



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

1. Our Commitment

Doyle Law Limited is committed to encouraging and ensuring equality of opportunity and fairness in its treatment of all employees, directors, consultants, clients and contacts of the company. The company is committed to recruiting, training and promoting the best person for the job and encouraging employees' full potential, regardless of age, sex, gender re-assignment, marital/civil partnership/parental/caring status, race, nationality, caste, disability, religious or other beliefs, or sexual orientation (or any other ground detailed at 5 (a) below).

2. Joint Responsibility

All employees, directors, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns are required to comply with this policy in dealing with colleagues, clients, barristers, other solicitors, potential employees and anyone else with whom we come into contact during our work, whether on our premises or elsewhere, including work-related social events and travelling on business.

It is every employee's responsibility to ensure this policy is implemented. Any breach of the policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence resulting, if appropriate, in disciplinary action.

3. Who is responsible for this policy?

- (a) The board of directors (Board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to Catherine Doyle.

Suggestions for change should be reported to the Office Manager in the first instance.

- (b) This policy is reviewed every 6 months by Catherine Doyle and the Office Manager.

- (c) Staff should disclose any concerns to the Office Manager in the first instance, or, if for whatever reason they do not feel it appropriate to do so they should instead refer these to Catherine Doyle directly.

4. Clients and Third Parties

Clients, barristers, outside solicitors and others who have dealings with the company and those who work for it, are required to comply with this policy. Any failure to do so will lead to the company taking appropriate action. The policy is on our website and is referred to in our client terms and conditions.

5. Forms of discrimination

The following are the kinds of discrimination which are against the company's policy:

Direct Discrimination, where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds (or perceived grounds), of their own - or that of someone associated with the person concerned - age, sex, gender re-assignment, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, sexual orientation, race or racial group (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), caste, religion or belief, or disability (the "Discriminatory Grounds").

- (a) Indirect Discrimination, where a provision, criterion or practice (such as criteria for considering promotions or remuneration) has the effect of placing at a disadvantage a particular person, or group, by reason of the Discriminatory Grounds, and it cannot be legally justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- (b) Victimisation occurs where a person is treated less favourably where s/he acts in good faith and either asserts a right not to be discriminated against, or assists another person to assert such a right, or gives evidence in support of such a right.
- (c) Bullying and harassment is where unwanted conduct has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, by way of threatening, abusive, insulting, unfair or undermining behaviour, words or actions. This may involve physical acts, verbal or non-verbal communications and gestures. It can be a series of minor acts, or a one-off act if sufficiently severe. It includes (but is not restricted to) "patronising" sexism, taunting or predatory behaviour, spreading

malicious rumours, and picking on or regularly undermining someone.

Examples of bullying are: personal insults; unpredictable behaviour; ignoring/excluding people; setting impossible targets; removing areas of responsibility; shouting at people; making inconsistent demands; undermining confidence by threatening job security; intentionally blocking training/promotion opportunities.

Examples of harassment are: use of provocative language; patronising manner; innuendo/mockery; unwanted comments on dress/appearance; unwelcome touching or physical contact; assault/sexual assault; denigration of religion or belief.

The company's Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy provides a more Detailed definition of bullying and harassment and should be read in conjunction with this section.

- (d) Less favourable treatment is where a person with a disability is treated in a detrimental way, compared to the way in which a person without that disability would have been treated.

6. Consequences of discrimination, victimisation, bullying and harassment

Any behaviour involving discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment of another person will not be tolerated. Such behaviour may amount to gross misconduct.

Disciplinary action (including dismissal for serious offences) will be taken against any person at the company breaching this policy, in accordance with the company's Dispute Resolution Procedures.

Bullying or harassment of or discrimination against employees by clients or other third parties will not be tolerated. If an employee suffers or witnesses any such bullying or harassment or discrimination, s/he should ensure this is reported promptly to a director with details of the nature and time of the incident, so that any appropriate action can be taken. Where the problem is not resolved and it is necessary to do so, the company's Dispute Resolution Procedures should be followed.

7. Recruitment and Selection

All applications to Doyle Law Limited are welcomed and are considered for selection on the relative merits of the applicant against the job specification for that position, regardless of age, sex, gender re-assignment, marital/civil partnership status, race, nationality, caste, disability, religion or belief, or sexual orientation.

Job specifications will only include those criteria which are objectively required for the duties and responsibilities of the vacancy and which it is lawful to require.

Opportunities for learning and development are available to everyone based on their role and the needs of the job. Promotion is based on merit and the reasonable requirements of the job.

Barristers and other sub-contractors are instructed on the basis of their skills, experience, ability and cost and not on Discriminatory Grounds. We will work closely with clients in agreeing the instruction of an appropriate barrister or other subcontractor on any matter.

8. Terms and Conditions of Employment

We ensure that our terms and conditions of employment are free from all forms of discrimination and our Dispute Resolution Procedures operate without discrimination. Consideration is given to requests for flexible working.

Consistent with paragraph 3 of the Procedure for Making a Flexible Working Request, the directors will not discriminate in any way when deciding whether to grant a request for flexible working and no one will be treated less favourably because of any of the following characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, caste, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity. Flexible working will not be taken into consideration in determining remuneration or promotion.

