

Equality & Diversity – Policy and Procedure

The aim of this policy is to ensure Grundon has a workforce that reflects the diversity within our local communities. Grundon is committed to achieving diversity by ensuring that we:

- Employ the right people to deliver a high quality service to our customers based on equality of opportunity;
- Ensure employees are able to contribute a diverse range of skills and experience to the Company and realise their full potential and performance;
- Encourage a culture where prejudice and discrimination are not tolerated;
- Break down barriers that lead to potential discrimination and nurture co-operation and respect;
- Avoid the costs of unfair treatment and discrimination.

General Principles

Grundon is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and prevent unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination. Specifically, we will comply fully with the requirements of the:

- a) Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- b) Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999;
- c) Race Relations Act 1976;
- d) Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- e) Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003;
- f) Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003;
- g) Equal Pay Act 1970;
- h) Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

References to the above legislation include any amendments which have been made to the legislation from time to time. Grundon will also comply with any subsequent future employment-related discrimination legislation or statutory regulations.

Our employment and training policies and practices will reflect our objectives to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and promote good relations between all employees.

We recognise that our employees are key in promoting the Policy and we will work to ensure that no employee or applicant will be disadvantaged on the grounds of their gender, age, race, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientation, transsexual or transgender issues, by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable, in the following key areas:

Age – Discrimination on the grounds of age that is not justifiable is likely to be to the detriment of the Company as it will not benefit from the talent and experience that people of diverse age groups can contribute. We will not make assumptions about commitment, motivation, maturity or suitability on the basis of age. We will respect people of all ages and eliminate unjustified age-related criteria from all aspects of employment, development opportunities and learning.

Disability – The Company will endeavour to accommodate, where justifiable and reasonable, any prospective employees who declare a disability. We will enable employees who develop a disability during their employment to remain in employment wherever possible.

Race Equality – The Company is fully committed to eliminating discrimination, prejudice and intolerance on grounds of race or ethnic background. We will ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that any perceived or actual barriers that prevent people from ethnic minority backgrounds joining the Company and achieving their full potential are identified and addressed.

Religious Beliefs – The Company will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the religious needs of all our employees so far as is reasonably practicable, taking account of the circumstances and the operational requirements and efficiency of the Company. No person will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their faith or religious belief.

Sex Discrimination – The Company will remove barriers that prevent anyone from realising their career potential. In addition, we are committed to developing and maintaining the good practices that encourage both women and men to balance work and home life through our Flexible Working Policy.

Transsexual/Gender Re-assignment – The Company will ensure that transsexuals (pre and post op) and transgender people are treated fairly in their recruitment and development. Individual needs, including requests for practical or emotional support, will be met wherever possible.

Sexual Orientation – The Company believes that no-one should be discriminated against on grounds of their sexual orientation and this will be reflected in our recruitment, training and employment practices. We wish to encourage an environment where people feel safe to disclose their sexual orientation, although we respect the fact that the decision to disclose sexual orientation to others is ultimately a personal one.

Bullying and Harassment – The Company believes that every employee has the right to be treated with dignity and respect as an individual within an environment that supports them.

Bullying is defined as “*offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and the misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient*”.

Harassment is defined as “*unwanted conduct that violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them*”.

We seek to eliminate bullying, harassment and any subsequent victimisation by encouraging employees to report and incidents, either informally or formally through the Grievance Procedure. We will provide procedures to enable incidents to be investigated and addressed in a fair, consistent and respectful manner.

All employees, and particularly those with supervisory and managerial responsibilities, have a duty to challenge and eliminate bullying and harassment and to ensure that no-one is subject to victimisation in the workplace. Please refer to the separate Bullying & Harassment Policy.

Responsibilities

- The overall lead on equality and diversity is provided by the Board of Directors.
- The HR Manager has overall responsibility for the effective delivery of this Policy.
- All directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this Policy are implemented in full, e.g. in recruitment, pay, promotion and training opportunities, and that reviews of the practice within their departments and teams are carried out in relation to diversity and equality.
- All employees have a responsibility to adhere to this Policy, and may be disciplined if found to have acted in breach of it.
- All employees will undertake training in this Policy where required and will be expected to comply with this Policy and their duty to promote equality of opportunity and maintain respect for diversity at work.
- This Policy will be communicated to all employees and associated third parties, e.g. occupational health and EAP providers, and will be referred to in relevant documents and the Company's website so as to be made available to our current and potential customers and all applicants for job vacancies.
- Copies of this policy will be made available in other formats (e.g. large print, Braille) upon request.

Raising a Complaint

Every employee has a duty to report instances regarding the unfair or negative treatment and acts of discrimination, either direct or indirect, by any other employees, either to themselves or to others. This can be achieved informally by speaking with, or writing to, any manager, director or a member of the HR Department. If, having raised a complaint, you feel that it has not been adequately resolved you can formalise your complaint by following the Grievance Procedure.

Working Environment

All Grundon employees are there to undertake their duties in an environment that should be free from discrimination and intimidation of any kind. We expect our employees to be treated with respect from our clients and customers and we will not tolerate our employees receiving less favourable treatment on any grounds. Should an employee suffer an act of discrimination by any customer the Company will investigate the matter and seek to take remedial action.

Customers and Non-Employees

Grundon employees must never discriminate against a customer or any other person with whom they may have contact with during the course of their duties.

Monitoring/Evaluation

This Policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the HR Manager to identify and address any detriment in relation to the workforce.

The Company will arrange for regular monitoring of all job applicants to ensure the Policy is adhered to.

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy is Grundon's overarching policy statement on Equality and Diversity. All employment and training policies and procedures are developed to be consistent with the statements in this Policy. As such, all employment policies and procedures are related to this policy.