

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Introduction

1. The Wise Group is an inspiring social enterprise and our success is built on our values and culture. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and human rights, and promoting a culture that actively values differences and recognises that people from different background and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.
2. We aim to:
 - Be an inclusive organisation where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, and able to attract and retain a diverse range of staff that reflects the communities in which we provide services
 - Comply with all relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and best practice
 - Proactively tackle discrimination or disadvantage and ensure no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against for any reason relating to employment or access to our services.
3. The Wise Group is also committed to protecting the human rights of the people who work for and with us (staff, volunteers, supply chain partners, contractors), and those who receive a service from us. As a responsible ethical social enterprise, we support the key principles of the Human Rights Act and associated legislation, and embed these within wider policies.
4. Key underlying principles include the following:
 - **Discrimination**
We will not discriminate against any person based on their protected characteristics, and will uphold Article 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998 in respect of protection from all forms of discrimination.
 - **Discipline**
We will not employ, or allow to be employed, any form of corporate punishment, physical coercion or verbal abuse. Any disciplinary matter will be dealt with through formal procedures.
 - **Working Hours**
We will adhere to Working time directives as per the Working Time Regulations 1998 with opt out offered to all staff.
 - **Remuneration**
We will pay the Living Wage for standard working hours for core staff, and gender pay gaps and inequalities will seek to be avoided.

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- **Forced Labour**

We will not make use of any forced labour or debt-bondage labour in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- **Child Labour**

We will not employ workers under the legal minimum age for work as stipulated by the Employment Act 2008.

Definition

5. We define equality as relating to treating people the same even though they may belong to certain groups. It involves breaking down barriers and ensuring access for all groups in employment, and to goods and services.
6. Diversity meanwhile is a broader concept that accepts everyone is different and is about respecting and valuing the differences each of us has.
7. Equality and diversity work together by addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by people in under-represented groups and by valuing the diverse cultures in society and our organisation.
8. We are committed to ensuring:
 - That staff, job applicants or other workers are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to the Protected Characteristics
 - All employment related policies, practices and procedures are applied fairly and impartially
 - The provision of opportunities for all to grow and develop and realise their full potential
 - Progression towards establishing a diverse workforce
 - Staff can operate in an atmosphere of trust, dignity and respect
 - The elimination of processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to all types of discrimination (including bullying victimisation and harassment)
 - Equality and diversity policy and practices are monitored, reviewed and reported to measure progress and make ongoing improvements.

Scope

9. This policy applies to all staff (which includes employed customer/trainees), consultants, contractors, partners, volunteers and agency staff. Key aspects all apply to the treatment of our clients, customers and visitors.
10. Where Wise Group services are provided by others (supply chain partners, external contractors or other third parties), they are also responsible for

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adhering to the Equality and Diversity Policy and human rights principles whilst providing services on our behalf.

11. This policy also applies to sub-contractors. The Wise Group will monitor performance and ensure all necessary steps are taken to perform and comply with this policy and appropriate behaviours. Inappropriate behaviour may result in contract withdrawal.
12. It applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, terms and conditions, pay and benefits, policies and procedures and other aspects of employment. All terms and conditions of employment and related benefits should be non-discriminatory, other than where there are legal grounds for discriminating such as in the case of gender specific jobs.
13. Everyone has responsibility for the implementation of this policy and to ensure others are treated with respect and dignity. We will not tolerate discrimination or unfair treatment of an individual based on the following 'Protected Characteristics':
 - Sex
 - Marital or civil partner status
 - Pregnancy or maternity
 - Sexual orientation
 - Gender reassignment
 - Race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
 - Religion or belief
 - Age or disability

Responsibility

14. The Wise Group will ensure this policy and associated procedure is made known to all current and perspective staff, and provides appropriate training and guidance to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities.
15. Managers will receive training on aspects of equality and diversity in conjunction with training and development in recruitment and selection, grievance and disciplinary training, and Personal Growth and Development.
16. All staff have a duty and legal responsibility not to discriminate against, harass, victimise or intimidate individuals or disadvantaged groups. Any such behaviour will not be tolerated by the Wise Group and will be dealt with through the Harassment Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedure. In exceptionally serious cases the police may also be involved.
17. If staff have any doubts as to the applicability of this policy, advice should be sought from the Human Resources Department.

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18. This policy should be read alongside other relevant policies including the Code of Ethical Conduct, Fraud and Bribery, Harassment, Pay and Job Evaluation, Recruitment, Recruitment of Ex-Offenders, Social Media, Vulnerable Adults, Data Protection, Volunteers, Alcohol and Drugs, Discipline and Grievance.

Review

19. The policy and associated procedures will be subject to review to reflect changes in legislation or good practice.