

1 Diversity & Equality Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out SFS FIRE's (The employer) policy on diversity, equality and equal opportunities. This is a policy statement describing the way issues are dealt with by the employer.
- 1.2 The Employer has introduced this Diversity & Equal Opportunities policy as a commitment to make full use of the talents and resource of all its employees and to provide a healthy environment which will encourage good and productive working operations within the organisation. This document describes how the policy is to be applied throughout by the Employer.
- 1.3 The Employer is particularly concerned that diversity & equality of opportunity is maintained in the following areas:
 - 1.3.1 recruitment and selection;
 - 1.3.2 promotion, appraisal, transfer and training;
 - 1.3.3 terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services;
 - 1.3.4 grievance and disciplinary procedures; and
 - 1.3.5 dismissals, resignations and redundancies.
- 1.4 The Employer will ensure that all managers and supervisors with responsibility for any of the areas of particular concern listed in paragraph 1.3 above are provided with the appropriate diversity & equality, equal opportunities training where necessary, which may be updated as required. Other staff may also be required to attend diversity & equal opportunities training. Attendance at training will be compulsory if you are notified that you should attend a course.
- 1.5 The HR department will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure that it is working in practice and will review and update this policy as and when necessary.
- 1.6 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2 Statement of principle

- 2.1 A diversity & equality policy statement will be displayed on all noticeboards AND/OR sent to all staff AND/OR displayed on the Employer intranet and website. A copy of this policy is available from the HR department *and on the website*.
- 2.2 The Employer's statement of principle on diversity, equality and equal opportunities is:

"The Employer is committed to a policy of treating all its employees, workers and job applicants equally. No employee or potential employee will receive less favourable treatment because of any 'protected characteristic', namely:

 - 2.2.1 *age (or perceived age)*
 - 2.2.2 *disability (past or present)*
 - 2.2.3 *gender reassignment*
 - 2.2.4 *marriage or civil partnership status*
 - 2.2.5 *race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins*
 - 2.2.6 *religion or belief*

- 2.2.7 sex
- 2.2.8 sexual orientation
- 2.2.9 trade union membership (or non-membership)
- 2.2.10 part-time or fixed term status

No employee or potential employee will be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

The Employer aims to encourage, value and manage diversity and is committed to equality for its entire staff. The Employer wishes to attain a workforce which is representative of the communities from which it is drawn.

These principles of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination also apply to the manner in which our staff treat clients or customers, our business partners and visitors."

- 2.3 Employees are expected to work with the Employer towards these aims. In certain circumstances, an employee can be personally liable for discrimination against a fellow employee or a job applicant.
- 2.4 Other Company policies, such as those dealing with harassment and bullying, maternity, paternity, adoption, emergency time off for dependants and parental leave are set out in separate documents, copies of which are available from [the HR department].

3 Equality principles

- 3.1 There should be no discrimination, whether direct or indirect, because of any of the protected characteristics set out in the Employer's statement of principle on equal diversity & opportunities contained in paragraph 2.2 above. The types of discrimination that are prohibited are explained at paragraph 3.2 below.
- 3.2 Discrimination may occur in the following forms:
 - 3.2.1 **direct discrimination** — this is treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. An example of this is paying someone less because of their sex or because they belong to a different racial group. 'Because of' is very wide and includes less favourable treatment based on a perception of another person, for example that the person is gay, or is disabled, whether this perception is correct and even if the perpetrator knows that their perception is, in fact, wrong. It also includes less favourable treatment because someone is associated with another person who has a protected characteristic.
 - 3.2.2 **indirect discrimination** — this is treating people in the same, but in such a way which adversely affects those with a protected characteristic. An example of this is telling all employees that they must work late at night — although applied to everyone, it will adversely affect those employees with childcare responsibilities, and these tend to be women.
 - 3.2.3 **victimisation** — this is treating someone less favourably because they have asserted their right not to be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic. An example of this would be an employee claiming that they had been discriminated on the grounds of their disability and then their manager deciding when they left not to give them a reference because they had claimed disability discrimination.
 - 3.2.4 **harassment** — this is unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone or violating their dignity. Harassment may also be of a sexual nature or may occur because someone has harassed the victim and the victim either rejects

or submits to it and, because of that rejection or submission, that person treats the victim less favourably. More information on what can constitute harassment is [*set out in the Employer's harassment and bullying policy or available from the HR department*].

- 3.3 The Employer will appoint, train, develop, reward and promote based on merit and ability.
- 3.4 All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the Employer's diversity & equality policy, which extends to the treatment of job applicants, employees (including former employees), customers or clients and visitors.
- 3.5 The principles set out in this policy apply:
 - 3.5.1 in the workplace; and
 - 3.5.2 outside the workplace in a work-related context, such as on business trips, customer or supplier events or work-related social events [*and at any time while a member of staff is wearing a work uniform*].
- 3.6 Special responsibility for the practical application of the Employer's diversity & equality policy falls upon managers, and supervisors and the HR department involved in the recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion and training of employees and the way their terms of employment are fixed.
- 3.7 The Employer's Grievance Procedure is available to any employee who believes that they may have been unfairly discriminated against. Please contact [the HR department] for a copy of the Grievance Procedure. [*The harassment complaints procedure set out in the Employer's harassment and bullying policy is also available to any employee who believes that they may have been harassed or bullied.*] Employees will not be victimised in any way for making such a complaint in good faith. Complaints of this nature will be dealt with seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible.
- 3.8 Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of this policy and serious incidents of harassment and bullying will be treated as gross misconduct. Unwarranted allegations that are not made in good faith may also be considered as a disciplinary matter. [*Confidential records of [ongoing] matters dealt with in accordance with this policy will be kept.*]
- 3.9 In the case of any doubt or concern about the application of this policy in any instance or situation, please consult the HR department as soon as possible.
- 3.10 The Employer will keep its policy, procedures and practices on diversity, equality and equal opportunities under review.