

GEM Partnership Ltd Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 GEM Partnership embraces diversity and seeks to promote the benefits of diversity in all of our business activities. We develop a business culture that reflects that belief. We widen the media utilised to recruit to ensure as diverse an employee and apprentice base as possible. We strive to make sure that our clients meet their own diversity targets.
- 1.2 GEM Partnership are committed to equality and diversity in the workplace, GEM Partnership is committed to providing a working environment that is free from harassment, discrimination and victimisation. The Company will take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and other unlawful forms of harassment within the workplace and in work-related settings. This includes maintaining effective policies and procedures, providing training, promoting appropriate standards of behaviour, encouraging the reporting of concerns, and taking prompt action where issues are identified.
- 1.3 GEM Partnership will promote equality and diversity for all employees, learners, apprentices, candidates and temporary workers. GEM Partnership will treat everyone equally and will not discriminate on the grounds of an individual's ("protected characteristics") under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) which are of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, or pregnancy or maternity political beliefs or membership or non-membership of a Trade Union or spent convictions and places an obligation upon all employee to respect and act in accordance with the policy.
- 1.4 GEM Partnership is committed to providing training for all employees and apprentices in equal opportunities and diversity. GEM will avoid stipulating any unnecessary requirements which would exclude a higher proportion of a particular group of people and will not prescribe discriminatory requirements for a role
- 1.5 GEM Partnership will not discriminate unlawfully when deciding which employees/learners/apprentices/candidates/temporary workers for a vacancy or assignment, or in any terms of employment or terms of engagement for temporary workers. GEM will ensure that each candidate is assessed in accordance with the apprentices/candidates/temporary worker's merits, qualifications and ability to perform the relevant duties for the role.
- 1.6 GEM Partnership will not accept instructions from clients that indicate an intention to discriminate unlawfully and furthermore will actively consult and work with clients to promote good equality and diversity practice.
- 1.7 All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times, regardless of their status.
- 1.8 Employee's training needs are identified through regular employee appraisals. All employees are given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

2 Discrimination

- 2.1 Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentional or unintentionally.
- 2.2 **Direct discrimination** occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Treating someone less favourably means treating them badly in comparison to others that do not have that protected characteristic.
- 2.3 It is unlawful for a GEM Partnership to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a protected characteristic; for example (but without limitation):
 - 2.3.1 In the terms on which GEM Partnership offers to provide any of its services;
 - 2.3.2 By refusing or deliberately omitting to provide any of its services; or
 - 2.3.3 In the way it provides any of its services.
- 2.4 **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) is applied but this results in people who share a protected characteristic being placed at a disadvantage in

comparison to those who do not have the protected characteristic. If the PCP can be objectively justified it will not amount to discrimination.

3 Disabled Persons

- 3.1 GEM Partnership will not discriminate against a disabled person:
 - 3.1.1 in the arrangements i.e., application form, interview or arrangements for selection for determining whom a job should be offered; or
 - 3.1.2 in the terms on which training opportunities, employment or engagement of temporary workers is offered; or
 - 3.1.3 by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering the disabled person a job or training opportunity for reasons connected with their disability; or
 - 3.1.4 in the opportunities afforded to the person for receiving any benefit, or by refusing to afford, or deliberately not affording him or her any such opportunity; or
 - 3.1.5 by subjecting the individual to any other detriment (detriment will include refusal of training or transfer, demotion, reduction of wage, or harassment).
- 3.2 Employees are encouraged to inform GEM Partnership if they are disabled or become disabled, so that GEM Partnership can support as appropriate.
- 3.3 Employees that experience difficulties at work because of their disability, should contact their line manager/Julie Hunter HR Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The line manager/HR Manager may wish to consult with the employee and their medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. GEM Partnership will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate the needs of the employee within reason. If GEM Partnership considers a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, they will explain the reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.
- 3.4 Within recruitment and training environments there may be a requirement to make reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments could include:
 - 3.4.1 modifying testing and assessment procedures;
 - 3.4.2 meeting the candidate at alternative premises which are more easily accessible;
 - 3.4.3 having flexibility in the timing of interviews, training sessions, assessments/exams;
 - 3.4.4 modifying application procedures and application forms;
 - 3.4.5 providing auxiliary aids and/or services;
 - 3.4.6 providing a reader or interpreter.
- 3.5 Wherever possible GEM Partnership will make reasonable adjustments to hallways, passages and doors in order to provide and improve means of access for disabled employees and workers. However, this may not always be feasible, due to circumstances creating such difficulties as to render such adjustments as being beyond what is reasonable in all the circumstances.
- 3.6 GEM Partnership will make career opportunities available to all people with disabilities and every practical effort will be made to provide for the needs of staff, candidates and clients.

