

GSS - Equal Opportunities Policy

GSS work as an Equal Opportunities employer and provider and are committed to the adherence of all requirements contained within the Equality Act 2010 and any of its amendments. The Equality Act protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

As such no employee, prospective applicant, or customer, or client of GSS UK Ltd should receive any less favourable treatment than any other. All treatment will be the same, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, nationality, colour, sexual orientation, religion, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership status.

1. Principles

The key principles of this equal opportunities policy are to:

- Provide equality for all
- Promote an inclusive culture
- Respect and value differences of everyone
- Prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Promote and foster good relations across the workforce and with partners

This means being aware of the impact of our behaviour and thinking about the impact of employment policies and our programmes in the UK

2. UK Legislation

GSS will not unlawfully because of the Equal Opportunities Act 2010 discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation

GSS will not discriminate in any area of employment or in the provision of its services to the public, and accepts its responsibilities to comply with all relevant legislation including:

- the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986,
- the Equal Pay Act 1970,
- the Race Relations Act 1976,
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995,
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1975.

This policy covers every aspect of the business. For employee's this covers advertising, recruitment, interviews, conduct whilst at work pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

For clients and customers this covers the quality of service and conduct that they receive from all GSS staff, including the ability to effectively make reasonable adjustments to cater to individuals' differing needs in accessing GSS services. All staff will be diligent in all these respects when recruiting and managing employees, and when dealing with clients and customers regarding provision.

Our Policy will be reviewed regularly in order that we ensure that every individual is given fair treatment at all times.

Responsibility for equal opportunities rests with the employer. Whilst this statement is true, it is also the employees and all that work as part of or in conjunction with GSS to make sure that their own practices and attitudes eliminates those which are discriminatory in their effects.

Under our disciplinary procedures any deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination, derogatory racist, sexist and / or offending remarks and any racial or sexual harassment directed to anyone be it any other company, client, employees, or member of the public, will be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal.

Any complaint of any discrimination by an employee or client will be promptly investigated and appropriate action taken.

3. Valuing Diversity

We progress our Equal Opportunity Policy through our Diversity Strategy
(Please also see *GSS Diversity policy*).

Diversity is an inclusive concept concerned with creating an inclusive environment and practices which benefit the organisation and those who work in and with it. It takes account of the fact that people differ from one another in many ways: for example gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, mental capacity, religion and belief, education, economic status, personality, communication style and approaches to work. Understanding, valuing and effectively managing these differences can result in greater participation that can be leveraged for success at an individual, team, organisational and wider societal level.

4. Monitoring

GSS having a partial Recruitment status will effectively monitor its practices and annually review the Equal Opportunities statistics as well as reviewing its statement on an ongoing regular basis. GSS's Equality and Diversity policy further supports our Equal Opportunities statement

GSS work to and under guidelines of all UK legislation regarding Equal Opportunities including the Agency Workers Regulations May 2011

5. GSS Commitments to:

- Encourage equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination
- All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities
- Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice
- Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation
- Ensure decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law. Please also see GSS Safer Recruitment policy
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any other supporting policies and procedures are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues

6. Communication

A copy of the Equal Opportunity Policy is made accessible to all employees via the web and intranet sites and is given to all employees during their Induction with GSS. All staff, including newly appointed ones must be made aware of this Policy and the responsibilities of both GSS and the individual in achieving equal opportunity objectives.

All updates and amendments to this policy must be disseminated to all staff and sureties of their understanding of any changes with this must be sought

7. Review

We commit ourselves to undertaking a formal review of the Policy at least once every two years and usually yearly and to communicate changes organisation wide.

Responsibility for this lies with the Head of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Lead – **Emma Glasscock**.

Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect best practice, future amendments to the Equal Opportunities and any changes to legislation, regulations and contractual obligations given to GSS

Any breaches to the above could constitute gross misconduct and where found, individuals could be subject to disciplinary procedures accordingly.

This policy is not exhaustive and is in conjunction with GSS Diversity policy, GDPR, Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment and Bullying and Harassment policies



Signed by Sonia Benjamin-Leach
Director
25.07. 2019
Updated v9