



Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy

The Commitment:

GES is committed to promoting diversity and practising equality of opportunity. One of GES'S core values is the promotion of equality, diversity, mutual respect and understanding. GES aims to create a culture and environment for staff to be treated equitably regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, political belief or social/economic group.

GES wants to build an environment that understands, appreciates and values the diversity of each individual and incorporates measures that make people feel valued and able to participate and achieve their full potential.

Implementation:

This policy covers all areas of staff life and ensures that the provisions of all equalities legislation are met in full, in particular the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief/Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003; Race and Religious Hatred Act 2006; Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended); Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005; Equality Act 2006; Gender Recognition Act 2004 and Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 200.

This policy ensures firm action is taken to redress inequality wherever possible.

GES will make efforts to ensure the appropriate confidentiality of procedures and information management systems to protect sensitive personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, but recognises that the discharge of its responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety regulations and child protection will require appropriate steps to inform responsible persons.

Race:

- GES recognises its general duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality. In carrying out its functions GES will have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting good race relations between persons of different racial groups.

- GES will create a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for people's differences, and show commitment to challenging and preventing racism and discrimination.
- GES will proactively tackle any differences between racial groups in the treatment/success of the following: For staff – recruitment/selection, promotion/progression and retention.
- GES will aim to make its workforce more representative of the communities it serves, by seeking to employ more ethnic minority staff.
- GES will make full use of the skills and knowledge of people from different groups.
- GES will assess the impact of policies, practices and procedures on staff from different racial groups.

Disability:

The term 'disabled person' includes a range of people such as those with physical and mobility difficulties, deaf and hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health difficulties, which now do not have to be clinically well recognised conditions.

GES has a disability equality policy for staff that sets out GES'S commitment to both potential and actual staff with single or multiple disabilities and provides a framework that ensures GES offers a supportive environment for any employee with a disability.

- GES is committed to taking positive action to welcome person with a disability and to enable them to reach their full potential. GES recognises that, at times, it needs to treat disabled people more favourably to ensure quality of opportunity.
- GES will meet its statutory requirements under the DDA not to discriminate against persons with a disability in the process of recruitment.
- GES Staff are provided with the opportunity to disclose a disability and access support. GES will ensure a culture and environment where people feel safe to disclose.
- GES will give clear information and advice about the practical issues, which may be encountered by an individual in their chosen job and make adjustments and ensure disabled people are not treated less favourably or experience discrimination.

Gender:

- GES will proactively seek to improve the gender balance within the company.
- GES will continue to monitor and implement schemes to ensure suitability for assessing equal pay for work of equal value.
- GES will maintain and extend flexible work practices and support to help individuals achieve an appropriate balance between work and their lives outside work.

Transsexual People:

- GES will uphold the amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Gender Recognition Act 2004 in respect to those proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone gender reassignment.
- GES is inclusive and supportive of all differing forms of gender identify and expression.
- GES will create a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for people's choices, and show commitment to challenging and preventing harassment and victimisation on grounds of transgenderism.

Within the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 sexual orientation is defined as – orientation towards persons of the same sex (lesbians and gay men), orientation towards persons of the opposite sex (heterosexual) or orientation towards persons of the same sex and the opposite sex (bisexual).

Staff will respect the sensitivity of individual's sexual orientation (Lesbian, gay and bisexual) in order that all may feel welcome and safe in their workplace and the dignity of all is respected. Specifically:

- Staff will not discriminate, harass or victimise anyone because of their actual or perceived sexuality.

Religion or Belief:

Religion or belief is not explicitly defined in the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 but is taken to include collective worship, a clear belief system, a profound belief affecting the way of life/view of the world. These Regulations also cover those without religious or similar beliefs.

- Staff will not discriminate, harass or victimise others because they follow, are perceived to follow, or do not follow a particular religion or belief.

- GES will raise awareness of religion or belief issues amongst staff (including issues such as times within work schedules for religious observances, special dietary requirements, requests for leave).

Age:

‘Age diversity at work’ means employing people of all ages and not discriminating against someone because of how old they are. The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 apply to employment and vocational training. These regulations prohibit unjustified direct and indirect age discrimination, and all harassment and victimisation on grounds of age, of people of any age, young or old. As well as removing many of the existing statutory age limits around redundancy, Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

GES embraces these regulations and age diversity at work by encouraging people from all age groups to apply for jobs; seeking a mixed age workforce; ensuring that people of all ages take up learning and development opportunities and that this is monitored. GES will also ensure that promotion routes are based on ability and judged in terms of measurable performance.

Victimisation and harassment:

- Investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment thoroughly however minor they may be considered to be at first sight.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee found to have discriminated against another employee on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religion and belief or disability.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee found to have harassed another employee on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religion and belief or disability.