4 Age Discrimination

- 4.1 GEM Partnership do not discriminate directly or indirectly, harass or victimise any person on the grounds of their age. Gem Partnership encourage clients not to include any age criteria in job specifications and every attempt will be made to persuade clients to recruit on the basis of competence and skills and not age.
- 4.2 GEM Partnership is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are suitable for the requirements of the various positions regardless of age. No age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements on behalf of the company.
- 4.3 GEM Partnership will request age as part of its internal recruitment process however such information will not be used as selection, training or promotion criteria or in any detrimental way and is only used for compilation of personal data as per GEM Partnerships Data Retention Policy and Procedure.

5 Harassment, Victimisation and Sexual Harassment

- 5.1 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. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 5.2 GEM Partnership is committed to preventing sexual harassment and will take all reasonable steps to create and maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment. The Company expects all employees, learners, apprentices, candidates, temporary workers, clients and other third parties to behave in a manner consistent with this commitment. Any allegation of sexual harassment will be treated seriously and investigated promptly and fairly.
- 5.3 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. For further information please refer to GEM Partnerships Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy.
- 5.4 Sexual Harassment Disclosures and Whistleblowing - GEM Partnership is committed to creating a workplace in which all individuals are treated with dignity and respect and where concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal. Employees, learners, apprentices, candidates, temporary workers and other relevant individuals are encouraged to report any concerns relating to sexual harassment, whether experienced personally or witnessed in the workplace.
- 5.5 In accordance with applicable whistleblowing legislation, disclosures relating to workplace sexual harassment may constitute a protected disclosure where the relevant legal criteria are met. Individuals who raise genuine concerns about workplace sexual harassment will be treated fairly and will not be subjected to victimisation, retaliation, detriment, disciplinary action, dismissal, or any other unfavourable treatment for making a protected disclosure or assisting with an investigation.
- 5.6 Concerns relating to sexual harassment may be raised through GEM Partnership's Grievance Procedure, Complaints Procedure, Sexual Harassment Policy, Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy or Whistleblowing arrangements, as appropriate. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, sensitively and confidentially, where possible

6 Part-time Workers

- 6.1 GEM Partnership recognises that it is an essential part of this policy that part time employees are treated on the same terms, with no detriment, as full-time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity leave, parental and domestic incident leave and access to our pension scheme.
- 6.2 GEM Partnership also recognises that part time employees must be treated the same as full time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

7 Fixed-term Employees

- 7.1 Gem Partnership will ensure that fixed-term employees are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities.

8 Gender Reassignment Policy

- 8.1 GEM Partnership recognises that any employees, learners, apprentices, candidates and temporary workers may wish to change their gender during the course of their employment with the Company. GEM Partnership will support any employee or worker through the reassignment.
- 8.2 GEM Partnership will make every effort to try to protect an employee or worker who has undergone, is undergoing or intends to undergo gender reassignment, from discrimination or harassment within the workplace.
- 8.3 All employees and workers will be expected to comply with GEM Partnership's policy on harassment in the workplace. Any breach of such a policy will lead to the appropriate disciplinary sanction. Where an employee is engaged in work where the gender change imposes genuine problems GEM Partnership will make every effort to reassign the employee or worker to an alternative role in the Company, if so desired by the employee.
- 8.4 Any employee or worker suffering discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment should have recourse to GEM Partnerships Complaints Policy and Procedure.

9 Identifying People's Rights Outside of the Protected Characteristics

- 9.1 Employee's, learners, apprentices, candidates and temporary workers who identify diversity currently outside of the scope of protected characteristics will be treated in line with this policy and are afforded the same protections as protected characteristics within GEM Partnership.

10 Diversity

- 10.1 GEM Partnership recognises the critical importance of diversity in the workplace for all businesses and our clients. GEM Partnership are committed to increasing recognition of our brand amongst a more diverse audience, to encourage the development of an increasingly diverse apprentice and candidate database.
- 10.2 GEM Partnership strives to ensure that we offer our clients the most suitable apprentices, candidates and temporary workers on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities and that such apprentice, candidate or temporary workers is drawn from diverse backgrounds.
- 10.3 GEM Partnership is dedicated to providing an environment in which employees' different perspectives are valued and their talents fully employed. To continue to be recognised as a world class business and employer of choice and is of key importance that we are as diverse as the customers and cultures we serve.

11 Statement on Promoting Disability Equality

- 11.1 GEM Partnership recognise that disabled people may face barriers to access and achievement in employment and training, and are committed to eliminating discrimination and harassment on grounds of disability and promoting equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
- 11.2 In order to meet the general duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, GEM Partnership will;
 - 11.2.1 Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
 - 11.2.2 Eliminate direct or indirect discrimination;
 - 11.2.3 Eliminate harassment of disabled people that that is related to their disabilities;
 - 11.2.4 Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
 - 11.2.5 Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
 - 11.2.6 Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than other people.
- 11.3 It is the responsibility of every individual within the business to treat people with respect, regardless of their disability status, and to make a positive difference to disability equality within the recruitment and training landscape, both in support of clients and for internal opportunities. In order to meet GEM Partnerships specific duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, GEM Partnership will also carry out the following:
 - 11.3.1 Gather evidence to inform and action, by monitoring the recruitment, development and retention of employees, and gather information on the effect of policies and practices on the opportunities and achievement of disabled apprentices placed with client organisations and internally.
 - 11.3.2 Assess the impact or likely impact of GEM Partnerships policies and practices on equality for disabled people.
 - 11.3.3 Promote the accessibility of all GEM Partnerships advertised vacancies for disabled persons in terms of both application stage, assessment and selection.

12 Responsibility for the Policy and Training

- 12.1 This policy is the responsibility of every employee to apply. Those who hold supervisory, management or other senior positions have additional and particular responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of its application and the commitment of all employee and others to it. To ensure awareness and effective promotion of our policy, and to measure its success, GEM Partnership will:
 - 12.1.1 Provide in-house training on Equal Opportunities and diversity issues during induction and periodically through personal development plans.
 - 12.1.2 Ensure all Trainers complete Education Foundation Equality and Diversity e-learning on an annual basis.

- 12.1.3 Ensure all apprentices are inducted at enrolment to the policy, which is also included in the learner handbook.
- 12.1.4 Ensure all employers and apprentices receive a copy of this policy as part of the onboarding process and it's also included in the employer handbook
- 12.1.5 Distribute Hot Topics on Equality and Diversity to apprentices and the employer on a monthly basis and ensure that the topics embedded within the training sessions.
- 12.1.6 Seek to diversify the workforce.
- 12.1.7 Ask all learners and apprentices to complete a monitoring form so that we have statistical analysis of diversity issues.
- 12.1.8 Develop relationships and joint initiatives with clients supporting diversity and other related topics including client organisations.
- 12.1.9 Promote equality and diversity in promotional literature, recruitment advertisements and company documentation and share with clients and employers

13 Complaints and Monitoring Procedures

- 13.1 GEM Partnership has in place a Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure for monitoring compliance with this policy and for dealing with complaints of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. This is available on SharePoint and can be made available immediately upon request. Any discrimination, harassment or victimisation complaint will be logged and investigated fully by the HR Manager, Julie Hunter.
- 13.2 GEM Partnership also recognises that concerns relating to workplace sexual harassment may be raised as protected disclosures under whistleblowing legislation. Individuals who raise concerns in good faith will not suffer any detriment or retaliation as a result of making such a disclosure. All reports will be handled in accordance with the Company's relevant policies and legal obligations.
- 13.3 This policy will be reviewed annually by the board of directors, or in line with legislation changes and amendments made accordingly.

