



RUNDLE & CO LIMITED

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

If you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format, for example, Braille, large print or audio tape please contact:

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Equality & Diversity Policy

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Equality & Diversity Policy

Foreword

This document sets out our vision and objectives for promoting equality and diversity. This Policy will ensure a clear and consistent approach to promoting diversity and equality across the whole of our organisation.

“We want to be recognised and known as an inclusive organisation that represents and serves people as equals. We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances.”

We provide services for customers of local councils, who, as public bodies, have a wide range of legal duties to promote equality for their employees and customers. Rundle & Co Ltd is not directly covered by all of these public sector duties. However, our public sector clients do have legal responsibilities to make sure that their contractors: promote equality of opportunity; eliminate discrimination; and promote good relations between different groups of people when delivering services and employing people. As such, when delivering public sector contracts we are committed to ensuring that our services and employment practices meet the public authorities’ legal duties to promote equality, and that we adhere to the Equality Act 2010.



Christopher Stephen John Rundle

Rundle & Co Ltd

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Our Vision

We want to be recognised and known as an inclusive organisation with a workforce that reflects the diversity of the population we serve. We value our employees and customers as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. We will respond positively to the diverse needs of our employees and customers.

Our Objectives

1. To commit to working within the guidelines of the Equality Act 2010.
2. To ensure consistency in what we need to do to make our workplace a fair environment and to comply with the law.
3. To champion equality of opportunity and challenge all forms of discrimination in our workplace and in the delivery of our services.
4. To meet the individual needs of our customers and staff.
5. To have a workforce that reflects the diversity of the populations we serve and to promote the benefits of having a diverse workforce; and
6. When purchasing goods, services or facilities to use our spending power to influence suppliers and contractors to promote equality of opportunity.

The Policy Context

Appendix 1 sets out our Equal Opportunity Policy Statements and our overall aim to promote equality irrespective of all 'protected characteristics', race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, social class, pregnancy, maternity or age.

The law and good practice elsewhere influences the way we pursue our objectives. We will update our policy as and when necessary to meet new laws and good practice as they appear.

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Definitions – Protected Characteristics

Under the new Equality Act 2010 there are nine 'Protected Characteristics', these are:

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Marriage and civil partnership

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman.

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Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

Definitions - Discrimination

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favorably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below).

Discrimination by Association

Already applies to race, religion or belief and sexually orientation. Under the new Equality Act 2010 this is now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perception Discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. Under the new Equality Act 2010 this is now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if a person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Already applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership. Under the new Equality Act 2010 this is now extended to cover disability, gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if you can show that you acted reasonably in managing your business i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A *legitimate aim* might be any lawful decision you make in running your business or organisation, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful.

Being proportionate means being fair and reasonable, including showing that 'less discriminatory' alternatives have been looked at before any decision is made.

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Definitions - Harassment

Harassment is “**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**”.

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviors that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Third Party Harassment

Already applies to sex. Under the new Equality Act 2010 it is now extended to cover age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act makes you potentially liable for harassment of you employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as customers or clients. You will only be liable when harassment has occurred on a least two previous occasions, you are aware that this has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Definitions - Victimisation

Victimisation occurs 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. An employee is not protected from victimization if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

There is no longer a need to compare treatment of a complainant with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act.

Institutional Discrimination

We know that institutions as well as individuals can unlawfully and unfairly discriminate. An established organisation such as ours can operate, in effect, as any institution and so institutional discrimination is also of concern to us. We define institutional discrimination as:

- The collective failure to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of who they are;
- Processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping;

Not just actions taken by a person, organisation or partnership, but also actions **not** taken. This includes neglect, or services provided which do not meet the needs of different groups of employees or customers.

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Institutional discrimination can be unwitting through lack of thought, knowledge or planning. It can exist regardless of the good intentions of an organisation's individual employees or decision-makers.

We are committed to proactively identifying and removing any form of institutional discrimination from our organisation should it ever manifest itself.

