**Transgender Equality Policy**

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that transgender employees are treated with dignity and respect and are not disadvantaged in the workplace. The policy sets out the steps they take to welcome and support transgender employees so that they feel that they belong.

**Scope**

The policy covers all employees, contractors, temporary workers, and job applicants and applies to all stages of the employment relationship. Please take account of this policy to avoid disciplinary or resolution action being taken against you.

**Our Commitment**

Diversity and inclusion benefit the business; people work better when they can be themselves and feel they belong. We are committed to providing a working environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation. We will ensure that recruitment, promotion, and retention procedures do not treat you less favourably because of your gender identity.

**Terminology**

We recognise that terminology around gender identity is evolving as awareness increases and more people choose to self-define. Transgender is an umbrella term describing the diverse range of people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. An individual may identify as transgender but not with the binary concept of woman or man.

We acknowledge that gender identity and sexual orientation are not interchangeable concepts. Gender identity is about a person's internal preconception of their gender. Sexual orientation, or sexuality, is to whom someone is physically and/or emotionally attracted. This may be to someone of the same sex ("lesbian" or "gay"), different sex ("heterosexual" or "straight") or more than one sex ("bisexual"). We will not assume that you have a particular sexual orientation.

Managers and colleagues should respect how you describe yourself and, if in doubt, should ask rather than assume. Using inappropriate language and terminology can cause offence and distress and undermines our efforts to create an inclusive workplace.

**The Law**

**Equality Act 2010**

Gender reassignment is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The Act protects you from discrimination, harassment, and victimisation if you are "proposing to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone a process (or part of a process) of gender reassignment". There is no requirement for you to be under medical supervision to be protected. Under the Act, if you take time off work for gender reassignment, you must not be treated less favourably regarding employment decisions, for example, by being denied access to training or promotion opportunities.

The Act also protects you if you are perceived to have the characteristic of gender reassignment or are associated with someone with the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, such as your partner or a friend.

If you treat a colleague less favourably because of gender reassignment, for example, by refusing to work with them, you may be liable for discrimination.

**Gender Recognition Act 2004**

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows you to apply for a gender recognition certificate (GRC), which will give you legal recognition of your acquired gender. It enables you to obtain a new birth certificate. If you have a GRC, the Act safeguards your privacy by defining information relating to the gender recognition process as "protected information" and, except "in certain specific circumstances" (for example, for the purpose of preventing or investigating crime), it is a criminal offence to disclose such information without your consent.

An application for a GRC will be made to the Gender Recognition Panel. You are required to provide a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria and evidence that you have lived in your acquired gender for two or more years and intend to do so permanently.

Your Employer will never ask you if you have a GRC or require you to apply for one for employment purposes.

**How We Support Transgender Equality**

We recognise that you are not required to tell us your gender identity or gender history. The gender in which you choose to present will always be acknowledged and respected. This also extends to you if you identify as non-binary, i.e., you do not regard your gender identity as exclusively male or female.

To promote a workplace that is inclusive of people, regardless of their gender identity, we adopt the following approach.

**Recruitment**

We wish to attract applicants from as wide a talent pool as possible, and the recruitment process is designed to be inclusive of applicants regardless of their gender identity. Except in exceptionally defined circumstances, a job applicant's gender identity is irrelevant. In an exceptional circumstance where the nature of a specific role might lawfully prevent someone transitioning from applying, legal advice must always be sought before advertising.

Job advertisements should make clear that opportunities are open to all suitably qualified applicants. If this statement explicitly references not discriminating on particular grounds, this reference should extend to all protected characteristics, including gender reassignment. Where an application form is used, this should not include a question about previous names, as this may deter an individual who has transitioned from applying.

Managers should not ask questions about an applicant's gender identity or history. If an individual chooses to mention this during the interview, they should be informed that your Employer supports transgender employees and be assured that the disclosure will have no bearing on the outcome of the interview and will not be revealed outside the interview room or noted on the interview record.

The requirement to provide proof of identity to confirm the right to work in the UK can be particularly sensitive for a transgender applicant whose identification documentation may be in their previous names. We will always ensure that an applicant is made aware of the full range of permissible identification documents and that the process of checking is handled sensitively and with respect for the individual's privacy.

