



## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

### **1. Commitment**

East Devon Law is committed to providing legal services to all clients regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage, gay marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin) religion or belief (including philosophical belief), sex or sexual orientation.

We also ensure that our trusted associates have similar policies in place. Please contact them direct for details of their respective policies.

In particular, we will endeavour to provide:

- a service that is accessible to everyone regardless of their physical and mental abilities
- a full and clear explanation of our advice that is easy to understand both verbal and written
- documents in larger print sizes; or in Braille [subject to an additional cost]
- an accessible website that complies with WCAG2.0 regulations
- copies of documents that we can send to carers or other nominated people (providing we have the appropriate authority)
- audio versions of all documents in either mp3, CD or cassette tape format, or reading of documents
- an appropriate service for D/Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients
- a referral to another legal services provider if we cannot meet the requirements of a particular religion or belief e.g. Sharia Law

Where clients advise us of these or any other special requirements, we will endeavour to provide them at no additional cost, with the exception of Braille documents which are provided by an external facilitator and for which an additional charge would need to be made

### **2. Scope**

This policy covers all areas of equality and diversity included in the Equality Act 2010. The Act consolidated all previous legislation relating to equality, diversity and

discrimination. The legislation and our policy applies to all dealings with all clients, consultants and employees of the firm.

Our policy also covers the Employment Rights Act 1996 which applies to new and current employees, and includes a commitment to take all reports of any type of discrimination seriously and to deal with them appropriately.

### **3. Approach**

Whilst we have a statutory duty to comply with legislation, EDL encourages all staff to examine any decisions relating to clients and staff having regard to issues of equality and diversity, and what action clients and staff should take where any issues of discrimination are identified.

We encourage our clients to discuss their needs with our lawyer, Ian Hunt, at any time, and to let us know if they have any concerns or issues which we will endeavour to resolve them to their satisfaction.

We take all concerns and complaints regarding discrimination seriously. If a client has a complaint relating to any equality or diversity issues, they should ask for a copy of our Complaints Procedure.

If a member of staff is concerned about any equality or diversity issue, they should refer to s2.9 of the Office Manual [2.9 Equality and Diversity policy](#) and to the Employee Handbook. All staff receive equality and diversity training on induction and annually thereafter.

### **4. Responsibilities**

All employees and consultants have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with the law, and to maintain a non-discriminatory ethos in all dealings with clients and other members of staff.

### **5. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Compliance Manager.

Last review: November 2016