

## **Baker Small Solicitors Equality and diversity policy**

### **Purpose**

Baker Small Solicitors is committed to advancing equality and diversity within all its activities, as it believes this to be ethically right, socially responsible and a key part of maintaining a successful business.

We aim to provide a working environment and culture which values and recognises difference and to pro-actively tackle discrimination to ensure no individual or group is discriminated against.

Our aim is to ensure that equality is reflected in all the organisations policies, practices and strategic planning.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to:

- employees (including agency workers);
- clients/customers;
- stakeholders;
- partner organisations;
- sub-contractors;
- suppliers;
- visitors;
- volunteers.

### **Policy statement**

Baker Small Solicitors is committed to:

- becoming an organisation which is inclusive and values difference by striving to ensure that our services are relevant and accessible to all;
- attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talented people from all sections of the community to contribute at every level of the organisation;
- recognising that people from different backgrounds and cultures bring new ideas, skills and experiences and perceptions that will help to increase efficiency and improve services;
- creating an environment that upholds the right of everyone to be treated with dignity and respect;
- a robust action plan to tackle discrimination and to encourage respect for diversity;
- ensuring employees of Baker Small Solicitors will not be treated less favourably in relation to pay, terms of employment and/or organisational support because of their disability, race, ethnicity, nationality religion/belief (or lack thereof), gender, gender reassignment, family circumstance, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, spent convictions, political beliefs, part time or fixed term status, trade union membership, pregnancy, social background or for any other characteristic;
- listening to the needs of our staff, partners, stakeholders and clients;
- maintaining an ongoing commitment to equality and diversity;
- ensuring all staff have a responsibility to be proactive in promoting equality and diversity and tackling unlawful discrimination; and
- encouraging equality of opportunity within our procurement processes.

## **Definition**

Equality and diversity is about accepting and embracing people's differences and creating an environment in which people can thrive. Harnessing differences creates a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where talents are fully utilised and goals are achieved.

**Equality** is about treating people fairly and with respect, giving regard for others rights and wishes.

**Diversity** is 'otherness' or those human qualities present in other individuals and groups that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences.

Diversity encompasses the properties and characteristics of a person. These include (but are not limited to) race, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion/belief (or lack thereof), age, disability, sexual orientation, socio-economic background and can also include other differences.

## **Implementation**

An Equality and Diversity Group has been established to provide a forum where policies and action plans on race, gender, religion, disability, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and widening participation can be developed, progressed and monitored.

A full implementation plan has been developed, and will be acted upon. The Equality and Diversity Group will regularly monitor the implementation plan to ensure that the principles are put into practice and that actions are progressing.

Appropriate training and support for employees will be provided to ensure the successful implementation of this policy.

## **Communication**

The equality and diversity policy is available in hard copy and can be made available in a number of alternative formats upon request to the HR department.

Training will be provided to ensure awareness is raised and all staff have a clear understanding of our equality and diversity policy and their responsibilities in regard to this policy.

## **Complaints**

Any complaint will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely and sensitive manner, in accordance with the relevant grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Staff should raise complaints in the first instance with their line manager or relevant HR Officer, however, should this not be appropriate other methods of raising complaints are available.

Diversity champions are available for confidential consultation on any issues that concern an individual member of staff relating to bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination. A member of the HR/diversity team will respond to your enquiry.

## **Monitoring and review**

The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the requirements of the business and the diverse culture in which we operate.

The implementation plan will be reviewed quarterly as part of the equality and diversity group remit. It will be a 'live' document which will grow and change to ensure the organisation meets its policy standards.

All HR policies and processes will be reviewed/impact assessed regularly to ensure they do not intentionally or inadvertently discriminate against, disadvantage or exclude any group(s) of people or individuals.

We are committed to monitoring our staff profile and services across a range of diversity issues.

## Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for:

- ensuring Baker Small Solicitors meets all its legal and regulatory obligations;
- with assistance from managers, ensuring that all action plans, strategies, processes and practices arising out of this policy are successfully implemented;
- making sure the policy is continually reviewed and all staff attend appropriate training to ensure successful implementation of the policy;
- providing a high profile lead on issues related to the policy;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities under the policy; and
- ensuring that disciplinary action is taken against anyone who participates in discriminatory behaviour or practices.

Managers are responsible for:

- implementing the policy and its related action plans, strategies, practices and/or processes;
- ensuring staff are aware of their responsibilities and providing appropriate training and support;
- taking appropriate action against anyone who discriminates;
- ensuring external partners are aware of the policy;
- not discriminating unfairly if involved in recruitment, selection, promotion and/or management of staff; and
- delivering effective services which meet the needs of our clients.

Staff are responsible for:

- fostering an environment where compliance with the policy is integral to their work;
- fostering an environment where individual goals can be pursued without fear or intimidation;
- not victimising any person who has complained, including complaints of unlawful harassment or discrimination, or who has given information in connection with a complaint; and
- being proactive in their approach to tackling discrimination in the workplace and for responding to situations appropriately, ensuring that the equality and diversity policy is put into practice.