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Roles and Responsibilities

Our Role as an Employer

We reaffirm our opposition to unfair discrimination or victimisation in recruitment, employment, or pay and our opposition to harassment of any employee. We will ensure that the selection, employment terms of contract, training, development and promotion are based solely on the criteria of merit and ability. No job applicant, employee or ex employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, religion¹, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities; social class; age or status as a refugee.

We will take robust disciplinary action against any employee found to be guilty of discrimination, victimization or harassment against another employee or a customer.

As we have a workforce of 149 we will monitor the following employment outcomes by race, gender and disability and report them in our annual report:

- Job Applicants
- Employees
- Disciplinarys
- Leavers
- Promotions
- Access to training and development

Our role as a Service Provider

We aim to provide services to all customers regardless of race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, caring responsibilities, social class or age.

We will make sure that our services are delivered equitably and meet the diverse needs of our customers by:

- **Assessing and Meeting Diverse Needs**

When planning and reviewing services we will research our customers' different needs to ensure that our services are able to cater for them with the highest standards possible;

When different needs are identified we will respond in a positive way as it provides us with an opportunity to improve access to our services;

- **Measuring and Reporting Performance**

Those of our goods, facilities, works or services that are identified as relevant to promoting equality will be monitored to ensure that different groups of people get equal access, outcomes and satisfaction.

¹ Except where there is a legally recognised Genuine Occupational Requirement

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Leadership and Responsibility for this Policy

It is crucial if we are to achieve our Equality Vision that we have strong leadership. The main areas of responsibility are shown below:

Board – Directors are responsible for approving the Equality & Diversity Policy and Plan as a ‘Key Decision’ document; and are responsible for overseeing the Policy and Plan implementation.

Directors take responsibility for obtaining advice on the range of policies relating to equality and diversity for overseeing and coordinating the company’s main policies and strategies, including this Policy and Plan.

Charlotte Gittins, Director, is the company’s lead officer on equality and diversity issues and monitors the progress the company makes against the objectives of its Policy and Plan.

To ensure that the company’s Equality and Diversity requirements are met, our policy is reviewed and any necessary improvements or updates made, at the quarterly meeting of our Quality Management Group.

Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring that their service and employment practices meet the objectives set out in this Policy and Plan; and

Employees are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of this Policy are met in their work and relationships with customers, colleagues and partners.

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Communicating this Policy

We will ensure that all employees receive a copy of this policy. It will also be made widely available to employees, customers and members of the public through our website, notice boards, etc.

We will provide training and written instructions to managers and supervisors covering:

- Promoting equality in recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal of staff; and
- Consideration of equality issues assessing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating services.

Breaches of this Policy

We have clear procedures that enable service users, candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel that they have been treated unfairly.

Customers who wish to report a breach of this policy should, in the first instance, contact Charlotte Gittins, Director, Rundle & Co Ltd, by telephone on 08456 585040, email: cgittins@bailiffs-uk.com or in writing to our office at: 53 Northampton Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9HB. We will ensure that our Complaints Policy is used to report your comments or complaint.

Employees who wish to report a **breach of this policy should, in the first instance, contact Charlotte Gittins, Director**, and their union representative, should they have one. In such instances our internal complaints procedure will be activated. Copies of this are available at **53 Northampton Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9HB, or from the online training folder available to all staff.**

We will take robust disciplinary action against any employee found to be guilty of discrimination, victimization or harassment against another employee or a customer.

Implementing and monitoring the Policy

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Rundle & Co Ltd has a strategic equalities planning and evaluation framework which is adapted by each service area to respond to the specific services that are provided. Each area will have an equalities action plan with specific targets and performance indicators aimed at reducing potential barriers to fair access and provision of service.

Employment and service related equality outcomes will also be regularly reported on at the request of our clients.

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Appendix 1- Equal Opportunity Policy Statements

Generic Statement

Rundle & Co Ltd is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to a policy of treating all its employees and job applicants equally.

It is our policy to take all reasonable steps to employ and promote employees on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion² or belief; age; marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

We will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with the company to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper discrimination.

