

Several Seats CIC



Equal Opportunity Policy

Our Policy





Several Seats Policy

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Statement of policy and purpose of the policy

Equal Opportunities Policy – Updated for 2024-25

- 1. Introduction and Commitment** Several Seats C.I.C (the Employer) is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace where all staff and applicants are treated fairly. Our policy aims to ensure that all employment decisions are based on merit and business needs, free from discrimination, harassment, or victimisation. We comply with all relevant laws in England and Wales, including the **Equality Act 2010**, and other statutory and governance requirements that come into effect.
- 2. Protected Characteristics** The Employer does not discriminate against individuals based on any **Protected Characteristics**, including but not limited to:
 - Race, colour, or nationality
 - Ethnic or national origins
 - Sex, gender identity or reassignment
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marital or civil partner status
 - Pregnancy or maternity
 - Disability
 - Religion or belief
 - Age
 - Caring responsibilities
 - Socioeconomic background
 - Neurodiversity and mental health conditions
 - Any other ground protected by law
- 3. Inclusive Work Environment** We are committed to fostering an inclusive work environment where all staff can thrive and feel empowered to reach their full potential. This commitment applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, including:
 - Recruitment, selection, and promotion
 - Pay, terms of employment, and benefits
 - Training and professional development
 - Work practices, including task allocation, discipline, and grievance handling
 - Social activities, both formal and informal
 - Termination of employment and post-employment matters, such as references
- 4. Collective Responsibility** Achieving an inclusive workplace is a shared responsibility. **All staff**, including employees, directors, consultants, contractors, trainees, and volunteers, must comply with this policy. Our goal is to ensure that everyone upholds values of fairness, respect, and equality at all times.
- 5. Leadership Accountability** The Board of Directors holds overall responsibility for compliance with equal opportunities law. The **Company Director** oversees the operational implementation of this policy and ensures it is regularly reviewed and updated in line with new legislative and regulatory guidelines. Managers must act as role models, fostering inclusion and ensuring policy adherence.
- 6. Recruitment Practices** Recruitment decisions will be made based on merit, using objective criteria aligned with business needs. Managers must:
 - Use job descriptions and advertisements that reflect genuine business requirements
 - Avoid language or criteria that could inadvertently exclude underrepresented groups

- Advertise roles widely and avoid informal recruitment channels that may restrict access
 - Refrain from inquiring about health, disability, or pregnancy before a job offer (in compliance with privacy laws)
 - Ensure selection processes are free from bias and reflect our diversity goals
7. **Support for Disabled Employees** The Employer will make **reasonable adjustments** to support employees with disabilities or long-term health conditions, ensuring their ability to perform effectively. Staff with disabilities are encouraged to discuss their needs with the Company Director in confidence, and reasonable steps will be taken to support them.
 8. **Training and Professional Development** All staff, especially those involved in recruitment, management, and leadership, will receive **training on equal opportunities, unconscious bias, and DEI** principles. Career development opportunities will be accessible to all, and any barriers to progression will be actively identified and removed.
 9. **Monitoring and Data Collection** We will continue to monitor the diversity of our workforce through voluntary and anonymised data collection on sex, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, and other characteristics. The data will only be used to assess our progress toward inclusion and to identify areas for improvement. This information will be kept confidential and separate from decision-making processes.
 10. **Harassment and Bullying** Harassment or bullying of any form, including based on **Protected Characteristics**, will not be tolerated. Examples include:
 - Offensive comments or jokes related to race, gender, disability, or other Protected Characteristics
 - Unwelcome physical contact or sexual advances
 - Disparaging remarks or exclusion based on characteristics protected under this policy Harassment does not need to be intentional to be unlawful or harmful, and a single incident can constitute harassment.
 11. **Addressing Complaints and Grievances** Staff who experience or witness discrimination, harassment, or victimisation should report the incident using the Employer's Grievance Procedure. Reports will be handled confidentially wherever possible, and complainants will be protected from retaliation. Any staff member found to have breached this policy may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
 12. **Equal Pay and Benefits** The Employer is committed to the principle of **equal pay** for equal work. We will regularly review pay scales and benefits packages to ensure fairness, addressing any disparities that may exist.
 13. **Discipline and Termination Procedures** All disciplinary and termination decisions, including redundancy selection, will be made on a fair, objective, and non-discriminatory basis. Part-time and fixed-term staff will be treated equally to their full-time and permanent colleagues unless there is objective justification for different treatment.
 14. **Reporting and Review** The Board of Directors will review this policy annually to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and compliant with updated governance standards. The **next review is scheduled for 29th March 2025**. Staff are encouraged to provide feedback or suggestions for improving this policy to the Company Director.

This policy does not form part of your employment contract and may be updated at any time in response to new legal, regulatory, or organisational needs.

By updating these sections, the policy aligns with 2024-25 governance guidelines, including a broader scope of diversity characteristics, disability support measures, DEI best practices, and enhanced monitoring of diversity and inclusion efforts.

