



Equal opportunities policy

Version 2.0, January 2025

Policy and scope

FJWilson is committed to providing equal opportunities at all stages of employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and in the conduct of its business.

This policy is intended to assist the Company to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

We aim to create a working environment which is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. That everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. The Company has a separate Bullying and Harassment policy (staff handbook, section 14) which deals with these issues.

FJWilson does not discriminate against employees on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (**protected characteristics**).

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat clients, candidates, temporary workers, suppliers and other external stakeholders.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass colleagues, regardless of their status.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

What is equality and what is diversity?

'Equality' requires us, and you, to treat everyone equally and fairly, with equal opportunities and rights.

'Diversity' recognises that this world is full of differences. We should note, value and positively embrace these differences. It is important for differences to be recognised. But it is equally important that, whilst recognising them, each and every person does so positively, with the importance of equality at the forefront of their minds.

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FJWilson Talent Services, FJWTS and FJWilson are trading styles of F.J.Wilson Ltd. **F.J.Wilson Ltd's registered office:**
Gascoyne House, Moseleys Farm Business Centre, Fornham All Saints, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 6JY.
Company Number: 07083525 Registered in England & Wales. VAT Reg. Number: 983 1111 34.



The law

It is unlawful to discriminate, whether directly or indirectly, in recruitment, employment or the termination of employment, in respect of any of the protected characteristics (as detailed above).

There are several types of unlawful discrimination and it could take place either intentionally or unintentionally:

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied generally but is such that it places an individual at a disadvantage and would also put other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. An example of indirect age discrimination could be stipulating that applicants must have GCSE qualifications, since this could exclude applicants that have equivalent qualifications such as O-levels.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

Failing to make reasonable adjustments. Discrimination may also occur where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Discrimination arising from disability is treating someone less favourably because of something arising from their disability (rather than the disability itself) without a good reason which justifies that treatment. For example, a person has a disability which means that they are absent frequently. If we tell them they should not attend a work social event because of their poor attendance levels, this will be discrimination arising from a disability unless we can show a good reason which justifies the treatment.

Direct discrimination by perception. You don't actually have to have a protected characteristic in order to be able to claim you have been discriminated against because of it. The law protects you from being treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic you are thought to have. So, for example, if an employee who is heterosexual is subjected to verbal homophobic abuse in the mistaken belief that they are gay, that employee could still claim discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

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Direct discrimination by association. The law also protects you from being treated less favourably because of a characteristic of someone you are associated with. So, for example, if an employee who is heterosexual is treated unfairly because they have been seen socialising with someone who is gay, then that employee could potentially claim discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, as they are being discriminated against by association.

Equal opportunities in employment

FJWilson will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits and other conditions of service, appraisals, disciplinary and grievance procedures, conduct at work, selection for redundancy, termination of employment and provision of references.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job.

We will conduct recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises, such as redundancy selection, on the basis of merit, using criteria and processes that avoid discrimination. Staff involved with these processes will receive training on equality and diversity. More information on our commitment in these areas can be found in 'Diversity and inclusion: our promise'.

Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary and within the perimeters of the law.

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals and will be carried out in line with our training policy (Staff handbook section 11). We will not be influenced by any protected characteristics that you may have. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation, and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Equal opportunities in the conduct of business

It is unlawful for a recruitment consultancy to discriminate against a person on any of the grounds detailed above:

- in the terms on which it offers to provide any of its services by refusing or omitting to provide any of its services, and
- in the way it provides any of its services.

Direct discrimination would also occur if a recruitment consultancy accepted and acted upon a recruitment assignment from an employer (client) which states that certain persons are unacceptable because of a protected characteristic. If you have any concerns regarding your instructions from a client, you should always raise those with your Manager.

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Both job advertisements and job descriptions should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups with a particular protected characteristic from applying.

Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions, which should only be used with your Manager's approval. For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments)
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons
Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment without the approval of a Director (who should first consider whether such matters are relevant and may lawfully be taken into account).

Responsibilities

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for this policy, but it is also the responsibility of every employee to respect and act in accordance with this policy.

Employee responsibilities

FJWilson's commitment to promoting equal opportunities is important not only in the workplace but also to its reputation in the business world. It is therefore vital that all employees understand the law relating to equal opportunities and discrimination and ensure that they adhere to the highest levels of conduct in this regard.

It is the responsibility of managers to support, communicate and provide training in respect of this policy, and it is a requirement that all employees attend any training provided to mitigate the risk of discrimination occurring and to ensure that the highest possible standards of professional conduct are maintained.

Breaches of our equal opportunities policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

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Disability discrimination

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the Company's grievance procedure to make a complaint.

The Company will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and review

All our employment practices and procedures are reviewed regularly by the Company to ensure fairness. This policy will be monitored periodically by the Managing Director to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

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