

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The WUN (Womens Utility Network) Ltd believe that everyone that works for us and engages with us should expect a welcoming, diverse and inclusive environment free from harassment, prejudice or discrimination.

We want all employees and potential employees, members and future members, volunteers and contractors, board members and affiliates, suppliers and partners, to feel supported and empowered to be their authentic selves and given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

We want those we serve and do business with to feel inspired to emulate and embed an inclusive and diverse working culture.

All employees, whether they are part-time, full-time, voluntary or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. We will work to recruit candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to help us build a truly diverse talent pool and all employment opportunities including promotion, training, participation or any other benefit, will be made on the basis of skills and ability. Our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is guided by the principles set out in the Equality Act 2010, which provides the legal framework for protecting individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Act requires organisations to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people. These principles underpin our EDI policy and shape the way we work with our members, partners and the wider community.

This policy sets out our commitment to providing equality and fairness in the way we employ and operate, ensuring we do not provide less favourable facilities or treatment on the grounds of our identity and beliefs, including age, caring responsibilities, disability, family situation, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, the effects of the menopause or trade union activity.

Sexual Harassment Prevention: Effect from 26 October 2024, the change to the law made by the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act, introduces a new legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers (the 'preventative duty'). WUN is committed to the cultural change that is associated with this law change and will take reasonable steps to safeguard our employees and potential employees.

Equality is the state of being equal. Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of any protected characteristic, where they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or any other dimension that may define them.

Equity means being fair and impartial. Equity means recognising that different groups or individuals may need different support or opportunity to reach equality.

Diversity is the state of being diverse and having variety. Any factor that can be used to differentiate groups and people from each other. It encompasses both the visible and invisible, such as background, personality, experience, skills, ethnicity. Our diversity can come from characteristics we're born with, experiences we've had or choices we've made. It is the "what" that makes up a company's workforce.

Gender refers to the range of characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Gender often relates to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones and is broader than the biological definition of 'sex' contained in the Equality Act. Please refer to Stonewall's List of LGBTQ+ terms for further information about some of the common terms used to talk about gender identity.

Inclusion means that everyone, regardless of who they are or their characteristics, is included, welcomed and valued. It is the "how it feels" to be part of a company's workforce. An inclusive working environment is one where all employees are respected and valued for their distinctive characteristics and have the opportunity to develop, participate and contribute.

Discrimination is where a person is treated less fairly than another person due to their protected characteristic. Discrimination can be direct, or indirect. Indirect discrimination may occur when a company policy or practice places a particular demographic group at a disadvantage when compared with others not in that group.

Harassment is behaviour or speech which makes someone feel intimidated or offended, or which has the effect of violating that person's dignity. This can happen face to face, by phone or in writing.

1. Purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, voluntary, part-time or full-time

2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:

- pay and benefits
- terms and conditions of employment
- dealing with grievances and discipline
- dismissal
- redundancy
- leave for parents
- requests for flexible working
- selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

2. Our commitments

WUN commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense
2. Proactively raise awareness of benefits of working with and learning from people with different life experiences from our own
3. Create an environment that promotes dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all are recognised and valued.
4. Not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy
5. Encourage and support anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so that we can take appropriate and corrective actions. Concerns should be raised through the Executive Director (karen@thewun.co.uk) or through a member of the board (www.thewun.co.uk/about/meet-the-board/). All concerns will be treated in confidence, investigated fairly and addressed without fear of victimisation.

6. Regularly review our practices and procedures so that fairness is maintained at all times