

WILSON JAMES POLICY STATEMENT



Policy Title	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Policy No.	HR09A
Owner	Chief of Staff	Date Issued	Mar-20
Author	HR Operations Director	Date Reviewed	Mar - 23
Scope	This Policy applies to all Wilson James Ltd operations in Northern Ireland		
Responsibility	The Policy owner is responsible for ensuring that this policy remains current and up to date and shall formally review the policy on an annual basis		

Policy Statement

Wilson James is committed to valuing and promoting equal opportunities in all areas of recruitment, employment, training and promotion. This means we will make every good faith effort to comply with the spirit and letter of the equality laws.

Wilson James' core values incorporate honesty, dignity, respect and responsibility for our actions in an environment where we expect supportive and inclusive teamwork within our organisation and in partnership with others. We require all our people to treat each other, the public, and our customers with respect, and we want to maintain a working atmosphere in which everyone delivers a high quality service.

We will aim to provide equality of opportunity in employment to all persons and we will not discriminate unlawfully against our job applicants or employees on any of the protected equality grounds, which are: Sex, Pregnancy or Maternity, Gender Reassignment, Marital or Civil Partnership Status, Religious or similar Philosophical Belief, Political Opinion, Racial Group, Sexual Orientation, Disability, and Age.

- When making recruitment and selection decisions we will aim to select the best person for the job and all decisions will be made objectively and lawfully. Likewise we will follow the same principles when making other employment related policies and decisions, such as those relating to pay and benefits, opportunities for promotion and training, flexible working arrangements, absence and performance management and, if necessary, redundancy.
- We will provide fair and open access to development opportunities in order to fully utilize the talent of all employees.
- We will promote a good and harmonious working environment in which our employees will be treated with dignity and respect. We will not tolerate harassment on the protected equality grounds or bullying.
- When appropriate, we will take lawful affirmative and positive action to encourage participation from groups that are under-represented in our workforce.

Purpose

This policy reinforces the behaviours that Wilson James expects to see in every employee.

Wilson James recognises the contribution of a diverse labour force. Equality legislation sets minimum standards and the company wants to go beyond ticking boxes. In promoting equality, the company wants everyone to have access to jobs, training and development opportunities and for all people to be treated fairly.

Embracing diversity means that the company acknowledges the full breadth of people who work for Wilson James and diversity is reflected in our workforce.

Inclusion means that everyone that works for Wilson James has a contribution to make, and the company will work to create the kind of environment that will be receptive, welcoming and inclusive of all its employees.

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By making sure Wilson James promotes equality, diversity and inclusion it will be helping everyone to perform at their best and realise their potential.

Policy Principles

The company will ensure that this policy is put into practice by developing an overarching equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, linked to our business objectives and corporate strategies. The company will take the following steps:

- Provide regular communication about equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Establish monitoring systems that enable the business to understand where it is making progress and where it needs to improve.
- Provide ongoing training and development on the positive impact of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Create an environment where people can challenge any potentially discriminatory behaviors.
- Managers and key decision makers will be trained about equality legislation and its key implication on the business.
- Opportunities for employment, promotion, transfer and training will be advertised widely. All applicants will be welcomed, irrespective of gender or marital/family status, race colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, belief or any other characteristic protected by law.
- Complaints about discrimination, harassment or bullying will be regarded seriously and investigated, which may result in disciplinary sanctions, and even dismissal.
- All training and development opportunities are available for all to apply and will be allocated fairly.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Wilson James Ltd operating within our Northern Ireland sites.

Responsibilities

Managers shall:

- Lead by example and promote an organisational culture that is supportive of the benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Ensure that this policy is implemented and communicated to all existing employees and new employees when they begin working for the company.
- Promote a professional and positive work environment by being inclusive and open, and challenging behaviour or decisions that breach this policy.
- Actively promote equal opportunities within the departments for which they are responsible.
- Identify the various behaviours and barriers that discrimination can take, and understand the negative effect these can have on the company and its employees and customers.
- Dispel the myth that only certain types of people are suitable for certain types of jobs or training.
- Monitor the application of the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and work towards eliminating any discriminatory practices which may be limiting the company's ability to achieve its objectives, thereby maintaining our reputation as a fair and responsible employer in the eyes of the company's employees, shareholders, customers, and the public.
- Take accountability for the timely and appropriate action to address and resolve bullying and harassment, and discrimination in their work area, in line with the Employee Relation's Policy.

