

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Langstone Construction Group is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for all to feel respected and valued.

We believe that a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion not only benefits our organisation but supports wellbeing and enables our people to work better because they can be themselves and feel that they belong.

We are committed to promoting a working environment based on dignity, trust and respect, and one that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

We ensure that our recruitment, promotion and retention procedures do not treat people less favourably because of their:

- disability;
- gender, gender identity or gender reassignment status;
- marital status;
- race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- age;
- civil partnership status;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- paternity;
- educational background;
- socio-economic background;
- caring responsibilities;
- part-time status; or
- fixed-term status.

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

We will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of our working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done. We will refuse requests for variations to working practices only if we have good reasons for doing so, that are unrelated to any protected characteristic. We will comply with our obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations and will also make reasonable adjustments to our working practices for individuals with a disability.

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About this policy

This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers, apprentices and agency workers. The policy also relates to job applicants.

The policy accompanies our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy and any other equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies adopted by the organisation.

Who is responsible for this policy?

Our board of directors (the board) has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law. Day-to-day operational responsibility Neil Phillpott, Director.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. Neil Phillpott has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. We provide training to all existing and new employees and others engaged to work for us to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the anti-harassment policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

We expect you, and every one of our people, to take personal responsibility for observing, upholding, promoting and applying this policy. Our culture is made in the day-to-day working interactions between us so creating the right environment is a responsibility that we all share.

Cultivating this culture does not happen by accident but requires ongoing commitment and nurturing. The reality is that we live in a world where areas of difference often translate to biases, challenges and barriers that may not be faced by others. And the more areas of difference a person brings, the more this effect can be compounded.

We expect you to treat your colleagues and third parties fairly and with dignity, trust and respect. Sometimes, this may mean allowing for different views and viewpoints and making space for others to contribute.

By embedding such values and constructively challenging inappropriate comments or ways of working, you can help us achieve and maintain a truly inclusive workplace culture. Any dealings that you have with colleagues, or third parties must be free from any form of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact Neil Phillpott.

Recommendations for change to this policy and suggestions for ways in which it might be improved may be made to Neil Phillpott.

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included. Without inclusion the benefits of diversity (such as creativity, innovation and problem solving) cannot be realised. Inclusion means:

- authenticity - feeling like you can be your authentic self at work
- belonging - feeling like you belong in your organisation and team
- voice - feeling like you have the opportunity to speak up

Each of us is unique, whether in terms of our background, personal characteristics, experience, skills or motivations. And we value our people for the differences they bring to the organisation. These differences - this diversity - is powerful.

Fostering an inclusive culture helps each of us to benefit from a wider range of these different perspectives, experiences and skills. We believe that this creates a happier, more productive working environment for us all.

To support this inclusive culture, this policy:

- outlines our commitment throughout the employment lifecycle to equality, diversity and inclusion and sets out how we put this commitment into practice;
- explains the behaviours we expect of our people in support of this commitment; and
- sets out the key steps we take to make our culture as inclusive as possible, including our diversity and inclusion framework and how we ensure equality of opportunity throughout the employment lifecycle.

We value differences and recognise that everyone, through their unique mixture of skills and experience, has their own valuable contribution.

Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain Protected Characteristics. These are:

- disability;
- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation;
- age; and
- pregnancy or maternity.

Discrimination can be intentional or unintentional and may occur directly, indirectly, by association, or by perception, as explained below.

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

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic compared with someone who does not have that characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay, or choosing not to recruit someone because they are disabled, and you think they "wouldn't fit in" to the team.

Indirect discrimination: where a policy, procedure or way of working that applies to everyone puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared with people who do not have that characteristic, unless there is a good reason to justify it. For example, requiring employees to have held a driving licence for 10 years may be indirect age discrimination, unless that requirement could be objectively justified.

Associative discrimination: where an individual is treated less favourably because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, for example because their partner is transgender (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

Perceptive discrimination: where an individual is treated less favourably 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).

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 (employers are legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that aspects of employment, or the employer's premises, do not put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage).

