

Equality & Diversity Policy

Watson Martin promotes equality of opportunity and recognises that discrimination is unacceptable. This applies in the recruitment, selection, training and promotion of all employees and associates and all those who use our services.

Promoting equality of opportunity means that everyone is treated solely on the basis of competence and merit, regardless of age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnic, racial or religious background or disability considerations. This helps create a culture and ethos where all feel valued and empowered, regardless of the many ways that people are different.

We believe that a key factor in business success is promoting and embedding equality and diversity in our culture and practices and attracting staff, learners and customers from all sections of society. A more diverse workforce brings a wider range of individual strengths, experiences and perspectives.

The Equality Act 2010 introduces the term 'protected characteristic' to refer to aspects of a person's identity explicitly protected from unlawful discrimination. Our aim is to ensure that no employee, job applicant, learner or potential learner receives less favourable facilities or treatment on grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, dependents or age or are placed at a disadvantage by imposed conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with UK equality legislation and our other external obligations including: equality standards set by contracts, regulatory requirements, accreditations and good practice schemes.

Those who work and learn at Watson Martin are expected to abide by this policy. This includes staff, learners, employers, visitors and associates. All employees and associates are expected to act in such a way as to foster a climate of equal opportunity within the organisation. Watson Martin will ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity, including in respect of learners and potential learners.

Employers are expected to have their own equality and diversity policies in place, including those associated policies.

Watson Martin will provide appropriate training for staff and its' implications for teaching and learning, including paying due regard to the policy when designing learning materials and delivering training and will actively promote British values to help:

- Identify and protect learners vulnerable to extremist ideologies
- Create 'safe spaces' for dialogue and discussion
- Provide opportunities to challenge views and bring a 'counter-narrative'

- prepare learners to live and work In Britain's complex multicultural society

Disability

Watson Martin attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people. Under the terms of this policy, we will:

Make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or associate who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours.

Give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs or places on our programmes, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job or undertake the programme.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct which affects people's dignity. It encompasses unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which denigrates, ridicules or is intimidating. It is for individuals to decide what behaviour is offensive or unwelcome. People have different perceptions about this and behaviour that one person may not find offensive could be so to someone else.

The policy applies equally to everyone working for Watson Martin: it applies internally and in our dealings with learners, external customers and/or members of the public.

Dealing with Unfair Treatment or Harassment

If you feel that you are being subjected to unfair treatment or harassment you may attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. In some cases it may be possible and sufficient for you to explain clearly to the person engaged in the unwanted activities that the behaviour is unwelcome, that it offends or makes you uncomfortable.

If the situation cannot be resolved informally then you have the right to pursue your complaint formally via the Complaints Procedure.

Access to Training and Fair Assessment

We will make necessary adaptations to the process in order to accommodate any learner or potential learner with special needs. This is to ensure that all learners have equal access to training and fair assessment. In practical terms examples of this could entail:

- Using a diverse range of examples and images in all learning delivery
- Meeting candidates at their preferred location
- Flexibility in meeting times to accommodate work/life balance issues

- Recommending the use of voice activated software for anyone with dyslexia
- Requesting the Standards in large print, Braille or audio version, if required.

Watson Martin has a robust Safeguarding Policy which supports all learners and ensures an environment which is free from all forms of discrimination. Watson Martin works in accordance with the Prevent agenda and is committed to ensuring all learners are aware that behaviours and activities associated with discrimination, harassment and extremism will be promptly addressed.

Equality and diversity will be introduced throughout key stages of the apprenticeship, which includes:

- Apprentice induction
- Line Manager induction
- 1:1 meetings with Advisor
- Progress reviews with the apprentice and their line managers
- Apprentice Satisfaction Survey

Recruitment of Ex-offenders

Under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, The Code of Practice outlines that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly. DBS applicants should not be discriminated against because of a conviction or other information revealed. The below policy statement has been taken from the DBS “Sample policy statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders” Version 2.1.

- As an organisation assessing applicants’ suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Watson Martin complies fully with the DBS code of practice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. Watson Martin undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Watson Martin can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Watson Martin are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended) and where appropriate Police Act Regulations (as amended), Watson Martin can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.

- Watson Martin is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- Watson Martin actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. Watson Martin selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Watson Martin ensures that all those in Watson Martin who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. Watson Martin also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, Watson Martin ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Watson Martin makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and makes a copy available on request.
- Watson Martin undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

As part of our commitment to implementing this policy, we undertake statistical monitoring of all applicants and learners. In particular we monitor achievement in order to highlight trends so that appropriate action can be taken to address any issues identified. It is stressed that this information is gathered solely as part of Watson Martin's commitment to equal access and is subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

Responsibilities of Directors

Directors have an obligation to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying and to take immediate action once it has been identified, whether or not a complaint has been made.

Allegations of harassment or bullying, received either informally or formally through the Grievance Procedure for employees or through the Appeals process for learners, must be dealt with promptly and sensitively.

Directors must take care to ensure that they do not pre-judge situations based on their own sexual or racial attitudes and perceptions.

Directors will ensure training about the policy and what it means in practice occurs at least annually on an all-employee training day and will review commitment to it through the performance management aspect of the quality assurance and evaluation process.

Responsibilities of all Employees

Whilst the responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with management, the attitude of staff is crucial to the successful operation of the policy. In particular, all employees should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements including training;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other employees or learners on the grounds specified in the policy;
- ensure learners understand the Policy and what to do if they have any concerns about how they are being treated in relation to it;
- pay due regard to the policy in all dealings with learners including training delivery
- ensure training delivery is used as an opportunity to actively promote equality & diversity and bring the policy to life for learners
- challenge any incidents of prejudice or discrimination and inform their manager of these and if they become aware of any other discriminatory practice.
- use appropriately inclusive language and behave in a way that will uphold the dignity of staff, learners, and stakeholders.

Watson Martin's Equality and Diversity Policy is reviewed and updated annually.



Heather Watson, Director, Watson Martin Limited (August 2021)