Employees shall:

- Comply with the letter and spirit of this policy.
- Treat all colleagues, the public and our customers with fairness, respect, dignity and honesty

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- Understand the values and benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion and be aware of the various behaviours and barriers that discrimination can take, understanding the negative impact these can have on the Company, customers and colleagues.
- To be sensitive to the potential impact of their own behaviour on colleagues, customers and job applicants.
- Tell their line manager about any instances of discrimination, or any perceived problems in relation to employment, or potential discrimination in the way that we provide our services.
- To co-operate with management in the elimination of any discriminatory practices that may be identified.

PROCEDURE

Managing Workplace Diversity

'Managing Workplace Diversity' ensures our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve and emphasises the business and personal benefits that accrue from valuing the differences between people, rather than just complying with the law. Organisations that grasp the additional business opportunities generated by managing diversity effectively are far more likely to enjoy sustained competitive advantage than those who do not.

Why is it important?

- It is against the law to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a protected characteristic.
- It is essential that we attract and retain the most talented people to continue to compete successfully in the security and logistics support services market. Skills and ability are not, for example, the preserve of one particular ethnic group or one gender; by recognising this we can widen our recruitment pool and maximise the potential of our existing employees.
- We are committed to providing service excellence to all our customers and we believe that this can be better achieved by a workforce that values and reflects the diversity of our society.
- We operate in an increasingly diverse society. In order to enhance business opportunities we should reflect and value that diversity in our advertising, marketing and sales strategies.
- It has been established that employees' motivation and commitment increase if people feel valued and perceive that they are being treated fairly. Evidence from a range of sources also indicates that diversity results in more creativity and higher productivity.
- Finally, but not least, there are a number of laws that set out how employers and individuals should act.

Recruitment, advertising and selection

The recruitment process will aim to select the best person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities and qualifications. The Company is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment to all persons. When recruiting new employees or when affording our current employees with opportunities for promotion, we will:

- follow the good practice recommendations of the codes of practice and other guidance issued by the Equality Commission.
- Not discriminate unlawfully against any person
- Select the best person for the job in terms of qualifications and abilities

Advertisements will aim to positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people. When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, the company will, as far as reasonably practicable:

1. Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
2. Avoid setting any unnecessary provisions or criteria which would exclude a higher proportion of applicants with a particular protected characteristic.
3. Ensure that a criminal conviction is not necessarily seen as a bar to obtaining a position and that each case will be assessed on an individual basis.

Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees with a particular protected characteristic.

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. All applications will be processed in the same way. The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application. Person specifications and job descriptions will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers and all questions asked of the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job. The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for, the job in question.

With disabled job applicants, and with existing employees who are disabled or regarded as disabled in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Company will comply with its duty to make reasonable adjustments to work provisions, criteria and practices or to physical features of work premises or to provide aids or services in order to ensure that the disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel), this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about any of the protected characteristics.

Flexible Working

Flexible working, such as job-sharing can also assist the company in retaining valued employees who wish to continue their careers but who may have, caring responsibilities outside of work. Please refer to the [flexible working policy for further information](#).

Promotion and Career Development

When making decisions on promotions and career development, managers should focus on the employee as an individual, with particular talents and experiences, rather than make assumptions based on their age, race, gender, marital status, disability or any of the other equality grounds. Promotion and career progression will be informed by our Management Capability Framework, a framework which outlines the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be a manager at Wilson James. Please refer to our [Learning & Development policy for further information](#).

Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when, because of one of the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or political opinion), a job applicant or an employee is treated less favourably than other job applicants or employees are treated or would be treated.

