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Equality & Diversity Policy

Purpose

Riverside is committed to promoting equality and diversity by promoting a culture that actively values difference. We recognise that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.

This policy sets out Riverside's approach to equality and diversity. Riverside is committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training and development of employees, termination of employment, and to proactively tackling and eliminating discrimination.

Equality and diversity at Riverside

At Riverside, we consider that equality means eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for all associated with the company.

We consider diversity to mean respecting difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and nonvisible differences and by respecting this, everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual, but for the company too.

Scope

This policy applies equally to all employees, whether part time or full time, on a substantive or fixed-term contract, and also to associated persons such as; visitors, clients, customers, suppliers, agency staff, contractors and others employed under a contract of service.

You, as an employee, or as part of the Riverside team, have personal responsibility for the application of this policy. During your employee induction, you are expected to read and familiarise yourself with this policy to ensure that this policy is properly observed and fully complied with.

This 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.

Our commitment

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect and is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Riverside will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee or any other person associated with the company (as stated above) because of a protected characteristic:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) will also not be tolerated.

All employees will be encouraged to develop their skills to fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities at Riverside. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of skill and ability.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. Any person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Riverside will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under Riverside's Disciplinary Policy.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the company in meeting its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment, treat colleagues with dignity at all times and avoid discrimination.

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination 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. Alternatively, you may decide to raise the matter through Riverside's Grievance Procedure. For types of discrimination see the Annex to this policy.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, customers or any other person associated with the company are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under Riverside's current disciplinary procedure (RIV/HR/009).

Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

In addition to this, employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the company for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

When does this policy apply?

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 Riverside's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to Riverside).

The following points detail some specific areas of application:

a) Recruitment

Selection for employment at Riverside will be on the basis of skill and ability in line with the job description. Jobs are advertised with an equality and diversity statement as part of the recruitment process to promote the elimination of unlawful discrimination. Job descriptions are reviewed as required to ensure that they are relevant to the duties of each role.

b) Training

Riverside will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

Employees may also be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

c) Employee development

Employee training requirements will be identified through regular employee appraisals. All employees will be given the appropriate training to enable them to progress within the company and all promotion decisions will be made on suitability for the role.

c) Promotion

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of suitability for the required role, 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.

d) During employment

The benefits, terms and conditions of employment and facilities available to employees will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that access is not restricted by unlawful means and to provide appropriate conditions, where reasonable, to meet the special needs of disadvantaged staff.

e) Termination of employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

f) Disability Discrimination

if you have a disability, or develop a disability, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you should contact your line manager or HR to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty.

Your line manager may wish to consult with HR and our occupational health team about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment to not be reasonable and not workable, we will explain our reasons and aim to find an alternative solution where possible.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the company as necessary to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

Riverside treats personal data collected for reviewing equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection in accordance with its data protection & privacy policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the company's privacy notice on the company website.

ANNEX**The law – types of discrimination**

1. Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a job applicant because of their race.
2. Indirect discrimination is where there is a practice, policy or rule which applies to everyone in the same way, but it has a worse effect on some people than others. The Equality Act 2010 says it puts you at a particular disadvantage such that it would be a detriment of people who share that protected characteristic, compared with people who do not, with no justifiable reason.
3. Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity which are covered by direct discrimination provisions in the Equality Act 2010) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or is reasonably considered by that person to create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
4. Victimisation is the less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported another person's complaint.
5. Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and (according to guidance from the Government and Acas) pregnancy and maternity).
6. Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they do not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).