

Diversity and inclusion policy

The firm is committed to promoting diversity, preventing discrimination and providing a supportive and inclusive working environment for everyone. This applies to our recruitment and selection practices, terms and conditions of employment including pay and benefits, promotion, training, transfer, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination of employment and every other aspect of your interaction while at work. Everyone, including contractors and anyone who works on site, prospective recruits and visitors will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect regardless of any of the following characteristics:

- age
- disability
- marriage and civil partnership
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy, maternity and paternity
- race, colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- gender identity and expression
- gender reassignment status
- part-time or full-time status
- union membership status

Protected characteristics

Of the characteristic listed above, nine are protected in law. The Firm also extends those protections to cover wider groups than those strictly protected under the law, in some cases.

Age	<p>Everyone is protected across all age groups.</p> <p>We treat everyone fairly and our focus is on your ability to carry out your role</p>
Disability	<p>This encompasses those who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on one's ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>We will take proactive steps to make any reasonable adjustments necessary for disabled people to carry out their roles. We have a flexible working culture and we are committed to supporting individual learning and working styles.</p>

Marriage and civil partnership status	<p>We recognise the rights of married employees and those in civil partnerships.</p> <p>All employee benefits available to a 'spouse' include a civil partner.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>People of all sexualities including, but not limited to, heterosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian and asexual people are protected against discrimination and will be treated fairly.</p> <p>We support an inclusive environment in which everyone can be authentic in the workplace. We also support those who wish to uphold their right to privacy and will maintain confidentiality.</p> <p>Any homophobic, biphobic or discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to our disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p>
Pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption and carers	<p>You are protected against discrimination during pregnancy and maternity leave. This also applies to adoption and paternity leave.</p> <p>Our maternity and paternity policies are open to all gender identities.</p> <p>We have a flexible culture to facilitate different stages of your life cycle, providing support for your caring responsibilities when required.</p>
Race	<p>This includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.</p> <p>Any discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to our disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>This protects those who follow any religion with a clear structure and belief system, including those who do not follow a religion.</p> <p>We support our employees in observing their religion or belief.</p>
Sex	<p>All employees are protected against discrimination on the basis of sex. We treat everyone fairly and focus on your ability to carry out your role.</p> <p>Any discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to our disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p>
Gender reassignment status and gender identity and expression	<p>We support employees of all gender identities and expressions.</p> <p>This includes anyone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone a process to change their gender, irrespective of whether they are under medical supervision.</p> <p>We will support anyone through this process and will ensure the right to privacy and confidentiality is upheld.</p> <p>We treat everyone fairly with the focus on your ability to carry out your role.</p> <p>Any transphobic or discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to our disciplinary and grievance procedures.</p>

In addition to the nine protected characteristics in law (above), we extend protections to the following characteristics:

Part-time or full time	Those working on part-time or full-time contracts will be treated fairly. We have a culture of flexibility and we are committed to supporting individual learning patterns, working styles and caring responsibilities.
Union membership	Everyone will be treated the same regardless of union membership status.

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination or any behaviour which is counter-productive to providing an inclusive and supportive environment will not be tolerated.

Forms of discrimination include:

- direct discrimination, where a person is less favourably treated because of any protected characteristic;
- indirect discrimination, where a requirement or condition which cannot be justified is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group;
- discrimination by association, where a person is less favourably treated because they associate or have some connection with another person who possesses a protected characteristic;
- perception discrimination, where a person is less favourably treated because others think they possess a protected characteristic;
- harassment, where a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that is either related to a protected characteristic or of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of (a) violating their dignity, or (b) creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- victimisation, where a person is subjected to a detriment for complaining about discrimination or harassment, helping someone else complain, or bringing discrimination proceedings.

We treat cases of discrimination or behaviour which is counter-productive to providing an inclusive environment seriously. If you believe that you may have been discriminated against you are encouraged to raise the matter through the procedure set out in our Grievance or Bullying and Harassment Policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and, where raised formally, will be investigated in accordance with the Grievance or Bullying and Harassment Policy. Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Policy. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy.

We do not tolerate intimidation or victimisation against any person who makes a complaint of discrimination or who assists in an investigation of alleged discrimination. We encourage everyone to report any incident of suspected discrimination or victimisation. We have a supportive environment in which confidentiality is upheld wherever possible. Support can be sought from a Partner or manager, or alternatively from a member of the HR team. Retaliation against anyone who initiates a complaint of discrimination may lead to disciplinary action.

Recruitment

We seek to ensure that we recruit from a diverse talent pool, that all applicants are treated fairly at each stage of the recruitment process and that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics set out above. The firm aims to recruit and develop the best people and to create a supportive working environment where individual capability and growth is encouraged.

Promotion

Promotion within the firm is based on merit and, in being considered for promotion, you will be treated fairly.

Monitoring and communication

We monitor certain characteristics in an annual HR audit to ensure the effectiveness of our policies. This enables us to further promote diversity by tracking the recruitment and progression of all to ensure no discriminatory practices are in play.

This policy will be monitored periodically to evaluate its effectiveness. It will be amended and updated where necessary and communicated appropriately to ensure everyone is supported.

Emma Lim, Head of Talent & Diversity, February 2024.

For additional information on our firm, please visit our website at [simmons-simmons.com](https://www.simmons-simmons.com).

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