



DIVERSITY & EQUALITY POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Bridge Construction Ltd is committed to building a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the companies it serves, enabling it to deliver the best possible service to those companies.

Bridge Construction Ltd is aware that diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference in its broadest sense. It is about creating a working culture and practices that recognise, respect, value and harness difference for the benefit of the organisation and the individual. Another factor is the emphasis on social inclusion rather than focus on race, gender and disability. Therefore, diversity is more about the collective mixture of individuals, cultures and organisational expertise – all the differences that make us unique and the commonalities that connect us for the benefit of the individual and the organisation.

Equality and diversity are not interchangeable but inter-dependent. There is no equality of opportunity if the difference is not recognised and valued.

Equality is essentially about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is backed by legislation designed to address unfair discrimination (past, present or potential) that is based on membership of a particular group. In some circumstances, positive action is encouraged to address discrimination.

Bridge Construction Ltd will ensure that all employees and users of services we provide are valued as individuals, and treated fairly and with respect, regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Gender includes Gender Re-assignment
- Religion & beliefs
- Sexual Orientation
- Employment status
- Health
- Marital Status
- Membership or non-membership of a trade union
- Nationality, Ethnic origin
- Domestic circumstances
- Social & employment status
- HIV status

Bridge Construction Ltd has a duty to be proactive in promoting race equality and will be active in ensuring that it works to avoid unlawful discrimination directly or indirectly, and promotes equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

No person working within Bridge Construction Ltd or seeking employment with us, and no client using our services, will receive less favourable treatment on any of the above grounds (direct discrimination) or will be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions that cannot be shown to be justifiable (indirect discrimination).

Bridge Construction Ltd objective is to eliminate unfair discrimination and our performance in this respect will be monitored on a regular basis. Failure by any member of staff to abide by this policy will be investigated and may be grounds for disciplinary action to be taken.

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Bridge Construction Ltd believes that diversity & equality are fundamental to the delivery of good quality care. As a company we are aware that in a diverse and also in an environment where there is equality of opportunity Bridge Construction Ltd will be able to recruit the best candidates and enable them to realise their full potential by offering the appropriate training and development. This is also likely to result in improved individual performance, a higher rate of retention, reduced sickness absence and increased quality overall.

This Diversity & Equality Policy has been developed within the framework of relevant UK and European legislation and Trust employment policies and procedures. The legal framework includes:

- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and
- Health & Safety Act 1974
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Equality Act 2010

Bridge Construction Ltd recognises that it is illegal to discriminate unfairly on grounds of race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this policy is ultimately the responsibility of every member of staff in Bridge Construction Ltd. The policy has to be implemented fairly and effectively – for staff. However Bridge Construction Ltd Directors have an added responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and that all staff are made aware of it. Monitoring of compliance with the policy will take place regularly within the Personnel Department.

In addition, all staff have personal responsibility to:

- Treat people fairly and without prejudice
- Seek to prevent harassment, victimisation or bullying in the workplace

- Promote a work environment where everyone feels confident to report
- Incidents which are unfair or personally offensive, and to report such incidents to a senior member of staff when it is believed they have taken place
- Seek to prevent discriminatory incidents from taking place within Bridge Construction Ltd
- To report any policies, practices or procedures that infringe the spirit and practice of this policy.

4. THE IMPACT OF THE DIVERSITY & EQUALITY POLICY

Bridge Construction Ltd recognises that in order to embed diversity and equality in all that we do, that is, how we treat members of staff and how we provide services, the organisation needs to undergo a cultural change. That can only be done by making diversity a priority and including it in our day to day activities, and also it will mean that Bridge Construction Ltd continually reviews its policies, practices and procedures. We realise that diversity and equality impacts on all areas of Bridge Construction Ltd, however it is especially important that we get it right in the areas of Recruitment Advertising.

Bridge Construction Ltd will ensure that no job applicant should receive less favourable treatment than another on the grounds mentioned in Section 1, except where there is a General Occupational Requirement. All vacancies are open to competition and publicised externally (when necessary) except those which are 'ring fenced' for staff at risk of their post being made redundant.

Bridge Construction Ltd will not discriminate directly or indirectly when advertising a post by including any requirements or criteria, which are unnecessary to the post and which may, unintentionally, exclude certain groups of potential applicants from applying.

