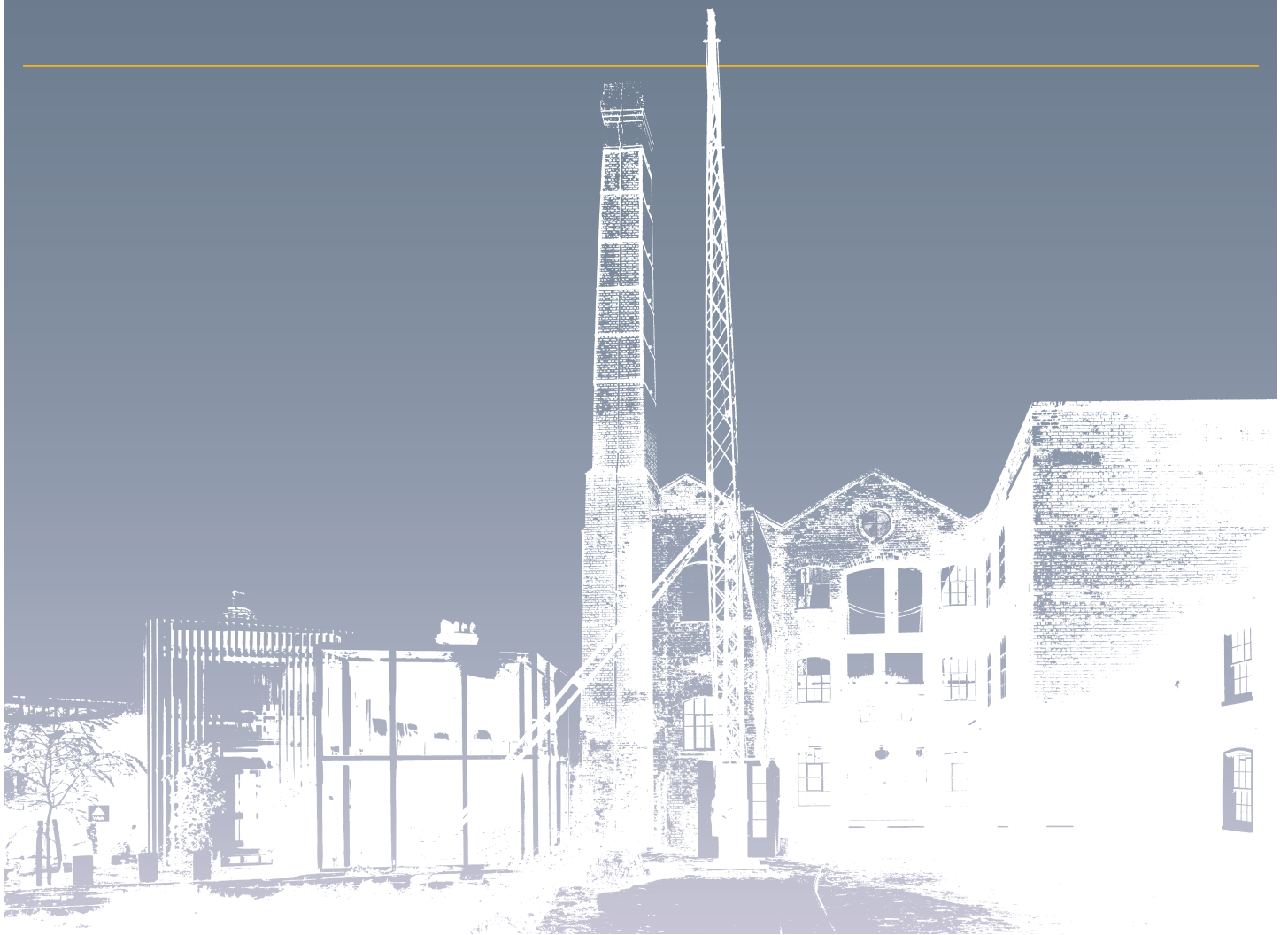




Our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Pollard Thomas Edwards architects
revised Nov 2010



PTEa

Pollard Thomas Edwards architects



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Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

1.00 Statement of Policy

1.01

This is Pollard Thomas Edwards architects' statement of Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. It forms part of the contractual obligations of each member/employee of PTEa and our commitment to all other parties eg. clients.

1.02

PTEa accepts that in society certain groups or individuals have been and are denied equal opportunities. The areas of discrimination that the policy specifically aims to cover are: race, ethnic and national origins, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability and sickness, HIV/AIDS, domestic circumstances, age, class, religion, ethical beliefs, politics and spent convictions of ex-offenders. This list is not exhaustive.

1.03

PTEa accepts the statutory requirements laid down in the Race Relations Acts and Amendments, Employment Equality Regulations, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act, Employment Equality Act, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, Equality Act 2010 and the Age Discrimination Act. In addition PTEa accepts the relevant code of practices and regulations to eliminate all discrimination.



