

**Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**

**Introduction**

**What is the purpose of this policy?**

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Senior Management Team, including the Managing Partner to the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity awareness in BDO. This policy is fully supported by the Partners.

**Who should use this policy?**

This policy applies to all who work for BDO; or apply to work for BDO, such as Employees, Contractors and temporary staff.

**Disciplinary**

A breach of this policy is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Firm’s Disciplinary procedure.

**Statement of policy**

BDO is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality for everyone at BDO. We do this by ensuring that we are fair, objective, transparent and free from discrimination in all of our systems, processes, procedures, activities and decisions.

It is the Firm’s policy to comply with its duties under the anti-discrimination legislation. That legislation is as follows:

* Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970
* Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976
* Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998
* Disability Discrimination Act 1995
* Race Relations (NI) Order 1997
* Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (NI) 2003
* Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006

In accordance with the anti-discrimination legislation the Firm undertakes not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of:

* Sex
* Pregnancy or maternity leave
* Gender reassignment
* Being married or in a civil partnership
* Religious belief or political opinion
* Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, such as being an Irish Traveller
* Disability
* Sexual orientation
* Age

**Inclusion and Communication**

The Firm is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training, pay or any other benefits will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

The Firm recognises that the provision of equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace is not only good management practice, but that it also makes sound business sense.

Our equal opportunities and diversity policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the Firm.

**To whom does the policy apply?**

This policy applies to all:

* Job applicants and potential applicants
* Employees
* Partners
* Contract workers
* Trainee workers and students on work placements
* Former employees

**Equality and Diversity commitments**

We are committed to:

* Promoting equality of opportunity and fair participation in employment for all persons
* Promoting a diverse workforce
* Eliminating occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, disability discrimination, victimisation and harassment
* Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with dignity and respect
* Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
* Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation and the associated codes of practice
* Complying with this equal opportunities and diversity policy and associated policies in order to ensure a best practice approach
* Regarding all breaches of this equal opportunities and diversity policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

We will achieve this through:

* The inclusion and involvement of employees at all levels of the Firm
* Visible and consistent leadership
* Seeking feedback from employees in the ongoing development of policies and the services we deliver.
* Seeking external advice and input when we feel that there are gaps in the process, or where best practice initiatives could be included.

**Implementation**

The HR Partner has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy, which on a day to day basis is delegated to the HR Department.

Each Partner and Line Manager also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create and maintain both a harmonious and diverse environment.

In order to implement this policy the Firm will:

* Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and relevant others (such as contractors)
* Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities and diversity policy into the job descriptions and work objectives of all staff
* Provide equal opportunities and diversity training and guidance where appropriate, including training on induction and management courses
* Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques
* Incorporate equal opportunities and diversity information into the Firm’s general communications practices (e.g. Sharepoint)
* Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations, such as subcontractors or recruitment agencies, that they too will comply with this policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce
* Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy

**Monitoring and review**

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities and diversity policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities and diversity policy will be reviewed regularly (at least annually) and action taken as necessary.

In addition, the Firm fully complies with monitoring requirements as outlined by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and fulfils these requirements by paying due regard to confidentiality and data protection legislation. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance; and help ensure an inclusive work environment and culture.

**Complaints**

The Firm recognises that employees have a right to complain about discrimination and harassment should it occur. Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures, which are available via the HR Intranet on Sharepoint.

All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a Tribunal should raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised and others who give evidence or provide information in connection with a complaint, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against in retaliation for their actions). Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

In addition to the Firm’s internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination or harassment to an industrial tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal under the anti-discrimination legislation. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under the Firm’s internal grievance procedure first.

**Additional Information**

If you require additional information to that contained in this policy, please liaise with the HR Department in the first instance:

Tel: 028 9043 9009

Fax: 028 9043 9010

E-mail: HRDepartment@bdo.co.uk