

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy

Velocys is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim of our workforce is to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. Furthermore, the Company in providing services is also committed against unlawful discrimination of clients and or third-party contacts.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

- Provide equality, fairness, and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time.
- Not unlawfully discriminate in line with the Equality Act 2010 in respect of protected characteristics of:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage or civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race, including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes the areas of:
 - Pay and benefits
 - Terms and conditions of employment
 - Dealing with grievances and discipline
 - Dismissal
 - Redundancy
 - Leave for parents
 - Requests for flexible working
 - Selection of employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities

Velocys Commitments

The Company commits to:

- Encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, as we believe they are good practice and make good business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - This commitment also includes training all employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the Company provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
 - All employees should understand they, as well as the Company, can be held responsible for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful

- discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, clients, suppliers, visitors, and any others in the course of the Company's work activities.
 - Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the Company's grievance and or managing misconduct and performance policies. ***Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice for Cause.***
 - 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.
 - Provide 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.
 - Base decisions concerning staff on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
 - Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.
 - Monitor the diversity of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting 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.
 - Such information may also be requested in questions raised at exit interviews to determine if an employee's reason for leaving is connected with equality of opportunity or discrimination. Any information obtained will only be used for these purposes.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. All forms of discrimination are unacceptable within Velocys and do not adhere to the company core values of treating people with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties with dignity and respect.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when one person treats another less favourably on the grounds of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. This could include but is not limited to decisions, comments, actions or omissions based on the grounds described above such as:

- Refusal to employ someone, dismissal, denying employment opportunities such as training and promotion.
- Speaking unpleasantly about or ignoring someone.
- Making racist or sexist jokes about someone's disability.
- Unfair allocation of work.
- Making assumptions about someone based on their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.



Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement, condition, rule, policy or practice which applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation).

Management responsibility

- Managers must abide by and raise awareness of the company's objective to ensure that employees, clients and people with whom individuals come into contact during the course of their duties are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Managers should ensure recruitment and selection of new employees, or selection of employees for promotion or training and development are undertaken without prejudice or bias, and ensure equal pay and benefits are given to employees according to the role they perform and their experience and abilities.
- Managers must make it clear to their employees that the equality, diversity and inclusion policy should be adhered to at all times. If there is an established breach of this policy then the manager should take appropriate action to ensure that this does not happen again.
- Managers have a duty to be aware if any member of staff is being discriminated against, victimised, harassed or bullied and to deal with it promptly and effectively.
- To fully understand this policy and be able to offer advice on the procedure when asked.
- Ensure that their own behaviour is consistent with this policy, and that they behave in a manner which upholds the dignity and respect of each employee both within their team and within the company as a whole.
- Be sensitive and receptive to the feelings of those who have made a complaint.
- Respond professionally and promptly to complaints in line with the processes laid out within this policy.
- Maintain complete confidentiality relating to all aspects of cases of harassment at all times. Information should only be shared between those who need to be involved in a complaint.

Employee's responsibility

Employees have an obligation to uphold the principals of this policy by:

- Treating all colleagues, applicants, clients and people with whom they come into contact during the course of their duties with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- Behaving professionally and in a way that is consistent with this policy.
- Employees should co-operate in any measures that are introduced by the company which are designed to ensure equal opportunity. All employees of the company have a responsibility to bring to the attention of their manager any concerns they have about the way they are being treated. It is also the duty of all employees to bring to the attention of their manager if they believe a colleague is being bullied, harassed, victimised or subjected to discrimination. This will allow the company the opportunity to investigate and address the issue.

Making an allegation

Any employee who makes an allegation of discrimination, bullying, victimisation or harassment or gives evidence in relation to a complaint will not be victimised as a result of their action. The company will investigate the allegation and take any appropriate action to resolve the complaint.

Any allegation made by an external job applicant about less favourable and unjustifiable selection methods will have their complaint investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken to resolve the complaint.



Complaints procedure

We recognise that employees who are experiencing discrimination do not often report it because they are embarrassed or worried about what will happen as a result of making a complaint.

The company has both informal and formal procedures to make sure that a complaint of unequal treatment, bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination is investigated and appropriate action taken. Any allegation will be taken seriously, responded to speedily, and handled with objectivity and sensitivity.

Making a complaint

The initial complaints procedure for employees is to discuss the unequal treatment or discrimination allegation with their manager, unless this person is the alleged perpetrator. In this instance the complaint should be raised with another relevant manager or the HR Director.

The manager will:

- Ensure a thorough investigation into the allegation is made by someone who is independent of the allegations and will handle the complaint with sensitivity, confidentiality, and impartiality.
- Explain how the complaint will be investigated e.g. meetings, 1-1 interviews, obtain witness statements, etc.
- Give an indication of likely timeframe of the investigation.
- Consider whether any immediate action needs to be taken depending on the nature of the complaint.
- Discuss the outcome of the investigation and any action that will subsequently be taken.

Whilst conducting the investigation every endeavour will be made to maintain confidentiality. However, any allegation made by an employee is likely to involve revealing the issues being raised to the alleged discriminator to ensure a fair and impartial enquiry.

Some individuals may find it difficult to raise a complaint by themselves; therefore a fellow colleague may accompany an employee or employees in meetings to provide moral support or to act as a witness.

If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint, then the allegation should be raised via the company grievance procedure.

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

