

OFFICE MANUAL, SECTION 4

EQUALITY POLICY

(01753) 530836

www.robertwalpole.co.uk

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REVISION TABLE

Revision*	Date	Comments
A, B, C, D	NA	-
E	20/10/2009	-
F	10/09/2010	-
1	25/07/2014	-
2	19/05/2017	Inclusion of flexible working, freedom of association, and the Investigation and Grievance Process.
3	21/05/2020	Renamed to Equality Policy. Updated for best practice and TfL requirements.
4	17/02/2022	Legal definitions added
5	21/04/2023	New section 3 and 4, Simplified Appendix A and B
6	02/05/2024	New logo, changes to wording in section 3b, and new information on UK living wage in section 5
7	24/04/2025	Changes to wording in section 1, amended section 7, added section 8 on remote working and Appendix C.

*Following re-formatting and consolidation in July 2014 revision naming was changed from letters to numbers.

1. EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Robert Walpole and Partners (RWP) is committed to treat all its applicants, employees and customers fairly, regardless of their race (including ethnic origin or nationality), sex, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, associations or during pregnancy and maternity.

Robert Walpole and Partners is committed to avoiding discrimination, harassment and victimisation in all aspects of employment and will monitor the application of this policy, including the composition of the workforce. RWP will take necessary actions to ensure this policy remains fully effective and follows all relevant legislation in the United Kingdom, in particular the Equality Act 2010. RWP supports flexible working arrangements to allow employees to balance their professional and personal responsibilities in a manner that supports well-being and productivity at work.

Robert Walpole and Partners seeks to promote equal opportunities awareness among staff, suppliers and customers where possible. The policy applies to all applicants, employees, suppliers and customers.

Robert Walpole and Partners is committed to:-

- a) Provide training and guidance for key decision makers such as management and supervisory staff and those involved in personnel and employment processes e.g. recruitment and selection;
- b) Monitor the existing workforce, and the effects and application of this policy;
- c) Examine and review existing procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and training in order to create fair conditions of employment;
- d) Implement the Investigation and Grievance Process, and develop those mechanisms for resolving grievances about unfair discrimination and harassment;
- e) Encourage key suppliers to adopt best practice with regards to equality and diversity.

Progress in implementing this policy will be reviewed annually by the partners.

Signed: _____



M. J. Walpole
Senior Partner

Date: 24/04/2025

2. EQUALITY ACT 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It defines nine protected characteristics:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Marriage and civil partnership
- e) Pregnancy and maternity
- f) Race
- g) Religion or belief
- h) Sex
- i) Sexual orientation

The Equality Act 2010 also protects against discrimination by association, when someone is treated unfairly because people in their life (like family members or friends) have a protected characteristic.

The Equality Act 2010 protects from discrimination by:

- a) Employers
- b) Businesses and organisations which provide goods or services
- c) Health and care providers
- d) Landlords
- e) Education providers
- f) Transport services
- g) Public bodies

More information on the legislation and its implications can be found on government [website](#).

3. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- a) **Direct discrimination** occurs when someone is treated worse than someone else because of a protected characteristic. In other words, it is unfair treatment of a person because of who they are.
- b) **Indirect discrimination** occurs where an employer has rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone but disproportionately disadvantages individuals with a protected characteristic. It may not be intended to treat anyone less favourably but disadvantages a group of people with a particular protected characteristic. For example, a blanket policy against flexible working can be indirect sex discrimination.
- c) **Harassment** is unwanted behaviour that is offensive or hostile, which makes you feel uncomfortable, intimidated or humiliated, on the basis of a protected characteristic.

- d) **Victimisation** occurs when someone is disadvantaged or punished because they have complained (or intend to complain) about discrimination or harassment in the workplace, or because they helped someone who has been discriminated against.

4. FAIRNESS, INCLUSION & RESPECT (FIR)

The difference between equality, diversity, and inclusion is that equality means making sure everyone can access the same opportunities, whereas diversity means valuing the differences between people, and inclusion is a measure of how safe and welcome people feel in their environment.

The Fairness, Inclusion and Respect (FIR) programme is an industry-wide initiative that aims to make workplaces better for everyone. The programme provides, free, industry-endorsed training and resources, guidance and materials, which supports businesses to be more innovative and profitable by addressing workplace culture challenges and helps attract and retain people from the full pool of talent. More information and training modules can be found by visiting the Supply Chain Sustainability School's [website](#).