2.00 Why does PTEa have an Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy?

2.01

An effectively implemented Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy helps PTEa to:

- Provide an environment conducive to the promotion of fair and equal opportunities to all staff
- Ensure fair treatment for all job applicants and existing members of staff
- Ensure fair treatment for all others with whom we have contact e.g. clients and contractors
- Make the best possible use of our existing and potential workforce
- Improve employment practices and staff morale
- Attract, develop and retain the good quality staff who are essential for achievement of our business objectives
- Avoid unlawful or unfair discrimination

2.02

Why is Equal Opportunities and Diversity important within PTEa?

Equal Opportunities and Diversity are an integral part of good management practice, aimed at developing people to the fullest extent possible for the good of the organisation and themselves. Equality of opportunity and Diversity can raise morale and improve employee and client relations.

PTEa believes that it is in everyone's best interests to ensure that the experience, talents and skills available throughout this organisation are considered when employment and/ or development opportunities arise.

The UK is a multi-racial society in which women (including pregnant women or those on maternity) account for almost half the working population. Increasingly it is recognised that people with disabilities can make a full contribution to working life. By ignoring these facts, PTEa runs the risk of missing out on the talent and skills of a large percentage of society. The company is unlikely to maximise its potential as a business unless it maximises the use of available talent in the community regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or marital status.

2.03

What has it got to do with me?

Everyone has a right to fair and dignified treatment. This means that no-one will be discriminated against nor harassed. The contribution of everyone will be valued and everyone will be treated purely on their merits. Everyone must act fairly, within PTEa policy and the law. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

2.00 Why does PTEa have an Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy?

2.04

PTEa's Commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity

PTEa is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to building a business that makes full use of the talents, skills and experience, and different cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic and diverse society, and where people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their potential regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or marital status.

PTEa will use its best endeavours to appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability. Our aim is to be fair to everybody and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives more or less favourable opportunities or treatment on the grounds of:

1. Age - PTEa is committed to adhere to the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006. Age diversity within the organisation is promoted and valued through challenging age stereotyping and recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce. PTEa offers development programmes open to all ages and individuals who wish to improve on their technical and non-technical skill range.
2. Gender reassignment / Sexual orientation / Marital status / Sex - All women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organisation. PTEa is committed to supporting employees in balancing their life and work at home and supporting employees who become pregnant and taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity/paternity leave.
3. Disability - The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the organisation through focusing on what people can do rather than what they cannot, PTEa will make appropriate adjustments in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full career potential. PTEa will make reasonable changes to overcome physical and non-physical barriers that make it difficult for disabled staff to carry out their work. Job applicants with disabilities have an equal opportunity to be selected for employment, trained and promoted in their career development.
4. Race / Colour / Ethnic or National Origin / Nationality (subject to nationality rules) / Religion or Religious Belief - Information on the ethnic background, nationality, religion or religious belief of each staff member and applicant for employment, promotion and training will be collected and analysed to monitor each stage of the recruitment process.



2.00 Why does PTEa have an Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy?

2.05

PTEa's Communication, Involvement and Responsibility:

The HR department and team leaders have special responsibility for implementation of the policy in recruitment, selection, training, promotion, planning, etc. The PTEa workforce has a personal responsibility to adhere to the policy and must not discriminate on grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or religious belief, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or marital status.

PTEa publicises the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy to employees via recruitment and induction literature, monthly company meetings, the Intranet, staff notice boards and emails. All procedures are subject to an annual review and PTEa publish statistics on the company's workforce on the PTEa website. We also ask people at their annual review whether they have experienced any form of discrimination.

2.06

Evaluation of the Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy:

The effectiveness of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy will be reviewed as and when required. PTEa endeavours to ensure that its Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy is successful in the promotion of equality and diversity – for example, through employee attitude surveys and by setting targets to effect continuous improvement and guard against complacency.

2.07

Monitoring the Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy:

PTEa monitors its employee statistics in terms of sex, ethnic minority, nationality and disability, all of which is published and available for viewing on the PTEa website.

Any changes or additions to the Equal Opportunities and Diversity policy will be communicated to all staff members and the updated version will be made available via PTEa's intranet. If the situation arises that PTEa requires advice on equal opportunities and diversity issues it will contact the relevant advisory body.



3.00 Employment, recruitment and career prospects

3.01

All job applicants and employees have a right to equal opportunity and treatment in employment.

3.02

No applicant or employee will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not strictly job related, or by assumptions and preferences which are discriminatory.

3.03

Where appropriate and where permitted under relevant legislation, employees from under-represented groups will be given encouragement to achieve equal opportunity within the organisation.

3.04

PTEa will endeavour to make the working environment accessible to people with disabilities.

3.05

PTEa will identify and target groups, which are currently under-represented in the office, prior to each round of recruitment.

3.06

To ensure that the recruitment procedure is as impartial as possible PTEa will undertake the following:

- (a) Job advertisements will appear in both general press and press likely to attract/encourage applications from people that are traditionally discriminated against and/or under represented. A list of papers will be drawn up to help fulfil this aim. This list will be updated with each recruitment.

A statement will be included that we encourage applications from people that are traditionally discriminated against eg. black and minority ethnic peoples, people with disabilities etc. A sentence will be incorporated in advertisements to undertake the provision of further information on the accessibility of the office.

