

Barcan+Kirby

Equality + Diversity Policy

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General commitment

We, Barcan+Kirby, are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in our policies, practices and procedures and in those areas in which we have influence.

We are also committed to promoting equality and diversity within the firm.

We are required by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) to conduct a regular survey of our employees and report back to the SRA. The survey is conducted on a voluntary basis.

This applies to the firm's professional dealings with clients, staff and partners, other solicitors, barristers and third parties.

The firm intends to treat everyone equally and with the same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of their disability, gender, age, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Legislation

We take all reasonable steps to ensure that we and our staff do not unlawfully discriminate under the terms of the Contracts and any legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination in employment and the provision of goods, facilities or services

Meeting client needs

We will treat all clients equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. We will also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity in relation to access to the legal services that we provide, taking account of the diversity of the communities that we serve.

Identifying client needs

We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of clients. In particular, we will take into account the needs of clients with a disability and clients who are unable to communicate effectively in English. We will endeavour to consider whether particular groups are predominant within our client base and devise appropriate policies to meet their needs, including men and women; carers; children; the elderly; members of religious groups; ethnic groups or nationalities; and lesbian, gay or transgender people.

Communications plan

We will endeavour to promote and raise awareness of our policies and procedures for ensuring that our services are accessible for a diverse range of clients.

Our communications plan will contain a list of these policies and procedures, information about what steps we will take to put them in place; who is responsible for them; and how we will make these policies and procedures openly available for the public.

Employees and partners will be informed of the communications plan and training will be provided where appropriate to ensure that it is effectively implemented.

Dealings with third parties

We will not unlawfully discriminate in dealings with third parties. This applies to dealings with other legal service providers and general procurement.

Dealings with barristers

We will instruct barristers on the basis of their skill, experience and ability and not unlawfully discriminate, or encourage barristers' clerks to unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of their age; gender; marital status; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation or on the grounds of disability.

Employment

As an employer, we will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, bonus schemes, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

Recruitment + selection

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- + we endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable;
- + employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit;
- + selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of race, sex (including marital status, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity and paternity), sexual orientation (including civil partnership status), religion or belief, age or disability; other than in those instances where the firm is exercising permitted positive action or a permitted exemption;
- + wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions (genuine occupational requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups;
- + all recruitment agencies acting for the firm are aware of requirements not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

Conditions of service

We will treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination and which respects the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees. Terms and conditions of service for employees will

Barcan+Kirby

Equality + Diversity Policy

Barcan+Kirby

comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as flexible working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their age; gender; marital status; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation or on the grounds of disability.

Where appropriate and necessary, the firm will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees that may arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Promotion + career development

Promotion within the firm (including partners) will be made without reference to any of the forbidden grounds and will be based solely on merit. The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any particular group.

While positive action measures may be taken in accordance with relevant anti-discrimination legislation to encourage applications from under-represented groups, appointments to all jobs will be based solely on merit. All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

Training plan

The firm will identify equality and diversity training needs and draw up a plan to address these as appropriate to their responsibilities. The plan will include details of the sort of training that will be provided, who will be trained, when training will be provided and who is responsible in the firm for ensuring that training is delivered. Employees and partners will be informed of this equality and diversity policy and training plan.

Working with other organisations

All those who act on the firm's behalf will be informed of this equality and diversity policy and will be expected to pay due regard to it when conducting business on the firm's behalf. In all its dealings, including those with partners, any consortium members, suppliers, sub-contractors and recruitment agencies, the firm will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity.

Implementing the policy

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the firm. The firm has appointed the HR Manager to be responsible for the operation of the policy. All employees and partners of

the firm are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing the firm.

Acts of unlawful discrimination on any of the forbidden grounds by employees or partners of the firm will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in a similar fashion. This includes agency, casual and freelance staff.

Complaints of discrimination

We will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any of the forbidden grounds made by employees, partners, clients, barristers or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance or complaints procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

We will also monitor the number and outcome of complaints of discrimination made by staff, clients, partners, barristers, and other third parties.

Monitoring

We will monitor and record equal opportunities information about staff and partners on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, and disability.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used for exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and have no bearing on opportunities or benefits.

We will monitor all elements of:

- + recruitment and selection process (applicants and existing staff and partners)
- + promotion and transfer
- + training (all training opportunities not restricted to equality and diversity training)
- + terms and conditions of employment
- + take up of benefits (work life balance policies e.g. flexible working requests)
- + grievance and disciplinary procedures
- + resignations, redundancies, and dismissals.

We will provide equal opportunities information to the Legal Services Commission (LSC) as required in relation to personnel and clients under the terms of the LSC Contracts.

Barcan+Kirby Equality + Diversity Policy



Responsibilities

The HR Manager has overall responsibility for this policy.

Review

We will review the operation of this policy once a year (or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problems concerning equality and diversity issues with clients or personnel). We will take remedial action if we discover non-compliance under this policy or barriers to equal opportunities. When reviewing the policy we will consider the outcome of monitoring and review actions under our communications and training plans.