Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Grade A Recruitment

1. Purpose and Commitment

Grade A Recruitment embraces equality, diversity and inclusion and is committed to providing fair and equitable treatment to employees, workers, candidates, applicants and clients. We will promote a culture in which individual differences are respected and where recruitment and employment decisions are based on merit, suitability, skills, experience and the requirements of the role.

We will regularly review our recruitment, selection and employment practices to identify and remove unjustified barriers and to prevent unlawful discrimination. All employees have a responsibility to understand and comply with this policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Grade A Recruitment employees, agency workers, temporary workers, candidates, applicants, contractors and, where relevant, clients and other third parties with whom we interact. It applies throughout recruitment, registration, selection, placement, pay and terms, training, promotion, performance management, workplace conduct and the ending of employment or assignments.

3. Equality Act 2010 and Protected Characteristics

Grade A Recruitment will not unlawfully discriminate because of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010:

- 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.

We will also not treat an individual unfavourably because of trade union membership or non-membership, or because they have raised a genuine concern, complaint or grievance.

4. Recruitment and Selection

Candidates and employees will be assessed against objective criteria relevant to the role. Grade A Recruitment will avoid unnecessary requirements that could disproportionately exclude particular groups and will seek to use inclusive recruitment methods and advertising.

We will not accept or act upon discriminatory instructions from clients. Where a client believes an occupational requirement or other lawful exception applies, Grade A Recruitment will require sufficient information and, where appropriate, written confirmation before proceeding.

Age, date of birth or equality-monitoring information will not be used as a selection criterion unless there is a lawful and objectively justified reason. Where specific legal requirements apply to children or young workers, Grade A Recruitment will comply with those requirements.

5. Forms of Unlawful Discrimination

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic. Protection can also apply where a person is treated less favourably because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic or because of their association with someone who has one.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur where a provision, criterion or practice applies to everyone but places people sharing a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, unless it can be objectively justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs where a person is subjected to a detriment because they have carried out, or are believed to have carried out, a protected act, such as making or supporting a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

6. Preventing Sexual Harassment

Grade A Recruitment has a proactive responsibility to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. We will assess relevant risks and take reasonable preventative steps, including maintaining clear standards of conduct, providing appropriate information and training, encouraging early reporting and responding promptly to concerns.

Grade A Recruitment is also preparing for the strengthened legal requirements due to take effect in October 2026, including the requirement for employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and the strengthened protections concerning harassment by third parties such as clients, candidates, contractors and other workplace contacts.

Sexual harassment or other harassment may occur in person or through telephone calls, email, messaging platforms, social media or other work-related communications. Conduct at work-related events, client premises, social functions or during business travel may also fall within this policy.

7. Examples of Unacceptable Conduct

- Derogatory, discriminatory or offensive jokes, comments, slurs or messages.
- Unwanted sexual comments, advances, propositions or requests.
- Displaying or sharing offensive, discriminatory or sexually explicit images or material.
- Unwanted touching, physical interference, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
- Repeated comments about a person's body, appearance, protected characteristic or personal life that are unwanted or inappropriate.
- Retaliation, exclusion or unfavourable treatment because someone raised or supported a complaint.
- Harassment by a client, candidate, contractor or other third party that is ignored or permitted to continue.

8. Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Grade A Recruitment will not unlawfully discriminate against disabled people and will consider reasonable adjustments where a disabled applicant, employee, worker or candidate would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- adjusting interview, assessment or testing arrangements;
- providing additional time, accessible information, a reader or interpreter where appropriate;
- holding meetings or interviews at accessible premises or remotely;

- adjusting working arrangements, equipment or workplace practices where reasonable;
- considering accessibility when placing candidates with clients.

Adjustments will be considered individually, taking account of the person's needs, the role and what is reasonable in the circumstances.

9. Part-Time and Flexible Workers

Part-time workers will not be treated less favourably than comparable full-time workers because they work part-time, unless different treatment can be objectively justified. Grade A Recruitment will apply relevant statutory rights and contractual terms fairly, including access to training, opportunities and benefits on an appropriate basis.

10. Gender Reassignment

Grade A Recruitment will support employees, workers and candidates who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment and will protect them from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Personal information will be handled sensitively and confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements.

11. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Where Grade A Recruitment is entitled to request a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, we will comply with applicable DBS requirements and the DBS Code of Practice. Criminal record information will be considered fairly and proportionately, taking account of the role, safeguarding requirements and relevant legal restrictions. Grade A Recruitment's separate DBS and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policies should be followed where applicable.

12. Raising a Concern or Complaint

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation should report the matter as soon as possible. Employees may raise concerns with their line manager or with Sarah Waller, Operations Director. Where the concern relates to that person, it should be raised with another member of senior management.

A report should provide, where possible, the date and details of the incident, the people involved and any witnesses or supporting information. Grade A Recruitment will take concerns seriously, investigate them fairly and promptly, maintain confidentiality as far as reasonably possible and take appropriate action.

No person should suffer retaliation or detrimental treatment for raising a genuine concern or participating in an investigation in good faith.

13. Responsibilities and Training

Senior management is responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring appropriate action is taken where concerns arise. Managers and consultants must apply fair, objective recruitment practices and challenge discriminatory client instructions or behaviour.

Employees are expected to treat colleagues, candidates, clients and other contacts with dignity and respect. Relevant equality, diversity, harassment and recruitment training will be provided and refreshed as appropriate.

14. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may be dealt with under Grade A Recruitment's disciplinary or other relevant procedures. Serious discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation or retaliation may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal or termination of an assignment or engagement, subject to the appropriate process.

15. Monitoring, Data and Review

Grade A Recruitment may monitor equality and diversity information where lawful and appropriate to help assess the effectiveness of recruitment and employment practices. Equality monitoring information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection requirements.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and when there are significant changes to legislation, regulatory guidance or Grade A Recruitment's working practices. The policy will be updated again where necessary to reflect the strengthened harassment provisions taking effect in October 2026 and any associated statutory guidance.

Policy owner	Operations Director
Updated	August 2026
Next review	August 2027 or earlier if legislation/guidance changes
Applies to	Employees, workers, candidates, applicants and relevant third parties