

# THRINGS

SOLICITORS

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the commitment of the Firm towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, ensuring it offers equal opportunities and prevents discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any of our employees, Partners, contractors, or external parties such as clients or suppliers.

## 2. IMPORTANCE OF EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At Thrings we believe that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is pivotal to the success and culture of the Firm. By valuing everyone as individuals and ensuring that we recognise, encourage, respect and provide opportunities for all, this will promote building successful relationships, good working practices and achievements in line with our Firm strategy.

A diverse workforce adds innovative perspectives, styles and approaches to our firm. It helps us better service our clients with different languages, cultural or religious influences.

Ensuring that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles are followed is not just about meeting the legal standards set, but about truly valuing each other and growing our Firm by appreciating, respecting and protecting each other's differences. Therefore everyone working here is tasked with the important role of preventing unlawful discrimination in all of their relationships, with colleagues, clients and with others and creating an ethical and respectful working environment.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### 2.1 Equality

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal chance to take up opportunities and also to make full use of the opportunities on offer and to fulfil their potential. Regardless of where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

### 2.2. Diversity

Diversity is about recognising difference and understanding and respecting those differences. It is acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making, widening participation, knowledge, skills, and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce.

### 2.3. Inclusion

Inclusion is where difference is seen as a benefit, and where perspectives and differences are shared, leading to better decisions. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels valued, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.

## 3. REGULATION AND LEGISLATION

As a Firm we are committed to comply with The Equality Act 2010, but also those requirements set by any relevant regulatory bodies, such as the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and their principals and code of conduct.

### 3.1 The Equality Act 2010

The Act defines the expectations of everyone in an employment environment in relation to equality and diversity. These expectations relate to specified protected characteristics as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race (includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

It is unlawful for the Firm, including any employees, Partners, external parties, clients or suppliers of the firm, to treat anyone in a work place less favorably because of one of the above characteristics.

Discrimination can occur both directly and indirectly. Acts of unlawful discrimination may result in disciplinary action.

#### **4 WITHIN THE WORKPLACE**

The Firm is committed to the equal treatment of employees, including potential new employees. This includes ensuring that we do not discriminate unlawfully against them in relation to their recruitment and selection, terms of employment, promotion opportunities, career development opportunities or access to training, as well as defining what is expected as appropriate behaviour.

The Firm will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments as part of the recruitment process, or within the workplace, as necessary and where appropriate.

##### **4.1 Recruitment and Selection**

The Firm understands that a diverse workforce is beneficial to our success and will take measures to ensure that we;

- Comply with our recruitment policy at all times
- Ensure that opportunities and vacancies are available to all
- Engage with recruitment agencies or organisations that uphold the same values as ourselves and do not unlawfully discriminate.

##### **4.2 Terms and Conditions of Work**

Working arrangements such as working hours, location, maternity and other leave arrangements as defined by our policies and any other conditions of employment will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee on the basis of the protected characteristics.

Where appropriate, the firm will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and working arrangements which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their having any of, or being associated with, the protected characteristics.

##### **4.3 Promotion and Career Development**

Promotion within the Firm is made without reference to any of the protected characteristics and will be based on the business need for promotion and an individual's merit, this will be measured against the Fee Earner Framework or Firms competences.

The promotion process will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unlawful discriminatory impact on any particular group which cannot be justified.

All employees are encouraged to take part in the annual Performance Development Review (PDR) process and to further develop their career path through mentoring or a career development plan.

#### 4.4 Appropriate Behaviour

The Firm promotes that all staff should conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the profession as defined by the SRA's principals. Employees should also;

1. Treat others (internally and externally) with respect
2. Have an awareness of how their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs may affect others.
3. Work in collaboration across the Firm, in line with our one Firm approach
4. Give and receive feedback which is evidence based and delivered appropriately
5. Communicate openly, honestly and with purpose to achieve our objectives as a Firm.
6. Set high standards and lead by example

#### 4.5 Training

All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their role, experience and abilities.

The Firm may take appropriate positive action to provide special training and support for groups which are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.

The Firm also offers relevant training in areas of Equality, Diversity and inclusion for all staff.

### 5. WORKING WITH EXTERNAL PARTIES

The Firm regularly works with and alongside others, including Barristers. This policy also applies to our instructions of and interactions with these stakeholders.

#### 5.1 Barristers

Barristers should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability. The Firm will not base any decision to instruct a barrister on one, or more, of the protected characteristics defined in section 3.1.

A clients request for a named barrister should be complied with where reasonable and appropriate and where it does not discriminate based on the protected characteristic.

Requests should be subject to the firm's duty to discuss with the client their individual situation and to match with the suitability of the barrister to advise appropriately. Should a client refuse to modify any instructions which are deemed as inappropriate, this should be discussed with relevant Partner with the intention of finding an agreed solution.

### 7. MONITORING

As a Firm we will assess the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion of the Firm and collect and publish relevant data about the our workforce.

This in turn will be provided to regulatory bodies and Government where required, and as part of any necessary bids to win work as requested by our clients.

## **8. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Firm will treat seriously and will take action, where appropriate, on complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any of the protected characteristics made by employees, partners, clients, barristers or other third parties.

If any employee, consultant, contract worker or partner feels that unfair treatment has occurred in accordance with this policy, the firms Grievance procedure should be followed.