

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Tayside Contracts is an inclusive organisation fully committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and harassment, promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging good community relations both in employment and in the delivery of our services.

We recognise that our most important asset is our people and we respect our employees for the unique differences that they bring to the organisation.

The communities we deliver services to are increasingly diverse and we believe that a diverse workforce reflective of our local communities will result in real business benefits. A diverse range of people from different backgrounds can bring a range of skills, knowledge and ideas. At Tayside Contracts our culture is one of encouragement, and we want our employees to contribute by making suggestions and explaining their point of view.

When selecting applicants for employment, promotion, training or any benefit we will base our decision solely on merit, potential and competence. All employees are actively encouraged to develop and reach their maximum potential which will in turn add value to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels and grades within Tayside Contracts.

THE LEGAL POSITION

The Equality Act 2010 defines the nine protected characteristics as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

No individual including applicants, employees, service users or customers will be treated less favourably because of their gender, sex, marital status, pregnancy, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, sexual orientation, civil partnership, religion or belief, age, trade union affiliation, political beliefs, irrelevant criminal conviction, responsibility for dependants or employment status. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

Tayside Contracts also has a public sector equality duty which is underpinned by specific duties. In exercising our functions we are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, considering the need to:
 - remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - meet the needs of people with protected characteristics

- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low
- Foster good relations between people from different groups, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

WHO'S RESPONSIBILITY?

Everyone working for or on behalf of Tayside Contracts has a responsibility to comply with and support Tayside Contracts' Equality and Diversity Policy. This includes:

- All Employees
- Trade Union Representatives
- Partners, Contractors and Suppliers

Tayside Contracts will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying towards applicants, colleagues, contractors, suppliers and customers. This includes behaviour or displaying material that is offensive, frightening or which causes an individual distress.

Any breach of our Equality and Diversity Policy by employees will be treated as misconduct and invoke our disciplinary procedures. Ignorance or "no offence was intended" does not constitute a defence.

As a Tayside Contracts employee you are an ambassador for the organisation and should treat everyone with dignity and respect. As an employee we would like you to challenge prejudice, stereotyping and disrespectful behaviour.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION

If you or any of your colleagues are experiencing any form of discrimination or harassment in the workplace you should follow the grievance procedure immediately.

Any allegations will be taken seriously and investigated, if proven disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with our disciplinary procedures. Some incidents of harassment may become a criminal issue and individuals who harass or victimise others may be ordered to pay compensation to the victims of their harassment.

RELATED POLICIES

The Equality and Diversity Policy links to the following policies which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the HR Admin Team:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Equal Pay Policy
- Grievance Policy

POLICY REVIEW

The Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed annually.

Should you have any queries or require further clarification regarding any aspects of this policy or related policies please contact, HR Services on 01382 812721 or employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk