



DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Awdry Law is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. We are committed to the wellbeing of our people and the creation of a culture in which all colleagues are treated fairly and with respect in line with our values.

Our Values:

Everything starts with you: People Matter whether you are a client or part of our team.

Always driving forwards: We always show ambition and energy to achieve results.

Be brilliant: We create positivity, excellence and innovation

Every person, every time: We are consistent and reliable and give our best every time:

The aim is for our people to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each individual to feel able to give their best. Awdry Law, in providing services, is also committed against unlawful discrimination of clients or the public.

1. Aim of the Policy

What are the principles of dignity at work?

To define dignity at work we must first define dignity. This can be summed up as a personal sense of worth, value, respect, or esteem that is derived from one's humanity and individual social position; as well as being treated respectfully by others. Therefore, dignity at work combines this feeling with the appropriate level of 'diversity and equity, health and safety, merit, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination' procedures.

The aim of this policy is to promote dignity at work and the principle of maintaining a healthy, safe and enjoyable place to go about your employment. This would be the case for example, regardless as to whether an employee is being promoted or demoted; they should be supported in maintaining their dignity. It can only be achieved once each of these points is met:

- The office is free from bullying, harassment and victimisation
- All staff are considerate of each other and treat each other with respect
- Unlawful discrimination in any form is never experienced, nor tolerated
- All employees' skills and abilities are valued and championed

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies equally to all employees, managers and senior leadership and also to any casual workers, agency workers and consultants.

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3. Objectives of this policy

To ensure all forms of unlawful discrimination are opposed and addressed. This includes for example:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities

Awdry Law is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and providing and supporting a workplace where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the Dignity at Work policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and preventing bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.

All employees should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, clients, suppliers and the public.

4. What is Discrimination?

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, clients, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with clients, suppliers or other work-related contacts and on work-related trips or events including networking and social events).

The following are examples of discrimination (this is not an exhaustive list), all of which are prohibited under this policy, unlawful, and will not be tolerated within Awdry Law:

Direct discrimination; where a person is less favourably treated because of:

- age
- sex

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- marital status
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
- pregnancy
- religion, belief
- disability.

These are known as “**protected characteristics**” as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Indirect discrimination; where a requirement or condition applies to everyone but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group and cannot be justified. An example is a requirement to work full time which adversely affects women more than men because they generally have more childcare commitments than men so such a requirement would need to be justified.

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Third party harassment:

Unwanted conduct related to a particular Protected Characteristic takes place by a third party (who is not an employee) with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment can be physical (sexual or aggressive) verbal, written or unwanted gestures.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.

Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Discrimination does not always relate to the characteristic of the person themselves. It can also include the following:

Discrimination by association; where a person is treated less favourably because they associate with another person who possesses a particular Protected Characteristic.

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Perception discrimination; where a person is treated less favourably because others think they possess a particular Protected Characteristic.

Bullying: Awdry Law considers bullying to be unwanted behaviour that is either:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- An abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

Bullying can be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one off incident. It can happen face to face or remotely.

5. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. When recruiting or promoting, we will aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our workforce and provide equality of opportunity. Shortlisting [and interviewing] should be done by more than one person where possible. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are objectively assessed on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. [They should include a short policy statement on equal opportunities and the employer's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace and state that a copy of this policy will be made available on request.]

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport)

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before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Department or UK Visas and Immigration.

6. Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

7. Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

8. Development opportunities

We will make opportunities for training, development, and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

We will make decisions concerning staff based on merit (apart from when there are any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act). We will review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

9. Equality & Diversity monitoring

We will monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in order to encourage equality, diversity and inclusion, and to enable Awdry Law to meet the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

For further information on recruitment and selection, please go to [Intranet/People Hub/People Policies & Guidance/Recruitment](#)

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10. Clients

Awdry Law is generally free to decide whether to accept instructions from any particular client, but any refusal to act must not contravene the legislation listed in this policy.

11. Barristers, Expert Witnesses, and others

Barristers, expert witnesses, and others should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability and their selection must not contravene the Legislation listed above.

Clients' requests for a named barrister should be complied with, subject to Awdry Law's duty to discuss with the client the suitability of the barrister and to advise appropriately.

Awdry Law has a duty to discuss with the client any request by the client that only a barrister of a particular racial group or sex be instructed. Awdry Law will endeavour to persuade the client to modify instructions which appear to be given on discriminatory grounds and should the client refuse to modify such instructions the firm will cease to act.

12. Breaches of this Policy and Complaints

Awdry Law take seriously breaches of this policy and complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, clients, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of its work activities. Any breaches of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination and victimisation may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, or witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. If you believe you have been victimised for making a complaint or report of discrimination or have witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you should raise this through our Grievance Procedure.

We encourage the reporting of all types of potential discrimination, as this assists us in ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are adhered to in the workplace. However, making a false allegation in bad faith, or that you know to be untrue, will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

13. Agreement to follow this policy

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The Dignity at Work policy is fully supported by the Management Board and is in line with the Solicitors Regulation Authority guidance.

14. Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The Employment Rights Act 1996

15. Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on the intranet in the **People Hub/People Policies & Guidance**. This includes with whom an employee should raise a grievance or complaint – this is usually your line manager or Human Resources.

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