

Greener Growth CIC

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Greener Growth is wholly committed to ensuring diversity and providing equal opportunities for all employees and contractors; it aims to be a first class employer. Greener Growth is committed to celebrating diversity, promoting equality, fostering equal opportunities and tackling discrimination in all it does to ensure that employees and contractors, clients and service users are treated with respect and valued equally. This means that Greener Growth is committed to ensuring that all its employees and contractors, potential employees and contractors and workers are treated no less favourably and not unlawfully discriminated against on the grounds of possessing a protected characteristic as defined in The Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are; colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender (including gender reassignment), marital/civil partnership status, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity, trade union membership or part/fixed term status. Greener Growth will ensure that it complies with all relevant current legislation covering sex discrimination, race relations, disability discrimination, data protection, human rights and equality.

Greener Growth aims to ensure that its employees and contractors achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. Greener Growth has adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims and should be read in conjunction with our policies on Bullying and Harassment, and Recruitment and Selection.

Greener Growth will aim to create a working environment in which all people are encouraged to give their best, that all decisions are based on merit and that there is no bullying and harassment.

Greener Growth recognises that publicity and marketing materials have an important impact in re-enforcing or reducing stereotypes, and in making the notion of receiving services attractive to a wide range of people.

If equal opportunities are not applied then valuable talent and potential are wasted. Moreover when unfair discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation takes place they bring about a climate of fear, insecurity and poor work performance. As well as being unlawful it affects morale, the quality of the service and profitability. It is therefore vital that every employee understands his or her responsibilities. Equal opportunities are taken seriously by Greener Growth and wilful failure to apply the policies or evidence of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation will result in disciplinary action which may result in an employee's dismissal.

2. WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION?

There should be no discrimination on any of the grounds set out in point 1 above. The types of discrimination which are prohibited are defined below. Discrimination can occur in the following forms:

2.1 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of their membership of a protected group in relation to his or her employment. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. Using fair and objective employment practices, the organisation aims to ensure that

- All employees and contractors and potential employees and contractors are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- All employees and contractors (volunteers/service users) have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may come from other employees and contractors or by people (third parties) who are not employees and contractors of Greener Growth, such as customers or clients.
- All employees and contractors (volunteers/service users) have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination.
- All employees and contractors (volunteers/service users) have the right to be free from discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

2.2 Indirect discrimination is putting a practice or condition for employment in place, which on the surface appears a 'neutral' requirement but in reality one of the protected groups finds the requirement more difficult to comply with.

Example

- A requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disparately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.

2.3 Disability discrimination occurs where an individual is unjustifiably disadvantaged in employment/recruitment for a reason connected with his/her disability unless the discrimination cannot be avoided by making reasonable adjustments.

Examples

- A requirement for employees and contractors to hold a valid driving licence for a job which involves little travelling.
- Failure to recruit a person who may have a mobility or sensory impairment without first considering whether the working arrangements or premises can reasonably be adapted to his/her needs.

2.4 Victimization occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights and/or asserted their right not to be discriminated against as a member of a protected group and/or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.

Example

- An employee claiming that he has been discriminated against on the grounds of his race and then his manager deciding not to give him a reference when he leaves their employment because he had complained that he had been discriminated against on the grounds of his race.

2.5 Harassment occurs when an individual is subject to unwanted conduct which has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that individual or violating someone's dignity because they possess a protected characteristic.

Example

- An employee who may be subjected to verbal comments or banter from a co-worker or group which they find offensive, degrading, humiliating or intimidating thus making their working environment intolerable.

2.6 Associative discrimination occurs when an individual is subject to Direct Discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.

Example

- An employee is told that she is going to receive a promotion. Just before this promotion is made official the employee's husband is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and she is not given the promotion due to the expectation that she will not be able to dedicate herself to her job or concentrate properly as she will need to look after her husband.

2.7 Discrimination by perception occurs when an individual is subject to Direct Discrimination because others think that they possess a certain protected characteristic. This applies even if they do not possess this characteristic.

Example

- An employee is often subject to jokes and insinuations that he is gay, which he is not. The discrimination that he is subject to is unlawful because of perception.

2.8 Harassment by a third party occurs when a third party who the organisation/business is not in control of and does not employ harasses an Employee. The Employer is liable for the acts of the third party.

Example

- An employee is subject to lewd comments by a client of the organisation which makes he/she feel uncomfortable and intimidates him/her. He/she tells the Employer of the situation and the Employer refuses to intervene, telling her that he/she needs to toughen up. If the lewd comments continue and the Employer refuses to intervene then he/she may have a case against the Employer for harassment by a third party.

3. IMPLEMENTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

It is a fundamental principle of our policies that all people are equally valued regardless of their race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, belief, gender, marital/civil partner status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, trade union membership and part/fixed term status.

3.1 Greener Growth is particularly concerned that equality of opportunity is maintained in the following areas:

- recruitment and selection
- promotion, appraisal, transfer and training
- terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services
- grievance and disciplinary procedures
- dismissals, resignations and redundancies.
- References and post employment checks.

3.2 Greener Growth is therefore, committed to promote equality of opportunity by ensuring that:

- Recruitment and employment decisions are made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Individuals will be assessed according to their capability to carry out a given job and assumptions will not be made that only certain types of people will be able to perform certain types of work. Job descriptions and person specifications will form part of the recruitment process. Our selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination;

- The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability are reviewed to ensure that whatever possible reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff can participate fully in the workplace;
- Person specifications are limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews are conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary. The use of experience, age requirements, gender, and qualifications in the job specification will only be used if they can be objectively justified;
- Appropriate training is provided, where possible, to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity. In certain circumstances an employee can be personally liable for discrimination against a fellow employee or job applicant;
- All staff have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Breach of the equal opportunity policy is potentially a serious disciplinary matter. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds which breaches this policy is entitled to raise the matter through the Greener Growth Grievance Procedure;
- It monitors its use of fixed term, part time employees and contractors and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. Greener Growth will monitor their progress to ensure they are accessing permanent vacancies and will ensure that the requests to alter working hours from all staff are dealt with appropriately;
- Any redundancy criteria and procedures are monitored to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any employee.

4. TRAINING

Greener Growth will ensure that all managers and supervisors with responsibility for any staff and their development are provided with the appropriate equality and diversity training where necessary which may be updated on a regular basis as required. Other staff may also be required to attend equality and diversity training. Attendance at training is compulsory if you are notified that you should attend a course.

5. MONITORING

Greener Growth has designated [REDACTED] - Operations Manager as the person who will have responsibility for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy and the action plan are regularly reviewed. All policies and procedures will be implemented and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure legal compliance and best practice with regard to equality.

Greener Growth may consider setting targets within their action plan as a result of the findings from the monitoring process and may look at a number of options for example;

- Consider if positive action is appropriate with regard to reviewing current policies and practices.
- Interviewing more people with disabilities.
- Reviewing the way that vacancies are advertised in order to attract applicants from minority ethnic groups.
- Increasing the number of management jobs open to job sharing in order to encourage more applications from females.
- Consider more flexible working options – such as flexible hours, job-sharing, homeworking, part-time working etc.

The [REDACTED] Operations Manager will also be responsible for monitoring how the policy is working in practice as this is critical to ensure that equality is being delivered in the workplace. The purpose of monitoring is to review the effectiveness of the policies and action plan. Monitoring involves;

- Gathering individual personal information on the diversity of our existing staff and any potential recruits.
- It also allows Greener Growth to be able to compare and analyse this information against jobseekers in the local community, the broader national labour market and other groups of employees and contractors within the organisation.

The type of information that Greener Growth will collect, shall be based around the current UK equality legislation.

Greener Growth will not tolerate acts which breach this policy and all instances of such behaviour or alleged behaviour will be taken seriously, fully investigated and may be subject to the disciplinary procedures.

6. DATA PROTECTION

In the implementation of this policy, the organisation may process personal data and/or special category personal data collected in accordance with its GDPR and data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which this policy is invoked will only inform the organisation for the benefit of implementing this policy. All data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.