Harassment: this includes sexual harassment (conduct of a sexual nature) 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. Sexual harassment also includes less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Victimisation: retaliation against someone or treating another person detrimentally either because that person has made a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because they have supported someone else who has made such a complaint, for example by giving a witness statement that supports the allegations.

Bullying: There is no legal definition of bullying. However, we regard it as conduct that is offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, or an abuse or misuse of power, and usually persistent, that has the effect of undermining, humiliating or injuring the recipient. Bullying can be physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. It is not necessarily face to face and can be done by email, phone calls, online or on social media. Bullying may occur at work or outside work. If the bullying relates to a person's protected characteristic, it may also constitute harassment and, therefore, will be unlawful. You should refer to our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy for further information on our procedure for reporting bullying.

Recruitment and selection

We take reasonable and appropriate steps to encourage job applications from as diverse a range of people as possible.

Anyone making a decision about recruitment must not discriminate in any way and should challenge themselves, and other members of the recruitment selection panel, to make sure that any stereotypes, unconscious bias or prejudice do not play any part in recruitment decisions.

Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one, where possible. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

Vacancies will generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements will avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market.

The recruitment team will consider disability in advance of a recruitment campaign so that advertising, application forms and assessments, arrangements for interviews, job descriptions and employee specifications, and selection criteria are appropriate and as inclusive as possible. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job.

We will ask applicants at the outset if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made to the recruitment process. These may include ensuring easy access to the premises for an interview/adapting psychometric tests/replacing psychometric tests with an alternative option/providing an alternative to a telephone interview for a deaf candidate/providing a suitable chair for an interview with a candidate suffering from back problems.

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

Job applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with caution.

For example:

- Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

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) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from Neil Phillpott.

Training career development and conditions of service

Training needs will be identified through regular work discussions. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all of you who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

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 and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Gender

Everyone is fully and properly represented and supported through:

- challenging gender stereotypes;
- supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home;
- supporting employees who are having children; and
- taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after parental leave e.g. maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave.

Gender re-assignment

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Trans-gender status

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. The employer will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marital status

People are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

Race

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented through:

- challenging racial stereotypes; and
- understanding, respecting and valuing different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives.

Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- challenging age stereotyping; and
- recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

Religion and belief

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs (or lack thereof) and practices or philosophical beliefs by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution.

HIV

Discrimination against an employee or potential employee on grounds that they have, or are thought to have, HIV or AIDS is not acceptable, and confidentiality will be respected in line with the wishes of an individual with HIV or AIDS.

Sexuality

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- respecting different lifestyles; and
- challenging negative stereotypical views.

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Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term staff will 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.

Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, you do not have to tell us, however we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate. We understand that some people find it hard to discuss their disabilities and that disability can be invisible. Psychological safety, where people feel able to speak up about their experiences without fear of negative consequences, is paramount to ensuring disability inclusion. However, this is only possible if we treat people with dignity, trust and respect and we expect everyone to uphold these values.

We do not tolerate ableist language in our organisation. Ableist language is language that is negative, inappropriate or offensive towards people with a disability and may take the form of jokes or "banter". If you adopt such language, we will take action against you including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary Procedure.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager so that we can support you and to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser about possible reasonable adjustments to our premises or to aspects of your role, or to our working practices. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

For colleagues who are returning from long-term disability-related absence, we will support your return-to-work. This will be discussed with you on an individual basis and monitored to ensure that you receive the support that you need.

Support

If you have a disability, or you care for someone with a disability, and need emotional support or help with practical issues, please contact our nominated Employee First Aider.

You can also speak to your line manager at any time if you want to discuss a support need.

Data protection

We will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, including the processing special categories of personal data. All employee records will be maintained in confidence and in line with the provisions of the General Data

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Protection Regulations 2018. Any breach of confidentiality will be treated very seriously and dealt with under the organisation's Disciplinary Procedure.

Breaches of this policy

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy. Any employee who is found to have committed, authorised or condoned an act of discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying, we will take action against them including (for those to whom it applies) under our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

You should be aware that you can be personally liable for discrimination and harassment.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination 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 discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

This policy is not contractual and may be varied by the organisation at any time.



Neil Phillpott
Langstone Construction Group Ltd
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