14 Employer / Apprentice handbook

- 14.1 GEM Partnership ensure that at enrolment each employer and apprentice is given a handbook which advises them of our policy and procedure, who the key contacts are at GEM Partnership, the process they can follow if they need to contact us.
- 14.2 Equality and Diversity is embedded throughout delivery to our apprentices and our employees champion this at every opportunity through open discussions, training delivery

15 Supporting Policies

- 15.1 GEM Partnership Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy
- 15.2 GEM Partnership Disciplinary and Grievance Policy
- 15.3 GEM Partnership Sexual Harassment Policy
- 15.4 GEM Partnership Complaints Policy
- 15.5 GEM Partnership Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy
- 15.6 GEM Partnership Whistleblowing Policy

GEM Partnership Ltd Equality and Diversity Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure sets out GEM Partnership's approach to equality and diversity. GEM Partnership is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.
- 1.2 GEM Partnership aims to be an inclusive organisation, committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination.
- 1.3 At GEM, we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services.
- 1.4 We consider diversity to mean celebrating difference 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 which is beneficial not only for the individual but for GEM too.
- 1.5 We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The rights and obligations set out in this procedure apply equally to all employees, whether part time or full time on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as secondees, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.
- 2.2 You have personal responsibility for the application. As part of your employee induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with the GEM Partnership Equality and Diversity policy, ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with.
- 2.3 The GEM Partnership Equality and Diversity policy is also of particular relevance to directors, line managers and other employees concerned with recruitment, training and promotion procedures and employment decisions which affect others.

3 Expectations

- 3.1 Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. GEM Partnership will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of an individual's ("protected characteristics") under the Equality Act 2010 the Act) which are of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, or pregnancy or maternity political beliefs or membership or non-membership of a Trade Union or spent convictions and places an obligation upon all employee to respect and act in accordance with the policy.
- 3.2 Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated.
- 3.3 All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities in GEM Partnership. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.
- 3.4 No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. GEM Partnership is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment for all employees, learners, apprentices, candidates, temporary workers, clients and visitors.
- 3.5 If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination or harassment because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter

through GEM Partnership Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy or GEM Partnerships Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. For types of discrimination see GEM Partnership's Equality and Diversity policy.

4 Sexual Harassment Reporting and Protected Disclosures

- 4.1 GEM Partnership is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment and all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Employees, contractors, agency workers, learners, apprentices, candidates and other individuals connected with GEM Partnership are encouraged to report any concerns relating to actual or suspected workplace sexual harassment.
- 4.2 Disclosures relating to workplace sexual harassment may constitute protected disclosures under applicable whistleblowing legislation where the relevant legal criteria are met. Individuals who raise concerns about workplace sexual harassment in good faith, whether they are personally affected or are reporting concerns they have witnessed, will be treated fairly and with respect. Further guidance can be found within GEM Partnership's Sexual Harassment Policy, Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.
- 4.3 All complaints raised, whether informal or formal, will be logged and information reviewed by HR.
- 4.4 Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. GEM Partnership will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably.
- 4.5 Sexual harassment disclosures that qualify as protected disclosures under whistleblowing legislation will receive the protections afforded by law. Any employee or worker who subjects another person to retaliation, victimisation or detrimental treatment because they have raised, supported or participated in an investigation relating to workplace sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary action
- 4.6 However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under GEM Partnership's Discipline Policy.
- 4.7 A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under GEM Partnership's Discipline Policy.
- 4.8 Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.
- 4.9 **This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on GEM Partnership's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to GEM).**
- 4.10 We set out below some specific areas of application:
 - 4.10.1 Recruitment Selection for employment at GEM Partnership will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. Further detail is set out in GEM Partnership's Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy. Where possible, GEM will capture applicants' diversity demographics as part of its recruitment processes to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination.
 - 4.10.2 Training - You may be required to participate in equality, diversity, inclusion, anti-harassment, anti-bullying and sexual harassment prevention training from time to time. Managers may receive additional training to support the prevention, identification and management of discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the workplace.
 - 4.10.3 Promotion - All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics listed above. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers to promotion.
 - 4.10.4 During employment the benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to GEM employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

5 Summary

- 5.1 Equality and Diversity is at the heart of GEM partnership's values and it is expected the responsibility of every employee to uphold these values.