



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

WebDrive365 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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WebDrive365 Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

WebDrive365 Limited has been established in the U.K. since 1968 and from its inception has carried out its business activities within both the domestic and the international arena. During this time, we have benefitted from the talents and skills of both employees and contracted professionals from a diverse range of origins and backgrounds, and remain wholeheartedly committed to the principles of equality and diversity.

The purpose of this Equality and Diversity Statement is to affirm and underline the company's continuing commitment to a policy of equality of opportunity and the encouragement of diversity among its workforce.

WebDrive365 Limited, therefore, takes positive steps to ensure that all current and prospective employees and service users are not discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, belief/religion, ethnic or national origin. We value the differences, needs and contributions that a diverse workforce represents. We equally extend our policy in respect of equality and diversity to our contracted professionals.

Apart from the nine protected characteristics outlined in The Equality Act 2010 namely:

- Age.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership.
- Sex.
- Disability Incl. long term limiting illness).
- Sexual orientation (sometimes called sexuality).
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Gender Reassignment (including whether someone is transgender).
- Religion or belief Race (includes colour, nationality and ethnic group).

We further recognise there are other individuals who have other characteristics, and so the commitment outlined above will be extended to include people who may experience disadvantage or discrimination due to:

- Socio-economic circumstances (class and geographical location)
- Caring responsibilities.
- Unrelated criminal records / activities (spent convictions).
- Appearance (e.g. religious / cultural dress)
- Being HIV positive or with AIDS
- Any other feature related to a feeling of injustice or unequal outcomes.

Definitions and Legal Responsibilities

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions and be themselves; which is beneficial not only for the individual but for the company.

Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed and taken account of.

WebDrive365 Limited acknowledges its responsibilities under the following primary legislation:

- The Equality Act 2010.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

The Aim of our Policy

- To ensure all staff are afforded equality of opportunity.
- To provide a fair structure of company policy and procedures covering recruitment and selection, training, disciplinary policy rules and procedures and harassment.
- To ensure all employees have equality of access to promotion and equal pay.
- To attract a diverse workforce and utilise the skills, knowledge and abilities available.
- To promote a positive image as an employer.
- To reduce costs as a result of lower staff turnover, increased performance and efficiency, and prevent disciplinary and grievance cases.
- To maintain zero tolerance of breaches of the company's Equality and Diversity Policy. All instances of alleged misbehaviour will be investigated under the company's Disciplinary Policy, rules and procedures.

Applicability and Personal Responsibilities

All members of staff have a personal responsibility to guard against any form of discrimination, to avoid any action which goes against the spirit of our company policy, and to challenge behaviours without fear, where they believe these are discriminatory, potentially discriminatory or not within the bounds of stated company ethos and policy.

In order that all levels of staff, including contracted professionals, are able to ensure that there is no discrimination in any of their decisions or behaviour; all staff will:

- Be made familiar with the company's ethos and stated policy in respect to equality and diversity, both upon commencement of their employment or contract period, and subsequently; and be made aware of the company's zero tolerance policy on same.
- Draw to the attention of their immediate line manager any instances of perceived discrimination or any apparent related problem in relation to employment or the provision of opportunity.
- Not prompt, encourage or persuade, nor attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not harass anyone as a result of them having complained about, reported or provided evidence of discriminatory behaviour.
- Not harass abuse or intimidate others.
- Co-operate fully with any measures which the company introduces to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity in the workplace.
- Be encouraged to understand the values and benefits of equality and diversity overall to the company and its business.

Additionally, whilst all staff have a collective responsibility to ensure that company Equality and Diversity policy is successfully implemented, there are also specific responsibilities applicable to various levels of the company's personnel structure.

The Board and Executive Team

The company's Board of Directors has responsibility at corporate level for ensuring that this Equality and Diversity Policy underpins all aspects of the company's work and for ensuring that the policy is communicated both internally, and externally, to contracted professionals, suppliers and other third parties wherever relevant.

The Management Team

The company's management team has responsibility for perpetuating and implementing the company's stated policies and practices in a fair and equitable way, and ensuring all staff act in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy providing necessary support and direction. They will also be responsible for effectively managing and acting promptly when investigating issues relating to potential discrimination.

Non-Management Employees

- Incorporating the policy into their day-to-day work and their dealings with colleagues, contracted professionals and external third parties such as clients and suppliers.
- Ensuring their behaviour is appropriate to the policy and that they treat people with respect and dignity.
- Not discriminating against other employees, contracted professionals, and external third parties such as clients and suppliers.
- Notifying their line manager of any concerns with regard to the conduct of other employees, contracted professionals, service users, or third parties.

Non-compliance with this Policy

The company's disciplinary rules and procedures outline the standard of performance and behaviour expected from our employees and provide a clear structure for addressing breaches of discipline.

Any form of discrimination or harassment among our workforce is classed as a breach of discipline. Where cases are reported a full disciplinary investigation will follow, and where there is a case to answer, the employee in question will attend a disciplinary hearing and be disciplined accordingly by the reviewing panel.

Work-Life Balance

The company has adopted a series of policies and practices to make the balance between work and home life more manageable for our employees.

The company has a Flexible Working Hours Scheme in operation which is at the discretion of managers and may depend upon the exigencies and requirements of service. In the main it is there to provide employees with an element of flexibility in the workplace with regard to start and end times of their working day and when breaks can be taken.

There is a Job Share Policy in place, subject to the exigencies and requirements of service, which allows an employee to make a request to alter their working pattern from full time to part time by implementing a job share in their role. This enables employees to adapt their working week to suit the needs of their home or family life.

There are also certain leave provisions for example, maternity and paternity leave, parental leave and time off for dependants. Both parental leave and time off for dependants are unpaid forms of leave but enable working parents to take time out of the workplace in addition to their paid annual leave entitlement.

Applying the Policy

Overview

The Board and the Executive Team will provide their leadership to ensure that this policy is delivered in line with the company's corporate ethos and business plan.

Staff Training and Awareness

Upon appointment, staff at all levels will receive an induction briefing on equality issues, which will be repeated as necessary.

Monitoring

Monitoring is essential in order to ensure the effect, impact and success of any implemented policy; to this end, the following steps will be taken with regards to the company's Equality and Diversity Policy:

The company will keep and maintain staff profiling records and data; profile categories will comprise of the nine protected categories as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and additionally, the further categories recognised by the company and previously outlined. Data will include:

- Applications for employment, those shortlisted and appointed.
- Requests for training and those who receive training.
- Staff progression and promotion.
- Those who leave the company.
- Requests for flexible working (including Carers' Leave)
- Those in role by Gender.
- Pay and remuneration in accordance with our Equal Pay commitment.
- The nature of grievances, warnings and disciplinary actions taken.

This information, where appropriate, will be disaggregated by protected characteristics to ensure that no particular group of staff are disadvantaged.

Making Complaints / Grievances

Staff have the right at all times to report any grievances or incidents of harassment, or any allegations of unfair treatment at work to the company's executive team, in the first instance via their line managers, however, if such grievance relates to same, it may be made directly.