Where your documentation reveals your previous name and, thereby, your gender history, this information will be kept confidential and stored securely with your permission and in accordance with our data protection policy. The same approach will apply where an applicant is required to present qualification certificates before a job offer is confirmed, and the certificates are in the applicant's previous name.

**Employment**

As an employee transitioning, you may wish to be redeployed temporarily or permanently. This may be because: you are in a public-facing role and wish to avoid having to answer questions from the public about your gender identity, or the role involves particular tasks that will be difficult to undertake if undergoing a particular type of treatment (for example, hormone therapy that causes fatigue). Requests to be redeployed will be discussed with you, and where possible, your Employer will seek to accommodate your wishes. This will include an agreement on whether the redeployment is temporary or permanent.

A manager should not pressure you to change jobs or make assumptions about your capability or wishes.

Your gender identity will not have a bearing on any employment decisions or access to benefits except where permitted by law. For example, an individual who has transitioned but does not have a GRC may be required to disclose their gender history for insurance and pension purposes. In such circumstances, we will handle such information in line with our data protection policy.

Where pension and insurance providers request disclosure of your gender identity, we will ensure that this requirement has been checked with the underwriter and the requirement is made clear in any scheme information provided to you. In such circumstances, your written consent will be obtained before disclosing your gender history and status.

**Names and Pronouns**

We will take all necessary steps to ensure your name change is respected. Whether intentional or not, consistently addressing a transgender employee by their previous name (known as "dead naming") is distressing to the individual and impacts the person's sense of belonging.

A GRC is not required to enable you to change your name, and we will never ask you if you have a GRC to verify a name change.

We will always respect your chosen pronouns. Consistently addressing a transgender employee by their previous name and/or an inappropriate pronoun may amount to harassment and will be dealt with accordingly.

**Updating Employee Records**

You do not need a GRC to request that your details are updated on your employment records. You will be treated in the same way as other employees wishing to update their details. We will agree with you on what paper and electronic records need to be updated. These will include those records that may contain names, titles, and other personal identifiers, such as photographs on our website and intranet.

If you are absent while completing your transition, any records that hold personal details should be updated by the time you present at work with your new identity.

**Confidentiality**

All records that include details of your gender history will be destroyed in a secure manner unless there is a specific reason for retaining them (in which case you will be made aware of this and told why). Where other people in the organisation need to be aware of your transition to make a change to a particular record, we will obtain your consent and restrict the information to those who need to know.

Where there is a need to retain documentation that shows your gender history, this information will be stored confidentially in line with the requirements of data protection legislation. The information will be held electronically in a secure environment (for example, password protected) that can be accessed only with your consent. Only named individuals will be allowed to access this information, and those individuals will be made aware that breaches of confidentiality could be unlawful and result in disciplinary action.

Care will be taken to ensure that any search of our records by others will not inadvertently reveal your gender history.

It is your decision whether you choose to reveal your gender status, and we will respect your right to privacy. The right to privacy will apply regardless of whether or not you have a GRC.

If you disclose information about your gender history or status (verbally or in writing), this will be treated as confidential. This includes any information provided to your line manager or HR. Such information will only be shared with others if there is a specific reason and not without your written consent. If you have a GRC, disclosure of your gender history without your specific permission would normally be a criminal offence.

Information relating to your gender status or history will not be disclosed to a third party without your consent, for example, when responding to a reference request.

**Communication**

If you choose to transition while working for us, we will work together with you to agree on who will be told and by whom and when and how this will happen. The most important consideration is that you feel safe in the workplace.

You may wish to tell colleagues about your transition, or you may prefer for this to be done by someone else on your behalf. Your Employer will encourage you to do what is best for you, and if you are not ready to tell anyone in the early stages, we will respect your wishes. You are entitled to privacy, and we will seek to protect you from intrusive enquiries.

If you have a public or client-facing role, we will discuss what third parties need to know and how this should be handled.

We will be mindful of possible media interest and establish a protocol for handling media interest to ensure that:

* You are not left to deal with this alone; and
* everyone understands the importance of not compromising your right to privacy