

# Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

## Vision and Values

SES Water is committed to create, maintain, and support an organisational culture with equality, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of what we do. We want everyone who comes into contact with us to feel valued and respected.

Our values, guiding our behaviours and decision-making, reflect respect, openness, and fairness underpinning everything we do in order to achieve our vision.



## Mission

SES Water believes that equality, diversity and inclusion should be embedded into all aspects of the business. This Policy sets out how the Company will promote and support an inclusive environment built on respect and understanding where everyone can flourish, irrespective of their background and personal characteristics. Our aim is to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation.

SES Water will be inclusive by engaging with all stakeholders fairly, by delivering value through operating a safe, sustainable and reliable business to provide exceptional levels of service to customers, and by creating a diverse, inclusive and skilled workplace and a diverse supply chain promoting fair employment practices.

## Objectives

- Embed equality, diversity, and inclusion into our activities
- Work together with stakeholders by engaging with communities, interest groups, regulatory bodies, and all Interested Parties, and generally with those affected by our services, as well as through our Customer and Environmental Scrutiny Panels
- Minimise the potential for discrimination, harassment, and bullying across all our activities; and promote equal opportunities so that people with protected characteristics do not experience disproportionate disadvantage as a result of our operations
- Create opportunities for local, disadvantaged, and underrepresented people and companies by increasing equal opportunity, skills, and employment; and promote equal outcomes in the services we provide
- Raise awareness of equalities issues and of the benefits of a diverse culture
- Further reduce our gender pay gap

## How we are going to achieve this

- Roll out training on equality, diversity, and inclusion to all staff
- Enhance accessibility to and increase the numbers of applications from and appointments of under-represented groups in staff
- Measure and report on the gender pay gap on an annual basis, and continue to work to reduce this
- Establish a Diversity & Inclusion Group to ensure a consistent approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion and to engage with all staff on values and embed them in all areas of our daily work

## Measuring success

- Everyone at SES Water feels empowered to have a voice that is heard, whatever their role in the organisation (measured by staff surveys, in appraisals)
- Gender pay gap is further reduced (measured through annual reporting)
- Higher percentage of applications and appointments to work from under-represented groups

## Workforce

SES Water supports the principle of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, because of or related to the protected characteristics of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

SES Water believes that it is in our best interests, and all Employees' best interests, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available are considered when employment opportunities arise.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion, career management, provision of other benefits, terms and conditions, transfer and dismissal are based solely on objective and job related criteria.

We have zero tolerance towards discrimination, bullying, or harassment. SES Water will deal with any allegations of discrimination or bullying seriously, sensitively and in confidence. Where evidence of misconduct arises, such case will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

## Complaints

Any complaint of discrimination, victimisation, harassment, bullying or other breach of this Policy should be reported to HR. Complaints are handled seriously, promptly, fairly, sensitively and in confidence.

## TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

### **Direct Discrimination**

This arises where an individual is accorded less favourable treatment because they have a protected characteristic, or are thought (whether rightly or wrongly) to have a protected characteristic, or because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

### **Discrimination by Association**

This is a form of direct discrimination where an individual is treated less favourably because they associate with (or because of their association with) another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

### **Discrimination by Perception**

This is a form of direct discrimination against an individual because others think (rightly or wrongly) they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the individual in question does not possess that protected characteristic.

### **Indirect Discrimination**

This occurs when a provision, criterion or practice is applied to a group of people but which puts an individual with a protected characteristic and others sharing that characteristic at a particular disadvantage and which the Employer cannot show to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **Victimisation**

This arises where an individual is subjected to a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or because they are suspected of doing so.

An individual is not protected from victimisation if they have given false evidence or information, or made a false allegation, in bad faith or if they have knowingly supported an untrue or malicious complaint.

### **Failure to Make Reasonable Adjustments**

Where any arrangements made by or on behalf of the Employer, or any physical feature of premises occupied by the Employer place a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled, the Employer has a duty to take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to avoid the disadvantage.

### **Discrimination Arising from Disability**

This occurs where an individual is treated unfavourably because of something arising as a consequence of an individual's disability and the Employer cannot show that the treatment is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

### **Harassment**

Harassment arises where an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Sexual harassment arises where an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect as set out in the paragraph above. Similarly, sexual harassment arises where an individual is treated less favourably after having rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

An individual may make a complaint of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves. Individuals are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

### **Discriminatory Action or Harassment by Employees**

Any employee who is found to have discriminated against, victimised or harassed another may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal (and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct, where the circumstances warrant this). Employees should also be aware that they may be personally legally liable for their actions to anyone against whom they discriminate, victimise or harass.

### **Bullying**

SES Water deplores all forms of bullying which is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.