Serious breaches of this policy will be treated as gross misconduct.

Employees must not harass or intimidate other employees on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; sex; age; pregnancy and maternity or marriage and civil partnership status.

Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Employees should draw the attention of their immediate superior to suspected discriminatory acts or practices. Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of discrimination with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, or provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Sources of Recruitment

The recruitment process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of experience and qualifications.

² Except where there is a legally recognised Genuine Occupational Requirement

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Advertisements

Recruitment publicity will positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people.

When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, the company will, as far as reasonably practicable:

- Ensure that advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants from gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Avoid prescribing any unnecessary requirements which would exclude a higher proportion of a particular gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion³ or belief; age; caring or partnership status.

Avoid prescribing any requirements as with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees of any particular with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

New employees will not be recruited solely on the recommendation of an existing employee;

There will be no setting of age limits as a matter of general recruitment policy and all policies will be assessed to ensure that they are not discriminatory in terms of age.

Selection Methods

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. The employer will ensure that this policy is available to all staff and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.

The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for the job in question.

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Selection Tests

Selection tests, which are used, will be limited to questions relating to the particular job and/or career requirements. The tests will measure the individual's actual or inherent ability to do or to train for the position. Thus, questions or exercises on matters, which may be unfamiliar to persons of a particular with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, will not be included in the tests if they are unrelated to the requirements of the particular job.

The tests that are used will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

Applications and Interviewing

All applications will be processed in the same way.

The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria, and of the need for their consistent application.

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two people.

All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job, for example if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel, this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Promotion, Transfer and Training

Rundle & Co Ltd will ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction of all supervisory staff so as to familiarise them with the employer's policy on equal opportunities. It is intended that this will help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity within the business units for which they are responsible.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training, whether induction or promotion training, or for transfer to other jobs, will be instructed not to discriminate on with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The Board of Directors will review the promotional system regularly in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers predominantly of one with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, is excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other

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benefits, the promotional system will be reviewed to ensure that there is no unlawful, indirect discrimination.

Where general ability and personal quality are the main requirements for promotion to a post care will be taken to consider favourable candidates of all with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, or ex-offenders, with different career patterns and general experience.

Terms of Employment, Benefits, Facilities and Services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed on a regular basis, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Grievance, Disputes and Disciplinary Procedures

All allegations of gender or racial discrimination or discrimination on the grounds of with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily.

Rundle & Co Ltd will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints from members of a particular with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity, on the assumption that they are over sensitive about discrimination.

Monitoring Equal Opportunities

Rundle & Co Ltd regularly monitors the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved.

Rundle & Co Ltd Examines:

- The gender and ethnic composition of the work force of each department and changes in distribution over periods of time, including monitoring the composition of the workforce with regard to disabled employees;
- The selection decisions for recruitment, promotion, transfer and training, according to the with regard to gender (including gender reassignment); race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity of candidates, and the reasons for those decisions.

Rundle & Co Ltd will regularly review the selection criteria and personnel procedures to ensure that they do not include requirements or conditions, which constitute, or may lead to, unlawful indirect discrimination.

We will promote equality, work to eliminate discrimination and promote good relationships between employees and customers, regardless of their: with regard to gender (including gender reassignment);

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race; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; sex; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity.

Specific Statements

In addition to the generic statement we wish to state that, with regards to:

Disability

We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people have equal access to our goods, facilities and services and employment opportunities.

Carers

We will encourage the promotion of flexible employment practices to assist employees who are carers.

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Appendix 2 – Relevant legislation

The following current and impending legislation influences this policy:

- Asylum & Immigration Act 2008
- Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004
- Children's Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation and Religion and belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Relations Act 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Equal Pay Act 2010
- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Human Rights Act 2000
- Nationality, Immigration & Asylum Act 2002
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Race Relations Act (Amendment) Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Sexual Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief (Goods, Facilities and Services) Regulations 2007
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Work & Families Act 2006