

# Equality and Diversity Policy

<b>Eligibility</b>	1.1 All ICE Group employees, consultants, contractors and temporary workers.
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<p>2.1 The ICE Group welcomes diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity, and to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination. The ICE Group recognises the benefit of embracing diversity so that its workforce is representative of society, members and customers.</p> <p>Reasonable and practicable steps will be taken to ensure that its opportunities for employment, career progression and training are equally accessible to all.</p> <p>Training on Equality and Diversity will take place on the employee’s commencement with the Company as part of the ICE Welcome Day.</p>
<b>Policy Status</b>	3.1 This policy does not form part of an employee’s terms and conditions of employment.
<b>Background</b>	4.1 The ICE Group is committed to ensuring, within the framework of the law, that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic, i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership. Pregnancy or maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. All employees and workers have a personal responsibility not to behave in a manner that could be offensive to others. Any person acting in breach of this policy may be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
<b>Policy Guidelines</b>	<p>5.1 <b>Introduction</b></p> <p>The ICE Group will avoid unlawful or unfair discrimination in all aspects of employment including but not limited to recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.</p> <p><i>Direct discrimination</i></p> <p>Direct discrimination is the treatment of a person less favourably than others who would be in the same or similar circumstances. Direct discrimination because of a protected characteristic is potentially unlawful. Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with someone who possess a protected characteristic. Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.</p>

### *Indirect discrimination*

Indirect discrimination is the application of a provision, criterion or practice which, although applied equally, puts or would put individuals with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage and the ICE Group cannot justify such a provision, criterion or practice as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, i.e. a valid reason for doing so. Indirect discrimination because of a protected characteristic is also potentially unlawful.

Indirect discrimination is often difficult to identify, in comparison to direct discrimination. Guidance should be sought from the Human Resources team in cases of doubt.

## 5.2 **Harassment and bullying**

Harassment occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or where a person's dignity is violated through an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

Bullying is any persistent behaviour, directed against an individual or groups of employees, which is intimidating, offensive and insulting and which undermines the confidence and self-esteem of the recipient(s) and may cause them to suffer stress.

The ICE group has a separate Harassment and Bullying procedure which will be followed in the event that the above occurs.

## 5.3 **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs where a person is treated less favourably than colleagues because they have taken action to assert their rights or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.

## 5.4 **Disability and employment**

The ICE Group will ensure that it considers reasonable adjustments to working arrangements or to a physical aspect of the workplace, where a disabled person would otherwise be placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person. The ICE Group will take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances of the case to remove that disadvantage. This covers the recruitment and selection process, and any term, condition or other arrangement on which employment, promotion, transfer, training or any other benefit is offered or provided and is outlined below.

### *The definition of disability*

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person with a disability will have a mental or physical condition which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

## 5.5 Reasonable adjustments

The ICE Group recognises that many impairments and illnesses do not limit a person's ability to perform in a job. If arrangements disadvantage a person because of a disability this line manager in consultation with the employee (and HR and/or Occupational Health team in Building Services, as appropriate) will consider any reasonable adjustments, and work with the employee to ensure that the recommendations are put in place, where possible. The expertise of the employee concerning their own disability / impairment will be recognised. However, there may be occasions when the adjustment(s) needed may not be possible. If this occurs the person will be consulted and the reasons for the decision will be explained.

The type of reasonable adjustments required depends upon the employee's medical condition as well as medical advice from the employee's doctor and/or the ICE Group's company doctor. Consent from the employee will be obtained for a medical report from the employee's doctor, so that any reasonable adjustments required can be better understood.

Where the person with the prime responsibility for arranging reasonable adjustments i.e. the line manager, does not have the relevant knowledge or experience they may consult an outside specialist with the agreement of the employee. The line manager should keep Human Resources and/or Occupational Health informed of progress.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include, but are not limited to: allowing absences during working hours for medical treatment, giving additional training, getting special equipment or modifying existing equipment.