- (b) Job and people specifications will be related to objective job criteria only, which are clearly set out with a pre-set method of assessment. Job specifications will include only qualifications and experience that are directly relevant to the particular job.
- (c) Short listing will be based on evaluating essential and desirable skills, knowledge, and experience.
- (d) Interviews will be based on the same criteria as shortlisting. Where possible the composition of the interview panel will remain unchanged throughout a particular interview cycle. Candidates will be asked questions which relate to specific requirements of the job, skills, knowledge and experience and assessed against agreed criteria. Candidates should be advised of when they will be told whether or not they are to be offered a job. A job offer or rejection will be confirmed in writing. If further information is required on grounds for rejection this should be readily extractable from the assessment system.



4.00 Service provision

4.01

PTEa is committed to promoting equality of treatment and preventing discrimination in relation to the services it offers. No other parties - clients, user groups, residents, consultants, contractors etc - shall receive less favourable treatment than another in their service provision offered.

4.02

PTEa believes that in providing an effective service it is essential to eliminate discrimination and promote good relations.

5.00 Key concepts explained

There follows a brief explanation of some key equal opportunities concepts.

Discrimination

Discrimination is unequal treatment of an individual because of their membership of a particular race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or religious belief, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age or marital status. It may be direct, for example, refusing to send someone on a training course because they are married or have children. It may be indirect, for example, declaring a post as being suitable only for a full-time member of staff without proper justification (that means establishing the need for a full-time member of staff rather than part-timers). Discrimination may be subtle and unconscious. It may not be easy to identify. For example, discrimination sometimes results from general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of particular groups or individuals, which are allowed to influence the treatment of staff or job applicants. Without appropriate awareness and safeguards, discrimination may occur in any area of recruitment and employment including:

- Inappropriate questioning at interview
- Inappropriate appointment to post
- Allocation of volumes and/or type of work
- Transfer decisions
- Promotion and progression opportunities
- Annual leave allocation
- Special leave requests
- Application of disciplinary action

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may involve unwelcome sexual comments or innuendo, looks and gestures, displays of pin-ups or physical contact by one individual aimed at another, and which is only directed at that other person because of their sex. Sexual harassment cannot be dismissed as a 'bit of harmless fun'. It can lead to an uncomfortable and alienating working environment.

Racial Harassment

Racial harassment is offensive or hostile behaviour, which has the purpose or effect of creating discomfort, distress, exclusion or isolation and is based upon someone's race (colour, nationality or ethnic origins) or is directed at them because of their race. If the comment or behaviour is offensive to the individual, it will amount to racial harassment.

Harassment / Bullying

As with sexual or racial harassment, any form of harassment or bullying will have the effect of causing undue stress on individuals and of demotivating them. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and serves to undermine the good team spirit which PTEa wishes to encourage. Offensive or hostile behaviour or comments aimed at an individual because s/he is disabled, will also be harassment.

Resolving Problems

Everyone must be sensitive to the effects their words and actions have on their colleagues and need to ensure that their attitudes towards others carry no trace of discrimination which can affect working relationships, behaviour or judgment. Staff who are experiencing or are concerned about discrimination or harassment should discuss the problem with their Team Leader or the HR Department who must take appropriate action to try to resolve it, if possible.

Managers should be aware of any problem developing at an early stage and take corrective action to ensure that the situation is resolved in a conciliatory and effective manner and that staff do not feel excluded.

Training

PTEa Equality Training for All Employees

PTEa considers that equality issues are relevant in all the training that we undertake. This means that staff that who are being trained in recruitment, reviews and appraisals, supervision, resource allocation, and so on, are made aware of the equality issues relating to those tasks.

In addition there are occasions when specific equality training is necessary. For instance, PTEa make all employees aware of our equality policy and what it means for them as employees. New employees also benefit from equality training and existing staff receive periodic refresher training. Our Equality Policy is published on the PTEa intranet and is available at all times to all staff.

Training Goals

PTEa has a workforce which is truly diverse, and it is essential that every one of our employees feels comfortable and appreciated at work. Thus, the goal of our training is to ensure that every employee at every level feels like a valued member of the PTEa team. From the highest level, PTEa encourages employees to strive for their goals irrespective of anything other than ability to perform the job. We measure the impact of training through post-training questionnaires and feedback from interviewees etc. The PTEa action plan can also highlight the need for extra training.

Who do we train?

All employees within the organisation receive equality training, ensuring that it makes sense to all employees regardless of level. Training is provided by our HR Manager, who also regularly audits our policy implementation and understanding. The HR Manager has received CIPD registered training in Diversity and Equal Opportunities and reports directly to the Executive Board.

Outline PTEa equality training programme

- 1 The PTEa approach to equality and why it is important
- 2 What our equality policy means in practice; dealing with relevant facts dispelling various myths about quality challenging stereotypes.
- 3 The business case for equality
- 4 The law and what this means in practice
- 5 The roles and responsibilities of staff in making the policy work
- 6 Relations with co - workers and dealing with harassment and bullying
- 7 Written material is given to all staff which reinforces the training
- 8 Specialist training for staff who recruit, select, appraise, supervise, etc, on the practical application of equality principles in these areas.
- 9 The opportunity for employees to raise concerns.