5. RECRUITMENT

At Robert Walpole and Partners, we aim to open recruitment to a diverse range of candidates as possible in order to find the very best match for our positions. All employment opportunities are to be advertised with widely accessible internet platforms, local recruitment agencies, and on our website making positions available to everyone.

To make the most of a local workforce we will primarily consider applicants from within our working regions, which generally includes London and the Southeast of England.

RWP are keen to support unemployed ICE (Institution of Civil Engineers) members and recruit them in conjunction with the ICE's Benevolent Fund programmes. In addition, each year we offer flexible student placements to those just starting their career.

RWP is committed to ensure fair compensation for all staff. RWP offers annual salaries for its direct employees and hourly rates for contracted staff. These are compared to appropriate Living Wage rates set by Living Wage Foundation, a citizens UK initiative, to ensure compliance (<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>).

6. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

To achieve continual improvement in line with this policy, RWP sets equality and diversity objectives and ways to achieve them within a Strategic Action Plan (Appendix A).

To teach our staff how to best manage equality and diversity aspects within the business, RWP sets out a Diversity Training Plan (Appendix B).

As industry best practice changes, the company may receive feedback about improving equality and diversity from employees, customers, and any other key stakeholders. The company is committed to listening to such feedback in an open manner and will update our objectives and this policy as required.

Where a client's equality and diversity policies set higher standards than this policy, Robert Walpole and Partners will adhere to those policies as well as our own.

7. HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND GRIEVANCES

Any reports of harassment, bullying or grievances will be dealt with in accordance with our Investigation and Grievance Process (Office Manual Part 13). We are committed to promoting good relations both within our workforce and with all stakeholders and encourage all to raise any concerns related to this policy.

Bullying, including cyberbullying or any behaviour intended to undermine, humiliate, intimidate, or degrade a colleague, is considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Robert Walpole and Partners. Bullying may be a one-off incident or a repeated pattern of behaviour, and it can occur in person, via digital communication, or through other indirect means. Any instance of bullying will be treated with the same seriousness as other forms of harassment and will be addressed using the same procedures.

In line with our Whistleblowing Policy (Office Manual Part 08), no one who reports any concern under this policy in good faith will be subjected to any detriment for coming forward. Appropriate support and guidance will be provided to all parties involved in line with our commitment to a fair and respectful working environment.

8. FLEXIBLE AND REMOTE WORKING

We recognise that flexible and remote working arrangements can give an improved work-life balance and provide greater opportunity for individuals from a range of backgrounds and personal circumstances.

8.1. Remote Working Within the UK

Remote working arrangements within the United Kingdom may be requested on a temporary or regular basis. This is subject to operational requirements and suitability of the role, and partner discretion. Remote working must be requested and approved in advance.

Employees working remotely are to:

- a) Be working and contactable during core working hours (10am - 4pm except a one hour lunch break)
- b) Communicate their planned working hours to the team they are working with
- c) Attend in-person meetings at the office when requested.
- d) Attend training courses as required
- e) Maintain a suitable and safe working environment at home
- f) Follow company policies relating to health and safety, drug and alcohol, data protection and fatigue management.

8.2. Remote Working Abroad

A request to work remotely must be submitted for approval and may be granted at the discretion of a Partner (appendix C).

a) Approval Process

- Applicant to submit a formal written request outlining the reason and proposed duration
- Requests to be made at least 2 months in advance
- Approval to be obtained from a Partner, following consultation with a line manager. Cover for UK site work is to be arranged by the applicant.
- Luke Fenlon (luke.fenlon@robertwalpole.co.uk) must be informed once approved
- A calendar entry must be sent to holidays@robertwalpole.co.uk with your name, staff code and the purpose clearly stated (e.g. B73 – Name – Remote work abroad), marked as “All Day”

b) Conditions

- Secure systems must be used at all times; public Wi-Fi must not be used.
- Follow company policies relating to data protection and confidentiality
- The work location must be a suitable and safe working environment
- RWP must be provided with up-to-date contact details
- Staff must be working and contactable during UK core working hours (10am - 4pm except a one hour lunch break)
- Staff must communicate their planned working hours to the team they are working with
- Staff must attend TEAMS meetings online when requested.

8.3. Exceptions

Except for short periods, remote working from abroad is not suitable for roles which require UK site visits. Exceptions for family emergencies will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and require Partner approval.

