



OUR POLICIES

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Why?

We recognise that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are vital to our success.

Laddering up to our '**Bring out the Best**' value, our aim is to make full use of people's talents and skills by creating an open and inclusive workplace culture where people can be free to be themselves no matter what their identity or background.

Every manager and employee has a personal responsibility for the implementation of this policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of the policy, or questions, should be addressed to the CEO, as should any requests for training.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Company's Dignity at Work Policy.

What We Do:

- We wish to ensure all our employees, potential future employees and those who work with us are supported in a positive way
- The company will not discriminate on grounds of sex, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origins, disability, age or perceived age
- The policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection*, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and to every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment
- The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees whether full time, part time, casual, temporary, seasonal or contract. The policy also applies equally to the treatment of the company's clients and suppliers
- We will promote awareness and understanding of EDI matters among our employees through policies, training, guidance and campaigns
- We will raise awareness of our policies and commitment to EDI with our clients, external suppliers and partners to encourage them to follow similar good practice
- We will ensure the Cirkle offices are as far as possible, welcoming and accessible to all
- We will assess the impact of policies and practices to identify, remove or mitigate any disadvantage to underrepresented groups
- When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, the company will consider carefully whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason why they are necessary
- All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities that they have. The company guarantees that the information provided on this form will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- The composition of the workforce and of job applicants will be monitored on a regular basis. Should inequalities become apparent, positive action may, if appropriate, be taken to redress the imbalance (for example - asking recruitment agencies to provide a diverse candidate shortlist)
- We will engage with employees in respect of changes which may affect their employment
- Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees on the basis of length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience
- We encourage all staff to participate in meetings as we value individual differences and contributions. Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. This is supported by our Dignity at Work policy which sets out behaviour that will not be tolerated. It clearly states procedures to follow and who to speak with if you feel you are a victim of such behaviour
- Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the company about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with the employee what "reasonable adjustments" to his or her job or working conditions or environment might assist him or her in the performance of his or her duties. The employee will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that he or she believes would be helpful. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the company to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee
- Any member of staff may use the complaints procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct (see Dignity at Work Policy)
- If the matter relates to sexual or racial harassment or harassment on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age, then the complaint may be raised directly with the CEO. The company is concerned to ensure that staff feel comfortable about raising such complaints



- No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice
- Where an employee is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct, then he or she may implement the company's grievance procedure. In this instance, the person who made the false accusation will be subjected to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances
- This policy will be monitored on a regular basis by the CEO. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely with a view to identifying measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy
- Breaches of this policy and the stand-alone Recruitment & Selection Policy will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary proceedings

*All recruitment agencies and employees involved in Cirkle's recruitment and selection process remain bound by Cirkle's Recruitment & Selection Policy – a copy of the current version can be obtained from the CEO. When engaging with external recruitment third parties, we will ensure that a shorter version of the policy, which clarifies Cirkle's equal opportunities guidelines, is provided. A longer, internal version includes further detail on Cirkle's internal recruitment & selection process, techniques and also an unconscious bias refresher. This is a live policy and the latest version can be provided to those involved in the recruitment process at the start of any new recruitment drive.

Training for those who are both new to the company and to recruitment will be given.

OUR POLICIES

DIGNITY AT WORK

Why?

We consider harassment, bullying or victimisation of any nature an unacceptable form of behaviour that will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All employees have a right to be treated, and have an obligation to treat others, with dignity and respect. This policy is designed to ensure that employees are confident, if they bring a complaint in good faith, that the matter will be dealt with according to the procedure and that they will not be subsequently victimised or disadvantaged in any way.

The Company recognises that informal channels can be a preferred means to preventing or stopping harassment, bullying or victimisation. Any reported incident will be regarded seriously and dealt with appropriately by the Company.

What We Do:

Cirkle has adopted a zero-tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour and is committed to providing a positive, supportive and collaborative environment free from harassment, bullying and victimisation by any person whether an employee, a client or an external third party.

Our aim is to uphold the dignity and respect of all employees and third parties including our clients who came into contact with the Company particularly in relation to the nine "protected characteristics" laid down in the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic and national origin)
- Religion or belief (including by way of example, ethical veganism)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Harassment - Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. Harassment which does not relate to a protected characteristic is not covered by the Equality Act.



