Inclusion & Equal Opportunities Policy

Executive Summary

This policy sets out the following:

1. The firm's commitment to creating an inclusive and fair working environment
2. What the firm expects from you
3. How the firm deals with inappropriate behaviour

As expressed in the Ashfords Way, the values and behaviours we promote, demonstrate our commitment to treating all employees, members, consultants, candidates, clients and third parties equally and fairly and with courtesy and respect.

In line with our responsibilities to our SRA and other reporting requirements, we monitor and track the diversity of our workforce and our applicants; this includes gender, ethnicity, disability and social mobility data.

Policy Statement

Ashfords is regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and is committed to complying with the SRA Standards and Regulations 2019 and the Equality Act 2010.

This policy applies to all employees, members, consultants, clients and third parties at Ashfords LLP and will operate in accordance with our Respect at Work policy. Our HR Director, has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy and approach is effectively managed and implemented.

We actively encourage inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities in the workplace and an environment where everyone can feel confident of fair treatment. We believe in treating people equally and we do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of characteristics which are irrelevant to the work they or we perform.

This is reflected in our actions of treating our people fairly and of managing our relationships with our candidates, clients, prospective clients, suppliers and our communities in a way that embraces best practice as well as meeting our legal and professional standards.

Conditions of service

The Firm will treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from discrimination and harassment across all aspects including recruitment; terms and conditions; promotion; development; training; work allocation; reward and benefits and policies and procedures.

Terms and conditions of service will comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance reviews, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, race, colour, religion or belief, age, nationality, national or ethnic origin, or gender reassignment.

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 which arise from their ethnic or cultural background, gender, responsibilities as carers, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age.

Expectations

We all have a responsibility in creating an inclusive environment. We expect our people to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in line with the firm's values and ensure the environment is free from any form of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination. We expect everyone to promote dignity and respect and recognise and value the contributions of all our people.

The firm has a number of network groups to help support and promote an inclusive workplace. Please refer to the Dashboard for further information.

Disciplinary action

Ashfords has a zero tolerance approach to any forms of discrimination including any forms of bullying and/or harassment. Inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously and should be reported. Any offences and breaches under this policy that take place in the workplace or any work-related setting outside the workplace, will be investigated under our Disciplinary Policy. It may lead to disciplinary action being taken, which could include dismissal, particularly where your actions have foreseeably harmed our business interests or reputation, or have significant potential to do so.

If you would like to discuss a matter of this nature in confidence please contact the HR Consulting team.

Confidentiality, data protection and record keeping

Any disclosure relating to inappropriate behaviour or actions under the terms of this policy will be treated sensitively, fairly and with an appropriate level of confidentiality. All sensitive personal data and other personal information disclosed under the terms of this Policy will be processed and secured in accordance with the firm's Employee Privacy Notice, Member Privacy Notice, and Privacy Notice to Candidates or Clients.

SRA Code of Conduct

Ashfords is committed to complying with the SRA Standards and Regulations 2019. In particular, for this policy, we recognise the importance of Principle 5 (acting with integrity) and Principle 6 (acting in a way that encourages equality, diversity and inclusion).

We also ensure that we comply with paragraph 1.1 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2019 for Solicitors, RELs and RFLs, and that the Firm complies with paragraphs 1.1 and 2.1 of the SRA Code of Conduct 2019 for Firms.

Additional support available

The following support is available:

- Your line manager
- HR Consultant/HR Director
- Mental Health first aiders
- Inclusion groups

There are also a wealth of resources available via our wellbeing page on the dashboard, including our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and Wellbeing Partners.

Control and Review

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0.4		