

Equality Policy and Guidelines

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1. About this Policy

This policy applies to all employees including temporary (fixed term), agency staff and consultants and outlines the commitment of the Avant Homes staff and consultants and outlines the commitment of the Avant Homes Group in encouraging equality and diversity among its workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The company values individual and cultural diversity at all levels in our workplace and we are committed to providing equal opportunities to people at all stages of their employment.

The purpose of this policy is to;

Provide equality, fairness and respect for all our employees whether temporary, part time or full time;

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 (gender) and sexual orientation;

Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

2. Equality

The company is committed to creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes ensuring all employees are aware of their responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help the company provide equal opportunities in employment and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All employees should understand that they, as well as the company as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, sub-contractors, customers, suppliers and the public.

The company takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, sub-contractors, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the company's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the company's disciplinary procedures and/or grievance procedures and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

In addition, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. Harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

The company also commits to make opportunities for training and development available for all employees, where they will be encouraged to develop their full potential, so talents and resources are fully utilised.

Decisions concerning employees will be based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and expectations allowed under the Equality Act).

The company will review employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

The company will monitor the make-up of the workforce in respect of information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity as set out within this policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy is working in practice.

3. Breach of the Policy

The Company takes incidents of all types of discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation very seriously.

If an employee believes that they may have been disadvantaged in contravention of this policy or they believe that they may have been harassed, bullied or victimised on any of the unlawful grounds listed and this cannot be resolved informally, they are encouraged to raise the matter through the formal grievance procedure.

If the Company or relevant party (as appropriate) believes that it is appropriate to preserve the anonymity of an individual, then that individual's anonymity will be preserved. The Company will determine whether anonymity is appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Any breach of anonymity, once granted, may give rise to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Carrying out these duties in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner does not constitute an act of harassment, victimisation, discrimination or bullying.