Third-party Harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (although this does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by third parties such as clients. If an employee has any concerns or complaints with regard to third parties you must make your Line Manager and the CEO aware so that appropriate action can be taken.

We're a proud endorser of



In July 2019, the Company became an ambassador of the **timeTo** initiative which is focused on ending sexual harassment in the advertising and marketing industry and has committed to incorporating timeTo's Code of Conduct into all our policies and practices. All employees are provided with a copy of the code during their induction and should read the document carefully as they too are bound by the terms. In light of this, we feel that it is important to provide a specific reference to sexual harassment.

Sexual Harassment – sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a worker, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The crucial word is 'unwanted'.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Sexual comments which could be about a person's appearance or body parts
- Sexual jokes or questions about a person's sex life
- Suggestions that the professional position a person holds or achieves is the result of sexual attractiveness or activity
- Sharing sexually inappropriate images or videos such as pornography or obscene images
- Sending emails, texts, apps or social media messages, notes or letters with material of a sexual nature
- Promises in return for sexual favours
- Threats (of any types e.g. career damage) if sexual favours are not granted
- Unwelcome physical contact, including inappropriate touching such as patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against another person
- Sexual assault

We would like to make it clear to everyone that:

- It's never appropriate to initiate unwanted physical contact: touching legs, arms, hands, faces or intimate body parts
- It's never appropriate to send overly personal or suggestive communications to a colleague, whatever their level or role
- It's never appropriate to request or suggest sexual favours as a means to promotion, salary increases or for business gains
- It's never appropriate to hire or promote a person (or not to do these) based on their level of physical attractiveness
- It's never appropriate to verbally or otherwise sexually objectify anyone's body, by using innuendos, suggestive or lewd comments or otherwise
- It's never appropriate to ask personal or intimate questions about someone's clothing choices.
- It's never appropriate to ask someone about their sexual habits, sexuality, gender or push for them to share their sexual experiences
- It's never appropriate for someone in a junior role to be asked by someone in a senior role to visit their home, hotel room or other place of stay alone, nor is it appropriate for someone in a senior role to visit someone in a junior role in their place of stay, uninvited
- It's never appropriate to exploit or wield your power over others
- It's never appropriate to use a person's gender and perceived attractiveness as a way to impress clients and for business gains
- It's never okay to excuse someone's behaviour because they are an important customer, client or have seniority
- It's never okay to excuse someone's behaviour because they are held in high esteem e.g., they come up with big ideas, run a huge team, win new business
- It's never okay to excuse bad behaviour as 'banter'
- It's never okay to excuse someone's behaviour because:
 - that's 'just the way they are'
 - of their gender
 - of their sexual orientation, even if it's different to your own
 - the harassment wasn't physical
 - of impaired thinking due to drug or alcohol use

- It's never okay to excuse someone's behaviour because it was away from the office and in an environment such as:
 - pubs
 - parties and social occasions
 - business trips and overnight stays
 - award shows
 - festivals and conferences
- It's never okay to rely solely on non-verbal cues as consent for sexual behaviour; relying on face and body movements alone is not enough and dangerous. Get verbal consent

Bullying is defined as an abuse or misuse of power, usually by someone in authority to a subordinate. Bullying is more than a strong, firm or authoritarian management style. It is destructive, rather than constructive. It is criticism of a person rather than their mistakes. It publicly humiliates rather than privately corrects.

The intention or motivation behind such conduct is irrelevant. What counts is the recipient's perception of the behaviour and whether he/she considers it to be acceptable or not. The essential characteristic of harassment or bullying is that the action(s) is unwanted by the recipient and subjects them to fear, stress and anxiety. It is important that what one person sees as a joke or a friendly gesture may not be interpreted that way by another.

Such behaviour can affect health, work performance and personal life and can lead to absenteeism, poor performance and high staff turnover.

Victimisation is defined in the Equality Act as occurring when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so.

The Equality Act provides protection against victimisation for all the protected characteristics.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 also makes harassment potentially a criminal offence and gives the harassed party the right to legal redress.

