

Equality Policy

Introduction

Valuing diversity means that we recognise that we all have complex identities made up of many strands. These can include, but are not limited to, 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), sexual orientation, physical and mental aptitudes, socio-economic status, political or other beliefs. This means we embrace and celebrate our differences in a positive environment, and are committed to engage with the needs of our diverse staff and users to enable us, both individually and corporately, to achieve our aims.

This policy applies to all staff at all levels including employees, management, agency workers, and independent contractors.

Commitments

FCS Laser Mail is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and respect for all amongst our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination. Our aim is:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all team members are recognised and valued.
- To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every employee.
- To not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy.
- To offer training, development, and progression opportunities available to all staff.
- To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures.
- To encourage employees to treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- To regularly review all our employment practices and procedures so that fairness is maintained at all times.

FCS Laser Mail will tackle barriers to participation and create a culture in which equal opportunities and equal treatment are a priority for all staff and users. In the recruitment, training, pay and management of staff, and in all our day-to-day work with both colleagues and customers, we seek to create an environment where attitudes and biases that hinder the progress of individuals are dismantled and where we work together in mutual respect and tolerance.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

Create a working environment where no staff member is unlawfully discriminated against protected characteristics in Equality Act 2010:

- 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),
- sexual orientation.

Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination in the workplace, including in staff's interactions with each other, in 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.

Unlawful discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits the following forms of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination:** less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination:** where a provision, criterion or practice is applied to all staff but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others, and is not justified.
- **Harassment:** unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This includes sexual harassment.
- **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination.
- **Failure to make reasonable adjustments** to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- **Discrimination arising from disability:** where a disabled person is treated unfavourably not because of their disability but something arising in consequence of it.

Responsibilities of all staff

This policy applies to all staff working for us including employees, management, agency workers, and independent contractors.

All employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times.

Staff must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former staff members, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, or visitors.

This responsibility applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

This applies in relation to face-to-face behaviour as well as communications by phone, text message, email, social media, and other electronic means. It applies to written, verbal and non-verbal conduct such as disseminating offensive pictures and cartoons.

Management Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all managers from directors and departmental heads to supervisors to:

- ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility
- familiarise themselves with the procedures in all Equal Opportunities documentation
- ensure that they are not instructing employees to act in a discriminatory manner
- ensure they are not putting pressure on employees to discriminate
- bring the details of the policy and procedure documents to the attention of all staff
- ensure that information on equal opportunities is incorporated in all induction processes for new or temporary staff and is supported by ongoing training

Staff Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of employees at all levels to:

- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity
- report any discriminatory acts or practices
- not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination
- not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination
- not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others

Breaches of this policy

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our disciplinary procedure.

If you believe you are being discriminated against

If you believe you are being discriminated against, you may wish to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. Explain the situation and how it has made you feel. It can be helpful to describe the event so the other person is clear about your concerns. Use the opportunity to ask the person to change or stop their behaviour.

Alternatively you may speak to your manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If manager is discriminating employee, employee should speak with Managing Director, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If you do not feel that informal steps are appropriate, or they have been unsuccessful, you should raise the matter formally under our grievance procedure. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with our grievance procedure.

If we consider that there is sufficient evidence to suggest you have been discriminated against we will consider the appropriate action to take. If the person accused is an employee, this may include invoking our disciplinary procedure. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

Version	Date	Description	Approved by
A	30.06.21	Initial version	Steve Beeching