

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The 'exemplary' practice managers are 'among the best', and 'go the extra mile to make everything run smoothly'.

Legal 500 2015

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The aims of the Matrix Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy are to:

- declare the commitment of Matrix to the practical application and promotion of principles of equal opportunities and diversity
- communicate that commitment to Matrix members, employees and other workers and service users, and
- further our core values.

Under this Policy, Matrix will avoid discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- Religion or belief
- Sex, and
- Sexual orientation

These are known, collectively, as "protected characteristics".

Matrix is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination, including:

- Direct discrimination – less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – the unjustifiable application of an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice the effect of which is to put a person at a particular disadvantage (for reasons connected with a protected characteristic)
- Discrimination connected with disability – unjustified less favourable treatment for a reason related to a person's disability
- Victimisation – the subjection of one person by another to a detriment because they have done, or the victimiser believes that the other person has done or may do, a protected act such as:
 - making an allegation of discrimination
 - giving evidence in proceedings relating to an act or acts of discrimination
 - bringing proceedings relating to an act or acts of discrimination, or
 - doing any other thing for the purposes of equality legislation or in connection with it
- Harassment - unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, and
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments to a provision, criterion, physical feature or practice which puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled people.

All applicants for membership, employment, traineeship, and work experience and all others who work with or for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the prohibited grounds. Decisions about membership, recruitment and selection, promotion, training, pay, disciplinary action and any other matter will be made objectively and with the goals of this policy in mind.

This policy has regard to the legal obligations, principles and guidance derived from the Equality Act 2010 and the related Codes of Practice. The policy also reflects Matrix's commitment to promoting respect for fundamental human rights and compliance with European Union discrimination law.

Matrix recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only right as a matter of principle and consistent with our core values, but that it is also good management practice. This policy will help us, and those who work with and for us, to develop our full potential, and thus promotes respect for the individual worth of all people involved with Matrix.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to:

- Members, including associate and academic members
- Employees
- Applicants for membership and for employment or other engagements
- Trainees
- Students on work experience
- Contract workers (including casual workers)
- Agency workers
- Volunteer workers
- Clients (lay and professional) and other service users
- Anyone who has formerly fallen into one of the categories above, but whose relationship with Matrix has either terminated or altered, and
- Visitors to Matrix

EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

Matrix is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all its legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and associated codes of practice
- Fulfilling all equality and diversity obligations imposed by the Bar Standards Board
- Complying with this policy
- Taking lawful positive action where appropriate
- Regarding breaches of this policy as potential misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings against members, employees and other workers, or a cessation of service to clients or other service users.

IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation of this policy lies with the Chief Executive, reporting to the Equality & Diversity Officers and to the Management Committee. In order to implement the policy, Matrix shall:

- Provide a copy of this policy to all employees, members and trainees

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- Publish a copy of this policy on Matrix's website
 - Inform all job applicants, students on work experience, contract workers, agency workers and volunteer workers of the existence of this policy and provide a copy of this policy to such persons upon request
 - Retain hard copies of this policy in a clearly marked location in the Matrix Practice Room and in Matrix Reception. Our terms of service will also refer to it and identify the name of the person in Matrix from whom a copy of this Policy may be obtained
 - Retain a copy of this policy on a public drive on the Matrix server
 - Require all employees, members and trainees to sign an acknowledgement copy of this policy
 - Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses. Such training is compulsory for all employees, members and trainees
 - Ensure that all members and employees who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion are or have been trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques
 - Review the conduct of third party organisations which do regular business with Matrix, in respect of their dealings with Matrix, and endeavour to ensure that Matrix only does business with third party organisations who respect equal opportunities principles in their dealings with Matrix
 - Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this policy.

RECRUITMENT

Advertisements for membership, employment and traineeship will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for the post. Information about vacant posts will be provided in such a manner that does not restrict its audience in terms of any protected characteristic.

Matrix will, where possible, publish the statement set out below on detailed vacancy information for job vacancies, work experience placements, traineeship and membership posted on its website:

"Matrix strives to be an equal opportunities employer and is committed to diversity amongst its staff and members. We therefore encourage and welcome applications from women, people of minority ethnic origin and people with disabilities, as well as candidates from other groups which are under-represented in the legal sector. We are happy to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled candidates to demonstrate their suitability for the job."

Recruitment literature will not express or imply preferences linked with protected characteristics except in pursuance of lawful positive action.

All vacancies for employment will be notified internally via the intranet as well as externally, through appropriate non-discriminatory advertising. Where appropriate, persons from under-represented groups will be particularly invited to apply and Matrix will endeavour to use those advertising media that are likely to attract the widest and/or most diverse group of candidates.

Descriptions and specifications for posts will include only those requirements that are reasonably necessary and justifiable for the performance of the job.

All selection will be conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job.

In the case of short-term or casual work where a full and open recruitment process would be disproportionate, recruitment will be through a Job Centre or any another appropriate agency that demonstrates compliance with good equal opportunities practice generally and in particular in relation to the selection of candidates for work.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Matrix will establish appropriate information, monitoring and review systems to assist the effective implementation of this policy. These measures are set out in the Diversity Data Policy.

COMPLAINTS

Anyone to whom this policy applies who believes that s/he has suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation contrary to this policy, is entitled to raise that concern. Employees should follow the Grievance

Procedure. Members, associates, academics and trainees should contact, in the first instance, the Chief Executive. All complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be treated confidentially, seriously and promptly