



## **Arboricultural Contractors & Consultants**

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# **THE ARB TEAM**

## **Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policy**

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Arb Team is committed to promoting equality, diversity and equal opportunities in all areas of its employment practices and service delivery.

We aim to create and maintain an inclusive working and training environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation, and which is based upon dignity, courtesy and respect.

The company is committed to:

- Providing equal opportunities in recruitment, training, development, progression and all other aspects of employment.
- Ensuring that no individual is treated less favourably on the basis of protected characteristics.

- Removing barriers that may disadvantage individuals or groups.
- Promoting a culture where diversity is valued and respected.
- Making reasonable adjustments where required.

The company recognises that diversity of background, skills, experience and perspective strengthens the organisation and contributes to its success.

The Arb Team is fully committed to complying with all current equality legislation and to upholding the principles established under previous anti-discrimination laws that underpin current legislation.

The company recognises and adheres to the requirements of:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1975
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

The Equality Act 2010 now consolidates and replaces the majority of the above legislation. However, The Arb Team recognises the importance of these Acts and Regulations in establishing the principles of equality and will continue to uphold the standards they introduced.

The company will ensure that no employee, subcontractor, applicant, client or service user is subjected to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

This policy applies to:

- The proprietor
- Managers and supervisors
- Employees (full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary)
- Subcontractors and agency workers

All individuals working with or on behalf of The Arb Team are expected to adhere to this policy.

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## **1.0 Legislative Background**

The Arb Team operates in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, which harmonised and replaced previous equality legislation, including:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended in 2000)
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Equal Pay Act 1975
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

These laws established protection against discrimination in employment and service provision on grounds including:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex
- Equal pay between men and women
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Age

Under current law, it is unlawful to:

### **Direct Discrimination**

Treat a person less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

### **Indirect Discrimination**

Apply a provision, criterion or practice that disadvantages individuals with a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified.

### **Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments**

Fail to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person where required.

### **Harassment**

Engage in unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an offensive environment.

### **Victimisation**

Subject someone to detriment because they have raised or supported a complaint under equality legislation.

## **Equal Pay**

Pay men and women differently for equal work without lawful justification.

The Arb Team is committed to ensuring full compliance with these legal requirements in all aspects of employment and service delivery.

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## **2.0 Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that the company:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Advances equality of opportunity across all company activities.
- Ensures fair and equitable treatment in all employment decisions.
- Fosters good working relationships between people from diverse backgrounds.
- Promotes a culture of dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Identifies and removes barriers that may disadvantage individuals.

In implementing this policy, the company will:

- Embed equality and equal opportunities into everyday working practices.
  - Provide appropriate training and awareness where required.
  - Address complaints consistently, fairly and promptly.
  - Support staff in meeting their individual needs where reasonably practicable.
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## **3.0 Definitions**

### **Equal Opportunities**

Equal opportunities means ensuring that employment decisions are made fairly and based on merit, ability and job-related criteria, and that unlawful and unfair discrimination is eliminated. It also means recognising and responding appropriately to individual needs to ensure fair access, treatment and outcomes.

### **Equality**

Equality is about ensuring individuals are not treated less favourably because of protected characteristics and that barriers to participation are removed.

## **Diversity**

Diversity refers to the visible and non-visible differences between individuals, including (but not limited to) those protected by legislation. Valuing diversity means recognising and respecting these differences and understanding the contribution they bring to the workplace.

The Arb Team is committed not only to equal treatment but also to recognising and developing the diverse contributions of its workforce.

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## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Responsibility of All Staff and Subcontractors**

All individuals must:

- Treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.
- Not engage in discriminatory, harassing or victimising behaviour.
- Support the aims of this policy.
- Report incidents of discrimination or inappropriate behaviour.
- Cooperate with investigations where required.

### **4.2 Responsibilities of Managers and Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors must:

- Lead by example in promoting equality and equal opportunities.
- Ensure recruitment, selection and promotion decisions are fair and based on merit.
- Apply policies and procedures consistently.
- Investigate allegations of discrimination or harassment promptly and thoroughly.
- Ensure disciplinary and grievance procedures are fairly implemented.
- Consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and respect within their teams.

Failure to meet these responsibilities may result in disciplinary action.

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## **5.0 Application of the Policy**

### **5.1 Recruitment and Selection**

- Recruitment will be conducted in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.
- Advertising will encourage applications from all suitably qualified individuals.
- Job descriptions and person specifications will reflect genuine occupational requirements.
- Selection decisions will be based solely on merit and objective criteria.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made during recruitment where required.

### **5.2 Pay, Grading and Promotion**

- Decisions regarding pay, grading and promotion will be based on objective criteria.
- Opportunities for progression will be open to all eligible employees.
- Criteria will be applied consistently and equitably.

### **5.3 Equal Pay Commitment**

- The Arb Team is committed to the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. Pay and benefits will be determined objectively and free from sex discrimination or any other unlawful bias. Where concerns arise regarding pay equality, they will be investigated promptly and fairly.

### **5.4 Training and Development**

- All staff will have fair access to induction, training and development opportunities, subject to business needs and resources.
- Development opportunities will not be denied on discriminatory grounds.

### **5.5 Flexible Working**

- Requests for flexible working will be considered fairly and objectively.
- Decisions will be based on legitimate business grounds and communicated clearly.

### **5.6 Performance Management**

- Probation and appraisal systems will be applied consistently and fairly.
- Performance will be assessed against clear, objective standards.

### **5.7 Discipline and Grievance**

- Disciplinary and grievance procedures will be applied fairly and without discrimination.
  - Allegations of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be treated seriously and addressed under the appropriate procedure.
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## **6.0 Monitoring and Review**

The Arb Team will periodically review this policy to ensure:

- Compliance with current legislation.
- Effectiveness in promoting equality and equal opportunities.
- Continued relevance to company practices.

Where appropriate, improvements will be implemented.

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## **7.0 Communication**

This policy will be:

- Made available to all staff and subcontractors.
  - Available to all trainees and clients.
  - Provided during employee induction.
  - Available upon request or on the website.
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## **8.0 Confidentiality**

Information disclosed in relation to equality, diversity or equal opportunities matters will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with data protection legislation.

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## **9.0 Breach of Policy**

Any breach of this policy will be treated as a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or termination of contract.

**Date Reviewed:** February 2026

**Next Review Date:** February 2027