9. Disability

We take reasonable steps to ensure that our working environment and terms of engagement do not prevent or make it difficult for a disabled person to take up positions for which they are suitably qualified and the best person for the job. We will make reasonable adjustments to our working environment and practices to ensure no particular person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in working at Doyle Law Limited, or as a client using our services. Please inform us if there is anything you want us to know and feel we ought to be

aware of, which might make it more difficult for you to work at Doyle Law Limited, or to access our services.

10. Dispute Resolution Procedures

All employees, directors, consultants, clients and third parties dealing with the company, must comply with this policy. The company will treat seriously, and will take action where appropriate concerning, complaints of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment on any of the Discriminatory Grounds made by employees, directors, consultants, clients, barristers, other solicitors, or other third parties.

Any incidents, or alleged incidents, of a discriminatory nature should be reported to one of the directors. It is the duty of all directors to ensure implementation and compliance with this policy.

The company's Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy provides a more Detailed description of the dispute resolution procedure in relation to bullying and harassment and should be read in conjunction with this section.

All complaints made by or concerning any person who is not an employee, director or consultant will be investigated in accordance with the company's Dispute Resolution Procedures. The person concerned will be informed of the outcome of any complaints made.

Any employee, director or consultant who believes that s/he is the victim of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment should where possible first raise this with the person against whom s/he has the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter without recourse to any formal procedure.

Allegations of sexual harassment made against solicitors and those working in legal practice must be reported to the Solicitors Regulation Authority.

- (i) Making a complaint - If an employee has experienced or are experiencing any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying, s/he should first consider raising the matter directly with the person concerned. If it is not appropriate, or the employee feels unable to do so, or where the employee has done so and the discussion has not succeeded in resolving the issue, the matter should be discussed with a director.
- (ii) Course of Action - Following initial discussions with a director the employee will be asked to choose one of the following options:

- no further action necessary;
- discuss the complaint directly with the individual who is alleged to have caused the offence;
- ask a director to help you resolve the matter through informal approaches;
- make a formal written complaint to a director (which will initiate an investigation and, if appropriate, recourse to the company's Dispute Resolution Procedures).

(iii) Investigation - Once a formal written complaint has been made, the first step is to investigate the allegations as carefully and discreetly as possible.

This will involve hearing accounts from both parties. Others may also be asked to provide information. Documents, emails and other evidence may be considered. A record of the progress and outcome of the investigation and any steps taken will be reported to the complainant. Those conducting the investigation will not be parties directly involved in the allegation.

In extreme cases (for example where it is felt that others could be at risk if no action is taken), we may need to investigate and take disciplinary action even if a formal written complaint has not been made.

(iv) Dispute Resolution Procedures - If the investigation concludes that there appears to be substance to the complaint, it will normally be appropriate in the case of an employee, director or consultant for the company's Dispute Resolution Procedures to be invoked. In the case of a client or third party, where there is found to be substance to a complaint, appropriate action will be taken to protect the company and its staff from discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Normally the complainant would be asked to agree to the Dispute Resolution Procedures being invoked. However, there may be occasions where, despite the views of the complainant, the matter needs to be formally pursued. The matter will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially.

Care will be taken to ensure that the reputation of each party is not unjustly affected during the investigation. Any acts of retaliation or intimidation against the complainant will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

- (v) If the complaint is not upheld - The individual bringing the complaint will be advised and an explanation and reason for the decision will be given.

No disciplinary action will be taken against any individual who makes a complaint which is not upheld unless it is found that the complaint was made maliciously.

11. Victimisation

It is victimisation for a director, consultant or employee to subject a person to a detriment because they have brought complaints or made allegations of discrimination, bullying or harassment, or given evidence in such proceedings, in good faith. Any person who victimises another will be subject to disciplinary action if appropriate and following an investigation. Anyone who considers that they have been victimised should raise this with a director without delay in accordance with the complaints procedure. Anyone who observes another being bullied or harassed or suffering discrimination, or victimisation, should talk to the individual to see if concerns arise, and if appropriate speak to a director.

12. Monitoring

We will review this policy regularly (at least annually). Where appropriate, we will update the policy in the light of any complaints made, action taken as a result of any complaints, and any new legislation.

13. Equality and diversity survey

The company will collect equality and diversity data as may be required by the SRA.

All employees are encouraged to participate in data collection when it is required, with the objective of monitoring diversity of race, age, sex, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, care responsibilities and socio-economic background. (Individuals will not be identified in the data collection process; the object of such an exercise is to extrapolate data to monitor the profession as a whole).

14. Regulation and legislation

In implementing this Equality and Diversity Policy the company will comply with the SRA Code of Conduct 2011, the SRA Handbook and current and future anti-discrimination legislation and associated

codes of practice and any relevant amendments or re-enactments of such legislation and any relevant amendment to such codes or further codes of practice, including but not limited to:

- a. The Equal Pay Act 1970
- b. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- c. The Race Relations Act 1976
- d. The Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- e. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- f. The Employment Rights Act 1996
- g. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- h. The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- i. The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- j. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- k. The Equality Act 2006
- l. The Legal Services Act 2007
- m. The Equality Act 2010

Policy reviewed April 2025