APPENDIX A – STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Equality and Diversity objective	Current position / Baseline	Action / Task	When	Person responsible	Resource implications	Measure of success
To create a diverse workforce	We collect nominal data on ethnicity, but do not use this information	Collate workforce diversity data Refresh employee survey data Check GDPR issues Research and set diversity targets where appropriate Review and update objective annually	Start during 2020, review annually	Business Partners	Extra workload for admin staff	Actions completed within set timescale
To ensure that key suppliers adopt similar approaches to Equality and Diversity	We engage with our supplier chain concerning Equality and a range of other strategic policies. We do not currently seek to influence our supply chain to change their policies	Revise Supplier Questionnaire to include E&D section Review and update objective annually	Start during 2020, review annually	Jonathan Walpole	Extra workload for admin staff	Understanding of suppliers' E&D

Equality and Diversity objective	Current position / Baseline	Action / Task	When	Person responsible	Resource implications	Measure of success
Fair employment practices including working with employment agencies	We currently engage with recruiters using anonymised data. E&D targets are not set or discussed	Engage with recruiters to develop more inclusive language in recruitment candidate packs Review and update objective annually	Start during 2020, review annually	Business Partners	Varies Not a lot once action plan has been prepared.	Successful engagement with recruiter Increase in number of applications compared to average from previous years
Eliminate discrimination within our organisation	Equality Policy in place; briefed out to all employees	Monitor compliance Internal review of progress Review and update objective annually	Ongoing, review annually	Business Partners	Varies	No cases of discrimination recorded Long periods of staff retention
Ensure that appropriate policies are in place and are regularly monitored and reviewed	All policies are reviewed on an annual basis	Track legislation changes Monitor clients' requirements React to changing business needs	Ongoing, review annually	Business Partners	Varies	Policies continue to be satisfactory and our Office Manual is maintained up-to-date
Ensure all future and current employees are supported to make the most of their skills and talents	Competency assessments are undertaken on an annual basis	Monitor employee performance and assign a mentor when gaps in skills or knowledge are identified	Ongoing, review annually	Business Partners	All employees	Greater efficiency and quicker task completion

APPENDIX B – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TRAINING PLAN

Equality and diversity objective	Current position / Baseline	Action / Task	When	Person responsible	Resource implications	Measure of success
Ensure that all staff receive appropriate E&D training	Equality Policy is briefed out as part of the employee induction process	Review the content of the Equality Policy on an annual basis	Ongoing, review annually	Jonathan Walpole	All employees	Understanding of company E&D objectives across workforce
	E&D training and guidance available to management and supervisory staff	Review of training undertaken by top management level to determine any gaps	By the end of 2020, review annually	Jonathan Walpole	Business Partners	Enhanced managing diversity competency
To ensure that E&D training is effectively resourced	Basic training provided as part of staff induction process	Research external resources	Ongoing	Mark Simmons	All employees	Better understanding of company E&D objectives across workforce
	Online resources available to management and supervisory staff	Monitor adequacy of learning modules	Ongoing, review annually	Jonathan Walpole	Business Partners	Roll out Sustainability School Training modules
Undertake equality impact assessment training	We do not currently undertake equality impact assessment training	Review the need for equality impact assessment training	By the end of 2025	Jonathan Walpole	Business Partners	Equality impact assessment training programme developed
Undertake competency training in managing diversity	We do not currently undertake competency training in managing diversity	Review the need for competency training in managing diversity Prepare training module as required	By the end of 2025	Jonathan Walpole	Business Partners	Prepare programme for competency training in managing diversity

APPENDIX C – WORK ABROAD REQUEST FORM**Employee Details**

Full Name: _____
Job Title: _____
Department (Engineer/CAD/Admin): _____
Line Manager: _____

Work Abroad Request Details

Country of Work Abroad: _____
Start Date: ____ / ____ / ____
End Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Total Number of Working Days Abroad: _____

Primary Reason for Working Abroad:

Work Location While Abroad (e.g. home address, co-working space): _____

Time Zone During Working Hours: _____

Will your working hours remain the same as your UK hours?

☐ Yes

☐ No – If no, please detail your proposed working hours:

Do you have access to:

Secure Internet connection? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Required hardware/software? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How will you ensure data security and confidentiality while abroad?

Contact (while abroad):

Phone: _____

Emergency Contact (while abroad):

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Approvals

Employee Declaration:

I confirm the information provided is accurate and I will adhere to company policies while working abroad.

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Manager Approval:

Approved ☐ Declined ☐

Comments:

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Partner Approval:

Approved ☐ Declined ☐

Comments:

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____