EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Our equal opportunity and dignity at work policy is governed by the Equality Act (2010). We are an equal opportunities employer and recognise that individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their abilities, merits, development potential and according to the job requirements. At Sewell, every employee will be given the opportunity to show their ability to progress within the company.

All employees have a personal responsibility to work in accordance with the equal opportunities policy and guidelines. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action. If you would like any further information, please contact the People Team.

It is our policy as an employer to treat all people with dignity and respect, equally irrespective of any of the 'Protected Characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act. The protected characteristics are age, disability including mental health, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity and will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant codes of practice.

The company will not condone any form of bullying or harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with the Company, such as clients, customers, subcontractors or suppliers.

Employees have a duty to cooperate with the company to ensure this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities, and in preventing discrimination, harassment or bullying. Action will be taken under the disciplinary procedures against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this equal opportunities and dignity at work statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

You should draw to the attention of your line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or suspected cases of harassment.

Our commitment to equal opportunities and dignity at work impacts upon a number of key company processes as detailed in the following pages.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions:

- Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
- Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
- We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
- We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources, which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
- All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job and the requirements listed in the person specification. Application forms will only ask for information necessary for selection.
- All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements
- Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
- Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
- We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
- Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Equality of opportunity is not limited to those joining Sewell and is put into practice all the way through an employee's career. Promotion in the company is determined on your work performance and competencies, together with the needs of the business.

Depending on those needs, managers are responsible for providing employees with appropriate opportunities to assist in their development.

Sewell has a responsibility to you to provide information and access to training, job experience and education relevant for your development and which meet the needs of the business. With regards to this policy, all senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy where necessary to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.

ATTENDANCE & PERFORMANCE

Standards and disciplinary procedures are applied equally so as not to disadvantage any particular group. The People Team have a responsibility to ensure these procedures are in line with equality practice.

APPRAISALS

All managers and employees are responsible for ensuring there is no discrimination in appraisals. The People Team will check there is no discrimination by collating completed information and monitoring feedback and statistics.

DISABILITIES

Sewell focus on ability, not disability, and is committed to good practice in the employment of people with disabilities by following the equal opportunities guidelines.

We give full and fair consideration of applicants with disabilities. Premises will be modified and special aids provided where appropriate. Employees with disabilities will be encouraged to fulfil their potential and given access to any appropriate training, according to business requirements.

We will provide special assistance, and make reasonable adjustments where reasonably practicable, to enable an employee who becomes disabled to remain in the same job or take a new role. We firmly commit to the Disability Discrimination Act and Equality Act. For further information contact the People Team.

EQUAL PAY

The company is committed to equal pay in employment. We believe that all employees should receive equal pay for like-for-like work, work rated as equivalent, or work of equal value.

MONITORING

The company's employment practices will be reviewed regularly to make sure no discrimination exists. We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the People Team to promote and monitor good practice throughout the organisation. To do this, the People Team will conduct regular audits on recruitment, selection and career development. This will make it possible to ensure that race, colour, ethnic origin, sex, age and disability are monitored to establish whether our equal opportunity practices are working successfully. The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy.

Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying is offensive or intimidating behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power which undermines or humiliates an employee. Harassment occurs where, on the grounds of a protected characteristic, a person engages in unwanted conduct that has the purpose of violating the employees dignity at work or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment for the employee.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Where someone meets the definition of a disabled person in the Equality Act, employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to any elements of the job which place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. The company will ensure that reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to prevent anybody being treated at a disadvantage in comparison with any other individual.

REPORTING COMPLAINTS

All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. Whilst the company encourages employees who believe they are being harassed to notify the offender that his/her behaviour is unwelcome, we recognise that this is not always practical. Therefore, should you wish to make an official complaint, you must speak to either your line manager, a Director or the People Team. Your complaint will then be investigated and relevant action taken. You are asked to cooperate during this time and the Company will endeavour to communicate with you as much as reasonably practicable.

Policy reviewed by Becky Oughtibridge, Director of Professional Services, April 2026.