

General Policy Statement

The firm supports the principle of Equality and Diversity in employment wholeheartedly and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.

We believe that it is in the firm's best interests and those of all who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available throughout the community are considered when employment opportunities arise.

To this end we are committed, wherever practicable and consistent with our statutory and professional obligations, to achieving and maintaining a workforce which broadly reflects the composition of the adult population of Greater Manchester. We encourage and support the recruitment, retention and career development of people from as wide a range as possible of ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds.

We will continue to take every possible step to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management are based solely on individual merits and abilities, appropriate to the job.

We work within the requirements of all current legislation including the Equality Act 2010, and we implement the provisions of regulatory codes of practice in employment. We are not required to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 as this applies only to public authorities (such as central and local government, hospitals and other bodies with public functions).

Equal Opportunities Policy

Beever and Struthers aims to provide a workplace in which all staff are treated in a fair and consistent manner. We will ensure, to the best of our ability, that staff and all others who have contact with the firm are not discriminated against, either directly or indirectly.

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in all areas of dealing with staff, whether in recruitment and selection, promotion or training and development.

We will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. Any employee having a complaint of victimisation, discrimination or harassment is encouraged to raise the matter. Such instances will be viewed very seriously and dealt with under the Company Disciplinary policy and in line with the Equality Act 2010. The complaint will be fully examined and all possible action taken to eradicate the problem.

If any concerns or queries about any equality issue at work arise, whether it may be to do with personal experience or lack of clarity on how to deal with a specific issue, the relevant Partner should be contacted in the first instance. If this is inappropriate in the circumstances, then our HR Director should be contacted.

Implementing our Policy

In order to put our existing policy of Equality and Diversity on to a more structured basis and to develop its application in the day-to-day operation of the business, we continually:-

- Monitor the application and effects of this policy through our recruitment process to ensure that our opportunity and promotion procedures attract a mix of applicants, which broadly reflects the clients and geographic areas we serve. When historic imbalances have been identified, remedial action has been taken to positively redress the balance in this area;
- Review and if necessary improve existing procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and training;
- Review our Equality and Diversity Statement on a regular basis;
- Research and review current legislation, regulatory guidance and codes of practice to address key areas on which Beever and Struthers should focus to ensure quality outcomes for equality and diversity issues;
- Advise on and coordinate the production, distribution and follow up of good practice guidance to all staff;
- Review current practices and address any areas of weakness in our procedures in relation to current legislative, regulatory and associated good practice frameworks;

- Research and recommend positive action initiatives, so that we can work towards building a diverse workforce; and
- Ensure new procedures support the organisational aims and objectives of developing a culture of equality.
- All employees are reminded that they have a responsibility to play their part in achieving the objectives set out in the policy statement and any discrimination or breaches will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.

Equal Opportunities in Practice

Beever and Struthers takes its equal opportunity obligations seriously and believes that having a strategy and policy in this area is not enough. We have sought to embed the philosophy of the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion through our working practices and partnerships over a number of years. Specific examples of positive actions taken in this area include:-

- We joined forces with pro-manchester back in 2020 to shine a spotlight on the state of equality, diversity and inclusion in the north west region. pro-manchester is a well-connected business development organisation, which works with other key strategic partners and businesses in the City of Manchester, which we too have business relationships with. Whilst the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion is paramount, we wanted to promote our EDI support and commitment to our staff, and the wider business community.

As a firm we support the principle of equality and diversity in employment and oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships. With this in mind, we recently met with pro-manchester to discuss their vision and whether we can be a part of the wider Greater Manchester focus.

Pro-manchester set up an EDI committee and we are now members of that group and have staff members who sit on some of the following focus groups:

- Disability, Mental health and Neuro Diversity,
- Minorities, Race, Religion, Belief.
- LGBT+ / Sexual Orientation.
- Black Lives Matter.

As a firm we attend meetings, attend events, write blogs and contribute and comment on topical issues.

- Projects undertaken with local schools to encourage minority groups, individuals from the local community and other disadvantaged groups to pursue careers through accountancy.
- Extensive equal opportunities monitoring procedures through the recruitment process to ensure that our opportunity and promotion procedures attract a mix of applicants, which broadly reflects the clients and geographic areas we serve. When historic imbalances have been identified, remedial action has been taken to positively redress the balance in this area.
- Supporting our staff observing religious festivals such as Ramadan by being flexible on working hours etc whilst still delivering on client expectations.
- Advising the firm's partners and staff and committees in matters of equal opportunities in employment on a regular basis.
- Providing training and guidance in the equal opportunities policy and those provisions to individuals, relevant to their responsibilities, of Equal Opportunities Legislation.
- Ensuring that all material adheres to the firm's equal opportunities policy and that the organisation's position as an equal opportunities employer is promoted in all relevant literature.
- Ensuring that reference to the equal opportunities policy is included in terms and conditions of employment
- On all external job adverts, we include the following statement: *"We are committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships."*