

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Human Resources

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Version 4



from
**Southern
Water** 



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1. Introduction

At Southern Water, we choose to consciously recognise and value our differences, ensuring all our people feel they belong and that we succeed together.

We're committed to having a diverse workforce that reflects the communities in which we operate. We aim to ensure that all of employees, secondees, agency staff, clients, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary, and job applicants are treated fairly, equally and with respect and dignity.

We're committed to ensuring that these values are enshrined in our company's policies, strategies, processes and practices. We seek to address inequality and eliminate unlawful discrimination in the workplace. We'll continue to embed good equality and diversity practices in all of our policies and procedures as we aim to be an employer of choice, and provider of essential services, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We'll do this through our Equality Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Steering Group, implementing our ED&I action plan, and implementation of improvements to address differences.

We acknowledge that equality and diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

2. Scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that our commitment to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity is reflected in all employment processes. The policy covers all employees, including those on fixed-term contracts and anyone directly engaged by the company through a service contract or through a third party supplier.

We expect all of our people to demonstrate personal responsibility for the application of this policy. As part of our employee induction, we talk about our approach and ethos to equality, diversity and inclusion.

3. Our Commitment

We believe that every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. Southern Water will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, contractor, customer, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:

- n sex;
- n gender reassignment;
- n marriage and civil partnership;
- n pregnancy and maternity;
- n race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- n disability;
- n sexual orientation;
- n religion and or belief; and

n age.

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated. All employees are encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

We're committed to working in partnership with employee representatives (Employee Voice and Unison) to progress employment strategy, policies and procedures that achieve equality of opportunity and treatment, and eliminate unfair discrimination in the business.

4. Principles

At Southern Water we:

- n Seek to create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognised and valued.
- n Support our managers and all employees through training and our induction process to understand their rights and responsibilities under our equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include employees conducting themselves to help Southern Water provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All employees should understand they, as well as the company, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

- n Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the Southern Water's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- n Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all employees, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Southern Water.
- n Make decisions concerning employees being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- n Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

- n We are committed to becoming an organisation which understands the effects of disability, and provides effective support so that all employees are able to perform to the best of their ability. This means ensuring that they have the opportunity to discuss and request reasonable adjustments, and that managers will ensure that any agreed adjustments are put in place promptly. When considering reasonable adjustments, Southern Water will consider how best to prevent substantial disadvantage.
- n Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

5. Associated documents

Employees are encouraged to look at this document in conjunction with the following:

- n Speak up policy
- n Flexible Working policy
- n Grievance policy
- n Southern Water Code of Conduct



6. Revision History

Policy number		HR110	Supersedes	All previous versions
Version:	Date of review:	Reviewer name:	Details of changes:	
3	May 2017	Nigel Hague/Cathryn Jeffery	Rebranding and Tone of Voice Legislation change – Reference changed from Disability discrimination Act 2005 to Equalities Act 2010 Replaces the following Policies:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunities Policy (HR110) • People with Disabilities Policy (HR112) • Race Discrimination Policy (HR113) • Sex Discrimination Policy (HR114) 	
4	April 2022	Sarah Porcelli/Naomi Turner	Rebranding, aligned to ACAS ED&I recommendations. Replaced Section 3 – Responsibilities with Commitment and Principles. Section 4 Policy statement has been incorporated into the Scope. Removed impact assessment.	

