

# Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities Policy

<b>Policy statement</b>	We want Howdens to be a place where everyone is welcomed and has the opportunity to thrive, being Worthwhile for ALL concerned. We're committed to encouraging diversity, inclusion and equality amongst our workforce and to eliminating unlawful discrimination. We value the difference a diverse workforce brings and want each employee to be respected, able to be themselves and give their best.	
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all employees on permanent and fixed-term contracts.	
<b>Responsible role</b>	Head of HR Services	
<b>Effective date</b> 01 October 2023	<b>Last review date</b> September 2023	<b>Next review date</b> 31 December 2024

*If you have any questions about how this policy applies to you or your role, please speak with your line manager in the first instance. If you have a question about the policy generally, please contact your HR Representative.*

## 1.0 Scope

This policy applies to anyone working for us. This includes employees, workers, contractors, volunteers, interns and apprentices. The policy is relevant to all stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment. This policy applies to behaviours not only towards fellow employees, but also towards clients, customers, end users and any other business contact with whom an employee might have in the course of their employment.

## 2.0 The company's responsibilities

Howdens will aim 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 workers are recognised and valued regardless of background.
- Seek to ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against or harassed inside or outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other business contacts or when wearing Howdens branded clothing) and on work related trips or events, including social events.
- Encourage equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace by providing training opportunities, booklets and toolkits and facilitating open conversations.
- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by employees and other workers, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the organisation's work activities.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop to their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
- Make decisions concerning employees (e.g. development, reward) based on merit, apart from those limited exemptions and exceptions set out under Equality Act 2010
- Ensure recruitment practices are fair and transparent, and regularly updated to reflect changes in the law.
- Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion, or belief, so that we continue to meet the aims and commitments set out in this policy.

## 3.0 Employees' responsibilities

We all have a responsibility to comply with and uphold the principles of this policy and avoid behaviours that could be deemed inappropriate, disrespectful or discriminatory. To enable this, you must:

- Familiarise yourself with this policy and seek clarification of any point that you do not understand. You should also actively participate in any additional training provided.

- Raise any concerns about discrimination or inequality of opportunity within the company through a line manager in the first instance.
- Act on and report all instances of unacceptable behaviour and practices by others.
- Cooperate with any potential investigation of complaints of discrimination at Howdens.

#### **4.0 Managers' responsibilities**

In addition to their responsibilities as a Howdens employee, line managers have an important role to play to engage their direct reports in this policy and to lead by example. Managers must:

- Ensure all new employees are made aware of this policy during their induction, as well as the process for raising any concerns they may have.
- Ensure their recruitment, remuneration, promotion and development practices are free from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.
- Cultivate an environment of trust and respect, that is free from any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation both for employees.
- Take appropriate action to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Support any employee who alleges inequality of opportunity and if necessary, use the appropriate Grievance Policy to resolve any complaint.

#### **5.0 Raising concerns**

Anyone who believes they have experienced discrimination of any kind, should raise the matter with their line manager in the first instance or through the Grievance Procedure. All complaints will be treated confidentially and investigated thoroughly.

#### **6.0 Breach of this policy**

If it is alleged or found that an employee has breached this policy, made false allegations or been treated badly because they have raised a complaint under this policy, this will be dealt with via the Howdens Disciplinary Policy which could lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

#### **7.0 Further support**

Employees can also contact our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for confidential support and advice.