

Underlying Principle

1. Everyone is different and has something unique to offer. BL wants to respect and understand these differences and to make the most of everyone's talents.

Definitions

2. Diversity is about understanding, recognising, respecting and valuing differences.

3. Equality is about managing differences so that everyone has equality of opportunity through a fair and consistent approach to the application of rules, policies and procedures. We recognise that sometimes this will mean treating people differently. This commitment is relevant to all we do, how we manage ourselves and how we deliver our services.

4. We will promote equality and diversity across all areas. Our vision pledges state:

- We aim to be a fair, unbiased and professional service
- Our priority is to meet clients' needs
- We are committed to and promote equality and diversity
- We are proud of our staff, respect their views and invest in helping them meet their potential
- At all times we are accountable for our performance
- We are a united firm

Summary statement

5. We will not tolerate discrimination because of a protected characteristic, these are Age, Race, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Pregnancy or Maternity and Civil Partnership or Marriage. We will also not discriminate because of working patterns or trade union membership nor will we tolerate harassment or bullying on these or any other grounds. A separate Bullying and Harassment policy 'Maintaining dignity and respect at work' is available for staff to access via the intranet.

6. We are fully committed to and undertaking action on the duties placed upon us under the Equality Act 2010 and other forms of legislation that combat discrimination and promote equality and diversity.

7. We will ensure that everyone in BL is respected and can give of their best, irrespective of who they are or what job they do.

8. We will work hard to ensure that our services are accessible to a diverse community.

Leadership and management

9. The Partners takes overall responsibility for the development of equality and diversity, lead by example and ensures that progress is reviewed and further actions instigated as necessary.

Indicators of success

10. All BL leaders and managers at all levels will demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality and diversity, and take responsibility for progress, and all staff have personal responsibilities to treat everyone with respect, consideration and without prejudice and to promote the same levels of behaviour in colleagues.

11. Leaders and managers visibly:

- challenge unacceptable behaviours and create a climate where complaints can be raised without the fear of reprisal
- take firm action where unfairness or inconsistency exists
- encourage and support diversity within their teams
- demonstrate and promote considerate and fair behaviour
- treat staff with dignity and respect and recognise and value individual skills and contributions
- demonstrate through words and actions that diversity is an integral part of meeting the business priorities
- create an environment in which staff are able to identify and share good practice, celebrate success and encourage positive attitudes towards diversity
- comply fully with Management and Leadership National Occupational Standards relating to Equality and Diversity Accessibility of our services

12. We will continue to review service provision to ensure accessibility for all, and that inadvertent discrimination against any community does not arise.

13. The starting point for such a review is to carry out equality impact assessments to identify and tackle any unintentional discrimination we may find in the provision of our services to clients, stakeholders or staff.

14. This should lead us to consider the language we use and how we communicate information, along with the accessibility of our buildings.

15. We are committed to reach the position where with everything we do equality and diversity considerations are built in from the beginning. To do this we will need to understand the different and diverse requirements of our customers and of our staff and to involve them in the planning stages of new initiatives.

Communication

16. We will ensure that this policy is accessible and understood by everyone in BL

17. Getting our message across successfully means all staff will:

- be aware of BL policies on equality & diversity - understand the benefit of valuing diversity and how this impacts on the work of BL
- have a greater awareness of the value of more inclusive communication
- understand their own role in promoting equality and diversity
- be aware of their legal responsibilities under current equality legislation.

18. Senior managers will discuss these messages at team meetings and take appropriate action.

19. Our clients will be able to access the policy on our website:

www.bamptonlaw.co.uk.

When things go wrong

20. Employees who feel they have been unfairly treated contrary to this policy should raise their concerns with managers in order to get them addressed. If matters are not addressed the individual can raise a grievance using the normal grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and without delay.

21. Contravention of this policy by way of harassment of or discrimination against a colleague will be considered a disciplinary offence and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

22. Employees should feel confident that raising a grievance will not have an adverse effect on them, and that BL will protect them from victimisation.

Policy Review

23. We are committed to keeping this policy current and relevant. It will be monitored and reviewed annually.