Harassment, bullying and victimisation are classified as serious offences which may result in summary dismissal under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Responsibility of Employees

All employees have a personal responsibility to treat all colleagues, client and third parties with dignity and respect and take appropriate measures to ensure that bullying, harassment and victimisation does not occur.

In addition, employees who become aware of harassment, bullying or victimisation occurring should bring the matter to the attention of their manager and the CEO immediately for support and/or advice.

Responsibility of Managers

Managers should maintain appropriate levels of communication with and supervision of employees; providing information and acknowledging achievements. Managers should hold regular 121 meetings, team meetings and appraisal review meetings.

Managers should themselves demonstrate a high standard of behaviour and demonstrate to employees what behaviours are acceptable and expected at work.

Managers should help create a working environment in which employees feel able to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Managers have a responsibility to treat their direct reports fairly and with consideration to their dignity.

Every manager has an obligation to prevent harassment, bullying and victimisation (to include explaining and promoting this policy) and to take immediate action once it has been identified, whether or not a complaint has been made.

The CEO must be informed immediately of any allegations of harassment, bullying or victimisation, received either informally or formally.

It may not always be appropriate for a Manager to be involved with specific complaints. For example, if the complaint relates to the conduct of the Manager.

Acceptable behaviour

All employees are expected to:

- Treat all others with dignity and respect
- Conduct themselves professionally



- Not behave in a manner that could be offensive to others
- Be proactive in developing and maintaining effective working relationships
- Take appropriate action where there are difficulties in working relationships

Behaviour that is offensive to one individual may not be to another, but most of the time people are able to judge correctly how they should behave. Differences in opinion are to be respected, although there are occasions when behaviour can become undermining and destructive. On these occasions, employees should be entitled to point this out without becoming subjected to a violation of their dignity.

Unacceptable behaviour may constitute a pattern of repeated behaviours in which individual incidents are borderline but which taken together breach the grounds of acceptability. The behaviour does not need to be ongoing; a single event of unreasonable behaviour is enough for the employee to make a complaint.

There are some types of behaviours that could always be considered to fall below the threshold of acceptability. These include assault, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Unacceptable behaviours should not be confused with normal management authority carried out in a reasonable manner, including legitimate, constructive and fair criticism of employee performance and conduct.

Procedure for Dealing with a Complaint

An employee who feels that they are being subjected to harassment, bullying or victimisation may attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. In some cases, it may be possible and sufficient for them to explain clearly to the person(s) engaged in the unwanted activities that the behaviour is unwelcome, that it offends or makes them uncomfortable.

Some people are unaware that their behaviour is unacceptable and if this is clearly pointed out to them, the problem can often be resolved. It is important to raise issues as soon as possible after the event so that the details are still fresh in people's minds.

If the employee does not feel that they can resolve the matter informally, or in the event that the behaviour continues despite the concern being raised informally, the employee should raise their concerns through the Grievance Procedure.

Where, following a full and prompt investigation as part of the Grievance Procedure, there is found to be evidence that harassment, bullying or victimisation has occurred, the Company will instigate the Disciplinary Procedure.

Harassment is a serious offence which may result in summary dismissal.

It should be borne in mind that an employee who harasses another person with intent is committing a criminal offence, may be prosecuted under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Under this Act, intentional harassment is a criminal offence. Additionally, the harasser may be personally liable for damages if the victim makes a complaint of sexual, racial or disability harassment to an employment tribunal.

Malicious complaints of harassment or bullying or complaints not made in good faith will not be tolerated. False allegations may cause damage to the reputation of fellow employee and, as such will be dealt with as a serious offence under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Confidential Support/Counselling

Employee Assistance Programme

Confidential advice, support, information and telephone counselling 24/7 and face to face counselling available to all employees - 0800 028 1963 & quote The Cirkle Partnership Limited

NABS

For free, confidential and impartial advice and support, for anyone working in the advertising, marketing and media industry, call the NABS Advice Line on 0800 707 6607, 9am – 5.30pm on week days or email support@nabs.org.uk.

Wellbeing Warrior Amanda Smith (Office Manager) is Cirkle's NABS Ambassador.