No discriminatory language will be included in adverts and, if you are in doubt, please contact Bridge Construction Ltd Personnel Department for advice.

Disability Provisions

We recognise that applicants with disabilities have abilities to perform most roles within Bridge Construction Ltd and can contribute a great deal to meeting our objectives. Not only do we value the commitment and contributions made by all current employees with disabilities, but we also welcome and encourage applications from people with disabilities.

Commitment 1: To interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.

Commitment 2: To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities, e.g. Appraisals.

Commitment 3: To make every effort to retain employees who become disabled during their course of employment with the organisation.

Commitment 4: To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make our commitments.

Commitment 5: Each year, to review the five commitments and what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and let the employees and employment service know about progress and future plans.

Recruitment and Selection

The intention of the Recruitment & Selection Procedures is to ensure the appropriate response to any employment vacancies in Bridge Construction Ltd. It means that as a candidate for any post within Bridge Construction Ltd, staff will be assessed (where appropriate) solely on qualifications, relevant knowledge and skills, experience and job related criteria regardless of marital status, domestic responsibilities, social background and other criteria set out in Section 1 above.

However, all selection decisions will always be based on the suitability of the candidate for the post. Bridge Construction Ltd recognises that positive discrimination, as opposed to positive action, is unlawful. This means, for example, that it is unlawful to discriminate in favour of a female or ethnic minority candidate at the point of selection.

Training and Development

Every new employee will receive appropriate training to fulfil the job role.

Opportunities for support, supervision, training, promotion and career development will be available to all staff on the basis of individual and service need.

Positive Action initiatives may be used for under-represented minority groups (as identified during the ethnic monitoring process) to enable staff to pursue career development opportunities.

Bridge Construction Ltd will ensure that all staff especially those involved in the recruitment process receives diversity awareness and recruitment and selection training courses.

Managing Performance

Directors will ensure that performance management processes e.g. appraisal and development schemes, and disciplinary procedures are applied fairly, objectively and within the spirit of this policy and the Capability Policy.

Working Environment

Directors will ensure that employees are provided with an environment where they are able to work free from harassment or intimidation, and where regard is paid to their individual needs. This will include taking action whether the source of bullying, harassment or intimidation is a member of staff.

Directors will be responsible for making arrangements for reasonable adjustments to working conditions or the physical environment where that help would overcome the practical effects of a disability.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

The Personnel Department will ensure that policies covering pay, benefits, grading, and other terms and conditions are formulated and implemented to be free from bias against any group likely to experience discrimination on any of the grounds identified in the policy statement.

5. MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

The monitoring of equal opportunities data is central to the effective implementation and mainstreaming the diversity agenda across Bridge Construction Ltd. This falls primarily into three areas:

- Applicant Monitoring – to assess the extent to which there is equal access to jobs and opportunities within Bridge Construction Ltd.
- Workforce Monitoring – to assess what is happening in Bridge Construction Ltd in relation to job moves, promotion and training.
- Complaints Monitoring – to assess if there is any particular group that is unfairly treated.

The main information required on each person will be:

- Racial Group
- Sex
- Disability
- Department & Location
- Marital Status
- Full or part-time

The statistical data will be used to build a clear picture of what is actually happening within the employment structure of Bridge Construction Ltd. This information about individuals will be kept strictly confidential in line with the Data Protection Acts 1984, 1998 and used only for monitoring of equal opportunities.

The results of the monitoring will be reviewed annually to assess what progress is being made in implementing the policy. Bridge Construction Ltd will ensure systems are in place to effectively monitor compliance with this policy. This will include monitoring the diversity of Bridge Construction Ltd workforce in comparison with the local working population.

6. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

All staff should be aware that direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation and instances of harassment or abuse, which are in contravention of Bridge Construction Ltd policies and/or the law, will be treated as disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Bridge Construction Ltd Disciplinary and Bullying & Harassment Procedures.

If a staff member believes that the Diversity & Equality Policy has not been applied in a particular case involving themselves or another they should advise their Director, in writing, of the complaint.