Where a person requires or may require an adjustment to the working arrangements or environment they should bring this to the attention of their line manager. It is the line manager's responsibility to liaise with the Health Safety Environment and Welfare (HSEW) team to arrange appropriate adjustments.

Once an adjustment has been made its operation may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals to assess its continuing effectiveness.

## 5.6 Responsibilities

All ICE Group employees, contractors, consultants and temporary workers operating on behalf of the ICE Group have a duty for opposing discrimination.

### *Responsibility of managers*

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that they, their employees and people working within their department operate within the terms of this policy, and that all reasonable steps are taken to avoid discrimination. They should ensure that:

- Their employees, temporary workers contractors and/or consultants are aware of the policy
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible in line with the relevant policies

### *Responsibility of employees*

All employees have a responsibility for opposing discrimination and should:

- Comply with this policy
- Not discriminate in any of their activities
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other employees or groups on the grounds specified above
- Inform their manager if they become aware of discriminatory practice

#### 5.7 **What to do if someone is in breach of this policy**

If a person feels this policy is being breached they should firstly raise it with their line manager. If this is not appropriate they should contact a member of the Human Resources Department.

Employees should refer to the Bullying and Harassment procedure if they feel they are suffering harassment or bullying.

Where employees wish to raise concerns relating to unlawful conduct they should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy. The Whistleblowing Policy is for employees to register a matter or concern that is specifically in the public interest. It is not intended to replace the grievance procedure, which is there for staff to raise any matter of a personal nature or to express dissatisfaction with a management decision.

#### 5.8 **What will happen if someone breaches this policy**

Any breach of this policy, act of discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated and may lead to investigation and disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary and Conduct Improvement Procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to instant dismissal.

Employees as well as, or instead of, the ICE Group can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination by the bringing of a claim in an Employment Tribunal.

Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

#### 5.9 **Recruitment and selection**

The ICE Group makes its employment opportunities open to everyone. Prior to interview, candidates will be asked whether any reasonable adjustments are required to enable them to attend the interview or assessment event. The Human Resources team will ensure that any such requests are undertaken to the best of the Group's ability.

#### 5.10 **Data collection and reporting**

The ICE Group will collate workforce demographics through the use of a diversity questionnaire given to all new employees on appointment.

Steps will also be taken to ensure this information is up to date and correct through an annual data cleanse. Where appropriate the ICE Group may request the opinions of employees on matters such as diversity and discrimination within the organisation such as in the Employee Engagement Survey.

Parts of this data will be reported to the Executive Board and Council annually. Data may also be used to benchmark against similar organisations, best practice standards and national demographics.

Where appropriate the ICE Group, may take appropriate action to address any issues.

#### 5.11 **Communication**

The ICE Group will take all reasonable steps to ensure this policy is available to all employees through the intranet, employee handbook and notice boards.

#### 5.12 **Non-employees**

Temporary workers will be asked to sign to agree they abide by the ICE Group's policies during their assignment and should be made aware of this policy by their line manager.

Contractors and consultants must also agree to comply with all appropriate HR policies in their contract. The person responsible for the consultant or contractors assignment should ensure they are made aware of the policy.

Any breach of this policy by a temporary worker, consultant or contractor may result in their assignment being terminated and where appropriate their agency will be informed.

If an employee believes that an external supplier has acted in a discriminatory way against them on the grounds mentioned they should escalate this to their line manager in the first instance.

Similarly, if an employee believes a Member has acted in a discriminatory way they should discuss this with their line manager. Members are expected to act in accordance with the ICE Code of Professional Conduct. Further questions about the Members Code of Conduct should be directed to the Head of Professional Conduct (ICE).

#### 5.13 **Training**

All new employees will attend diversity training during their ICE Group Welcome Day. Where appropriate, the Human Resources department may run further training for managers and employees.

The following course on the ICE ELearning platform specifically deals with this relevant area:

- Equality and Diversity - Overview

The following link will take you through to the ELearning platform:

<http://icegroup.jenison.co.uk>

Full details on joining this course is available on the ICE Intranet.

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