



SYKES
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GROUP LTD

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Equality and Diversity Policy

Equal opportunities statement

Sykes Cleaning Group Limited is a stronger believer in equal opportunities. We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity for all our subcontractors. We aim to ensure that our service is inclusive to meet the needs of all our subcontractors and clients. We recognize that all individuals come from diverse backgrounds

We aim to:

- Provide a secure and accessible environment in which all individuals can flourish and in which all contributions are considered and valued;
- Include and value the contribution of all individuals;
- Provide positive non-stereotyping information about gender roles and diverse family structures, diverse ethnic and cultural groups and disabled people;
- Improve our knowledge and understanding of issues of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting equality and valuing diversity;
- Challenge and eliminate discriminatory actions.
- Make inclusion a thread that runs through all of the activities of the setting and foster good relations between all communities.

Our Workforce

Sykes Cleaning Group is committed to ensuring equal opportunities, fairness of treatment, dignity, work-life balance and the elimination of all forms of discrimination in the workplace for all individuals.

Our aim is to create a working environment representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit and everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

Sykes Cleaning Group is committed to providing a working environment in which people feel comfortable and confident that they will be treated with respect and dignity.

Our policy is to treat all individuals equally and fairly and to not unlawfully discriminate irrespective of their sex (gender), marital status, civil partnership status, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin, culture, religion or belief, age,

pregnancy or maternity or disability (“protected characteristics” as per the Equality Act 2010). This is irrespective of whether they are temporary, part- time or full-time.

Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of self-employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for self-employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

Discrimination by or against an individual is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favorably because of one or more of the protected characteristics. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It may also, in some cases, occur by association i.e. where a person is put at a disadvantage due to a characteristic of another person.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage, for example, a requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disparately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is also prohibited. Harassment is dealt with further in our Harassment policy.

Victimization is also prohibited. This is less favorable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

All subcontractors have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat individuals with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other individuals, regardless of their status.

Recruitment and selection

This equal opportunities policy applies to all stages of the recruitment and selection process, as well as throughout an individuals’ self-employment.

All individuals who have responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion, or who supervise other subcontractors’, must observe our equal opportunities policy at all times.

References and Criminal background checks

We use enhanced criminal record checks through the DBS for subcontractors, who will have unsupervised access to vulnerable environment, such as child centered settings.

This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 for the vetting and barring scheme.

We keep all records relating to subcontractors, up to 6 years, in particular those demonstrating the checks have been done, including the date and number of the DBS check.

Gender

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at all levels of the organization through:

- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Supporting employees in balancing their life at work and at home
- Supporting employees who become pregnant and taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity leave.

Trans-gender status

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. Sykes Cleaning Group will take positive steps to support a trans- gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marital status

People are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

Race

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented at all levels of the organization through:

- Challenging racial stereotypes
- Understanding, respecting and valuing different racial and cultural backgrounds and perspectives.

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognized and valued at all levels of the organization through:

- Focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- Challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities
- Making appropriate adjustments in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full career potential.

Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- Challenging age stereotyping
- Recognizing the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

Religious belief and political opinion

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices or political opinions by recognizing individuals' freedom of belief and right to protection from intolerance and persecution.

Wherever possible subcontractors will be allowed time for prayer. If time is allowed, subcontractors should make up that time in a way to be agreed with HR Manager. There is no automatic time off for prayer.

Subcontractors who wish to dress in accordance with their religion must be allowed to do so whenever possible. If there are any potential difficulties (e.g. Health and Safety) this will be discussed with the subcontractor with the intention of reaching an appropriate solution.

HIV

Discrimination against an subcontractor or potential subcontractor on grounds that he or she has, or is thought to have, HIV or AIDS is not acceptable, and confidentiality will be respected in line with the wishes of an individual with HIV or AIDS.

Sexuality

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- Respecting different lifestyles
- Challenging negative stereotypical views.

Commitment

Sykes Cleaning Group is committed to: -

- Encouraging equality and diversity in the workplace as they are good practice and make business sense.
- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognized and valued.
- Awareness of individuals rights and responsibilities under the equality policy. Responsibilities, including individual conducting themselves to help the organization provide equal opportunities and prevent bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination.
- Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all subcontractors, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilized to maximize the efficiency of the organization.
- Decisions concerning subcontractors being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act) .
- Is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each subcontractor to feel respected and able to give their best.
- Sykes Cleaning Group is also committed to ensuring that no policy, procedure, provision, rule, requirement, condition or criterion will be imposed on any worker or job applicant without justification if it would be likely to put that person at a disadvantage on any of the above grounds.
- The diversity of the communities we serve is reflected at all levels within our workforce.

Liability

All subcontractors should understand they, as well as Sykes Cleaning Group, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimization and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their contract, against fellow subcontractors, customers, suppliers and the public.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organization's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

Monitoring and review

Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, such as the composition of job applicants, benefits and career progression of subcontractors. This will be reviewed annually, and action taken to address any issues.

Review self-employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

Policy Name	Equality and Diversity Policy
Date	07/02/2024
Signed	Emilia Ascroft
Name	Emilia Ascroft
Role	Legal Assistant
Next Review Date	January 2025