There will be prompt acknowledgement of the complaint. The Director or a member of Personnel staff will ensure that the complaint is dealt with quickly, effectively and confidentially, that it is fully investigated, and that any necessary action is taken in accordance with the appropriate Grievance Procedures. Directors should consult the Personnel Department for further advice.

7. PROVIDING FOR CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS

Where a member/ members of staff have particular cultural and religious needs which may conflict with existing work requirements, Bridge Construction Ltd will consider whether it is reasonably practical to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met.

If a member of staff requests either an accumulation of annual leave or unpaid leave in order to visit relatives or attend religious events overseas, sympathetic consideration will be given.

If a member of staff requests time off for additional religious holidays to the English public holidays that should be regarded as annual leave. However sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for unpaid leave, or exchanging English public holidays for other religious holidays.

8. Disciplinary Action

All allegations of discrimination will be investigated in accordance to the Disciplinary Procedures and Rules and the Investigation Policy and Procedures.

Behaviour or action which goes against the essence or letter of the Diversity & Equality Policy will normally constitute serious misconduct liable to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Directors must take particular care to deal effectively with all allegations of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment. It should not be assumed that such allegations arise out of over-sensitivity. Failure to undertake the responsibility of dealing appropriately with allegations of discrimination may be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

All the members of staff can use the grievance procedure (or appeals procedure in relation to disciplinary matters) if they feel that they have been discriminated against.

9. Hours of Work

Bridge Construction Ltd will positively look at opportunities to adjust hours of work where such adjustment would be helpful in promoting equal employment opportunities (e.g. if you are returning to work after maternity leave, etc).

10. Communication of this Policy

Bridge Construction Ltd will publicise this policy by the following means:

- By using the main theme of this policy statement in advertising vacancies and other marketing material.
- By making it available on the intranet.
- By making copies available to all employees

11. RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of Staff

All members of staff and are expected to observe this policy. In particular, all of us shall:

- Support and implement the principles of Diversity & Equality Policy
- Ensure that discrimination does not take place against other members of staff and the public.
- Inform management of any cases where we have witnessed or,
- Consider that harassment, abuse, victimisation, or discrimination is occurring or has occurred.

Directors

All Directors have responsibility for ensuring this policy is fairly and consistently applied by all those staff that they manage. All Directors should ensure that:

- Members of staff are made aware of the contents and significance of observing this policy.
- They carry out responsibilities in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Any allegations of discriminatory behaviour or practices are properly investigated, all relevant documentation retained and, disciplinary action taken (where appropriate) in a non-discriminatory manner.
- Directors are expected to be good role models of best practice for their staff.

Personnel

They are also responsible for providing advice and guidance to any employee on the application and effective implementation of this policy. They have also got responsibility for monitoring, and for ensuring that the duty to promote equality is observed and implemented where necessary.

Legal Liability

Individual members of staff can be held personally liable for acts of unlawful discrimination. Bridge Construction Ltd as an employer may be liable for any unlawful discrimination committed by its staff during the course of their employment, unless it can be proved that all reasonable and practicable steps had been taken to prevent such an act from occurring. Bridge Construction Ltd has a primary legal and moral responsibility for ensuring that discrimination does not occur.

12. DEFINITION OF PRINCIPAL TERMS

Bullying includes persistent criticism, intimidation, personal abuse and/or ridicule which humiliates or demeans the individual involved, eroding their self-confidence.

Direct discrimination is treating someone less favourably than others would be treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination is to apply a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages a particular group on the grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation without objective justification.

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim. This can take the form of, for example, verbal abuse, unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks, jokes, gossip, graffiti or the display of material which gives offence, derogatory statements etc. It may be a single incident or be persistent and may be directed at more than one individual.

Victimisation is when a person is treated less favourably than others would be in the same, or similar, circumstances because the person has made a complaint or allegation of discrimination, or has acted as a witness or informant, in connection with proceedings under the Race, Sex, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief and/or Disability Discrimination Acts.

A Racist Incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

13. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective from June 2015.

14. RESPONSIBILITY

Overall responsibility for this procedure rests with the Directors. It is the joint responsibility of all Directors and staff representatives to ensure that this policy is implemented correctly.

15. AGREEMENT AND REVIEW DATE

This document shall be reviewed not later than

15.9.20



16/9/19

Signed.....

Date