The treatment will still amount to direct discrimination even if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the job applicant or employee is associated and not on the job applicant's or employee's own protected characteristic. In addition, it can include cases where it is perceived that a job applicant or an employee has a particular protected characteristic when in fact they do not.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate direct discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination is treatment that may be equal in the sense that it applies to all job applicants or employees but which is discriminatory in its effect on, for example, one particular sex or racial group.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a provision, criterion or practice (PCP), is applied to the job applicant or employee which is discriminatory in relation to a protected characteristic. A PCP is discriminatory if:

- It puts, or would put, the job applicant or employee at that disadvantage, and ;
- It cannot be shown by the company to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Company will take all reasonable steps to eliminate indirect discrimination in all aspects of employment.

Genuine Occupational Requirement

In some instances there may be a genuine occupational requirement or qualification which may be applied for a specific position e.g. female search officers.

When applying a genuine occupational requirement in a job advert Wilson James must be wary to ensure there is clear justification for its inclusion otherwise they could be liable for a discrimination claim.

The Company must decide whether a genuine Occupational requirement may apply before advertising the job. In very limited circumstances if the company can show that someone with a protected characteristic (on grounds of age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation) is central to a particular job then it can insist that only someone with that protected characteristic is suitable for the job. For example if a security officer is required to complete searches on a female then there would be a genuine occupational requirement for female

security officers.

Bullying and Harassment

This policy covers bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside the workplace, for example, during business trips and at work-related social events where an action detrimentally affects the organisation, colleagues or the client.

Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

An employee harasses another employee if they engage in unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, and the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating the other employee's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that other employee. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning or unacceptable.

The unwanted conduct will still amount to harassment if it is based on the protected characteristic of a third party with whom the employee is associated and not on the employee's own protected characteristic, or if it was directed at someone other than the employee, or even at nobody in particular, but they witnessed it. In addition, harassment can include cases where the unwanted conduct occurs because it is perceived that an employee has a particular protected characteristic, when in fact they do not.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person intended to offend. Something intended as a "joke" or as "office banter" may offend another person. This is because different employees find different levels of behaviour acceptable and everyone has the right to decide for themselves what behaviour they find acceptable to them.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would recognise as likely to offend an employee will always constitute harassment without the need for the employee having to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, for example, touching someone in a sexual way. With other forms of behaviour, it may not always be clear in advance that it will offend a particular employee, for example, office banter and jokes. In these cases, the behaviour will constitute harassment if the conduct continues after the employee has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Examples

Bullying and harassment may be verbal, non-verbal, written or physical. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other conduct of a sexual nature.
- Subjection to obscene or other sexually suggestive or racist comments or gestures, or other derogatory comments or gestures related to a protected characteristic.
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances or threats for rejecting sexual advances.
- Jokes or pictures of a sexual, sexist or racial nature or which are otherwise derogatory in relation to an anti-harassment protected characteristic.
- Demeaning comments about an employee's appearance.
- Questions about an employee's sex life.
- The use of nick names related to an anti-harassment protected characteristic.
- Picking on or ridiculing an employee because of a protected characteristic.
- Isolating an employee or excluding him or her from social activities or relevant work-related matters because of a protected characteristic.

Grievance and Discipline

If any employee believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against they should make a complaint using the company's grievance procedure. Likewise, if any employee is found to have breached this policy they may be subject to disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedure, which in serious cases may result in dismissal.

Monitoring

Human Resources will maintain records of the age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and disability of job applicants and existing employees.

We are registered with the Equality Commission for the purposes of the *Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998*. As such we are obliged to monitor the *community background* and *sex* of our job applicants and workforce. We are also obliged to review the composition of our workforce and our employment policies and practices every three years and, where appropriate, to consider taking affirmative action to promote fair participation between members of the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities. We are committed to complying with these duties and have set up suitable arrangements to ensure that we do so.

The company will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome substantial disadvantages caused by disability.

Compliance

Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of every Wilson James employee.

Further Guidance

For further guidance please contact the Human Resources department.

Documents Related to this Policy

HR07 - Aggression and Violence

HR08 - Learning & Development

HR18 - Flexible Working

HR32 - Disciplinary

HR33 - Grievance