

Equality and Diversity Policy

Policy Statement

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 The A1 Group is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect.

The A1 Group will support and develop the staff through providing all with access to facilities, personal and career development opportunities, employment and study on the basis of equality. The A1 Group is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation and to fostering good relations between different groups.

This commitment supports the organisational principles and upholds the ethos of establishing a culture based on dignity, courtesy and respect.

This policy builds upon the foundation of equality legislation and anti-discrimination guidance and strives, not only to comply with legal requirements, but to use these to ensure that The A1 Group endeavours to exemplify best practice.

The A1 Group values diversity and recognises that its business is greatly enhanced by the range of backgrounds, experiences, views, beliefs and cultures represented within its staff. The A1 Group aims to embrace diversity in all of its activities and proudly acknowledges that variety and difference are intrinsic to the wellbeing and future development of the business.

The Equality and Diversity policy underpins the Mission of The A1 Group and is integral to the success of the business and an employer of choice.

This is an over-arching policy designed to outline the fundamental principles of The A1 Group commitment to equality and diversity and will be supported by specific equality policies.

The policy applies to all staff and applicants, to all applicants for posts with the Company, to all staff employed on a full time or part-time basis, to all staff on permanent or temporary contracts, to agency staff, to honorary title/contract holders and visitors undertaking duties in the name of the company and to sub-contractors undertaking work.

Legislative Background

Under Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to:

- Discriminate directly against anyone and treat him/her less favourably than others on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: *age (unless this can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy or maternity*. This also includes discrimination based on perception of the person e.g. a belief that someone is gay or a belief that someone is disabled even if this is not actually true.

- Discriminate against someone for reasons relating to their association with a person on the grounds of the protected characteristics of *race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, pregnancy or maternity and e.g. discriminating against an employee/student because they have a disabled dependant.*
- Discriminate indirectly against anyone by applying a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people with a protected characteristic (*age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy or maternity*) unless the person applying the provision can justify it as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Subject someone to harassment for reasons relating to *age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy or maternity.* This includes behaviour that an individual finds offensive on these grounds even if the behaviour is not directed at the individual. It also includes failure of an employer to take reasonable steps to protect an employee from persistent (3 occasions or more) third party harassment.
- Victimise someone because s/he has made, or intends to make, a complaint or allegation or has given or intends to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination in line with the Equality Act.

Types of discrimination

Our Policy in accordance with The 2010 Act also extends some of these protections to characteristics that previously were not covered by equality legislation. Employers and business owners now need to be aware of the seven different types of discrimination under the new legislation.

These are:

1. **Direct discrimination** - where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic
2. **Associative discrimination** - this is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic
3. **Discrimination by perception** - this is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
4. **Indirect discrimination** - this can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic
5. **Harassment** - this is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient. Employees can now complain of the behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.
6. **Victimisation** - this occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.

Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that in carrying out its activities The A1 Group will have due regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity, across all the activities of the business between different groups.
- Fostering good relations between people of a diverse background.
- In the implementation of this policy The A1 Group will aim:
 - To develop and promote a culture of equality and diversity throughout the institution.
 - To develop and promote a culture of dignity, courtesy and respect.



- To support all staff and students, including provision of relevant support relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.
- To work to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination.
- To deal with all forms of discrimination consistently and effectively.
- To ensure that the Equality and Diversity policy influences and informs the culture of The A1 Group

Definitions:

Equal opportunities refers to the elimination of unlawful and unfair direct and indirect discrimination of particular groups and promoting equal access, treatment and outcomes that take into account specific needs of individuals.

Diversity - Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences that includes, but is not limited to, differences protected by anti-discrimination legislation. Appreciating diversity is about valuing differences and recognising that everyone through their unique mixture of skills and experience has their own valuable contribution to make.

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is incumbent upon all members of the business community to behave with dignity, courtesy and respect and to act in a manner that does not unlawfully discriminate at all times. The Managing Director has overall responsibility for implementation of the policy in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Role of Staff

- Actively to encourage non-discriminatory practices and to report any incidences of behaviour that fail to comply with this policy.
- To support the aims of The A1 Group Equality and Diversity policy.
- To undertake appropriate equality and diversity training.

Role of Human Resources

- To provide appropriate equality and diversity awareness and training for all staff.
- To ensure that recruitment advertising, selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes and disciplinary grievance processes are fair and transparent and are consistently applied.
- To monitor employment equality data, monitoring activity, as appropriate.
- To ensure that all members of staff receive the appropriate equality and diversity training.
- To investigate all matters of alleged discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour promptly and thoroughly.
- To ensure that selection and appointment procedures, performance management processes, staff development opportunities and disciplinary and grievance processes are fairly and consistently applied to all staff.
- To treat all applications for flexible practices on a fair and equitable basis and to provide reasonable and objective reasons when such requests must be refused.
- To advise on the provision of appropriate training and awareness-raising in relation to all equal opportunities and diversity matters.
- To provide leadership in the operation and implementation of the Equality and Diversity policy and to monitor and improve the policy and procedures.

Application of the Policy: Staff

Recruitment and Selection

- Recruitment advertising will encourage applications from all sectors of the community reflecting The A1 Group's commitment to equality and diversity.
- Recruitment advertising will appear in publications appropriate to the audience capable of producing the best candidates (subject to budget considerations).
- Job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment advertisements will be written on the basis of the essential and justifiable requirements of the position.
- Short listing, appointment and rejection decisions will be transparent and justifiable and will be supported by written comments.

Grading and Promotion

- All grading and promotions criteria and procedures will be free from prejudice and must be applied equitably and consistently.

Staff Development

- All staff will have equal access to induction, personal and career development opportunities and facilities.

Performance Management

- Probation and appraisal procedures will be clear and transparent and will be applied fairly across all staff.

Discipline and Grievance

- Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and transparently for all staff.
- Allegations of discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary procedures for staff.

Training

Equality and diversity awareness raising and training will be mandatory for all staff. Information will be provided to all students in order to raise awareness of equality and diversity and the contents of this policy.

Communication

This policy will normally be available at The A1 Group offices. It will also be available in printed form on request and, if requested, will be made available in different formats (e.g. large print, audio). Anyone requiring a copy of the policy in another language should contact The A1 Group to discuss their requirements.

Confidentiality

Any information disclosed to The A1 Group in relation equality and diversity issues will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with legislative requirements.

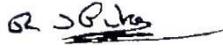
Breach of Policy

Contravention of the Equality and Diversity policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter and offenders will be dealt with under The A1 Group Disciplinary policy for staff.

Revision

The Company will make all employees aware of this Company Policy.

Signed:



Date: 1/1/24

Russell Pike - **Managing Director A1 Group**

Next Review date 1st January 2025

Sources of Further Guidance:

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

Equality & Human Rights Commission:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service):

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461>

Equality Challenge Unit:

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/>