

# The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal

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## Equal Opportunities Policy

The SDT strives to be an equal opportunities employer. This means that it is our policy that there should be no discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment of any employee or job applicant, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of:

- race, colour, nationality or national or ethnic origin
- sex or marital status
- disability
- sex change status
- sexual orientation
- religion or philosophical belief
- age

The policy applies to all employees and contractors working at the SDT's premises and to all Members of the SDT. All references to "employees" also includes contractors and Members.

### The SDT's policy is to:

- Eliminate and prevent, as far as is reasonably possible, discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- Encourage all its employees to take a positive active role against all forms of discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment;
- Deter employees from participating in discriminatory behaviour, victimisation, bullying or harassment;
- Demonstrate to all employees that the SDT takes allegations of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment at work seriously.

The SDT is fully committed to providing a good, harmonious and diverse working environment that offers equal treatment and equal opportunities for all employees and one where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. The SDT's aim is that remuneration, recruitment, promotion, training and retention should not be affected either directly or indirectly by irrelevant or discriminatory considerations such as prejudices or stereotyping.

The SDT recognises that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice; it also makes sound business sense. The SDT's equal opportunities policy works towards ensuring that all employees develop towards their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

While the SDT recognises that the overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy lies with Managers and the Board, it is incumbent upon all employees, whatever their position within the SDT, to take responsibility for ensuring its effective implementation in their day-to-day activities and working relationships with colleagues.

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Employees should ensure that:

- they co-operate with all measures introduced to develop equal opportunities and diversity in the workplace;
- they respect the sensitivities of others;
- they refrain from taking discriminatory actions or decisions which are contrary to either the letter or spirit of this policy and, for employees of managerial status, that they ensure that those who report to them also comply with the policy;
- they do not instruct, induce, or attempt to induce or pressurise other employees to act in breach of this policy;
- employees who make, or support, complaints in respect of breaches of this policy are not victimised but treated fairly and responsively both when the complaint is made and thereafter.

Breaches of the SDT's equal opportunities policy and procedures, and any unfair or unlawful discrimination, bullying, victimisation or harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with under the SDT's disciplinary procedures. In serious cases, this would lead to dismissal of the relevant individual on the grounds of gross misconduct.

## General application of the policy

### Recruitment and selection

The selection process is of crucial importance in this policy and must be carried out according to objective job-related criteria, which will be subject to regular review. The effectiveness of the policy will be determined to a great extent by this aspect of employment procedure. The SDT will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection decisions will not discriminate whether consciously or unconsciously in making these decisions.

### Training

Equal opportunities will be integrated into all training concerned with selection skills, staff assessment, counselling, staff development and the management or supervision of staff. The SDT's policy will form part of the induction training of all staff. Reasonable arrangements and/or adjustments will be made, if practicable, to accommodate the needs of those with disabilities.

### Promotion

It is in the SDT's interest to provide equal opportunities for promotion to all employees. Managers must continually assess the promotion potential of all employees and all promotion decisions must be made in accordance with objective selection criteria.

### Grievances

Employees who believe they have experienced any form of unfair or unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment should raise their concern through the SDT's grievance procedure. As we are a very small organisation we would encourage employees to use the grievance procedure; however, alternatively,

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employees who wish to raise a concern informally may choose to speak to the Clerk in the event that they do not feel able to speak to their line manager directly.

## **Disciplinary process**

Where following an investigation it is deemed that there is a case to answer, matters will be dealt with under the SDT's disciplinary procedure.

## **Monitoring**

Examining the effects of policy and programmes of action on a regular and structured basis is a fundamental part of the process of successfully establishing equal opportunities.

The objectives of monitoring are to:

- to identify areas of and reasons for under-representation of particular groups in the workforce
- to assess the effect of employment procedures and practices and identify any unintentional impact on particular groups
- to enable appropriate corrective action to take place, including defining targets for future change
- to enable the SDT to review and reshape its equal opportunities policy and programme of action.

## **Communication**

This policy must be communicated widely and effectively throughout the workforce and to potential employees. It is the responsibility of management at all levels to ensure that such communication takes place and that the policy is adhered to.