



Equality and Diversity Policy

This document sets out JS Agriculture Ltd.'s ('JSA') policy on equality and diversity for its staff and those who use our services. It underpins our internal Code of Practice on equal opportunities and sits alongside our existing policies on Diversity in the broader sense, reinforcing our determination to make this organisation a leader in this field.

JSA recognises the positive benefits of the implementation of an Equality and Diversity Policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all employees, potential employees, volunteers and visitors, are treated in a fair and equitable manner regardless of their age, disability, marital status, family responsibility, race, colour, ethnic background, nationality, religion or belief, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. We value the differences, needs and contributions a diverse workforce and customer base represents.

The company places an obligation upon all our staff and volunteers to respect and act in accordance with this policy. We are committed to providing equality and diversity training for all our staff and volunteers.

JSA extends this positive attitude in respect of equality and diversity to our sub-contractors, service users and the community.

We will be an equality and diversity champion and leader in:

- ✚ promoting equality and diversity
- ✚ challenging and eradicating discrimination
- ✚ providing responsive and accessible services

Within the overall framework of its statement of purpose and values, JSA is committed to the principle and practice of equal opportunities and celebrates the diversity of people. We understand that these two concepts are not the same but are complementary. Without recognising and, most importantly, valuing the differences between people, there cannot be true equality of opportunity. Moreover JSA promotes individual life-enhancing opportunities that respect all people.

The company believes that equalising employment opportunity not only meets legal and social responsibilities, but also promotes organisational effectiveness and improves the quality of working life.

All employees and volunteers whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Current Legislation

There is a range of current legislation which establishes the principles of equal treatment in employment and in the provision of services to the public.

JSA has a legal obligation to ensure policies and procedures conform to the legislation as set out in appendix I.

This document sets out the Equality and Diversity Policy of the company. It explains why equality and diversity are important to us, the basic principles we will follow and how we intend to monitor and achieve this — that we do what we say.

What does the JSA mean by equality?

DEFINITIONS

Equality is creating an even platform to enable everyone to access the same opportunities, and is backed by legislation to prevent discrimination based on prejudices against any group.

Diversity is understanding and valuing the differences in people, and believing that harnessing these differences will create a productive working environment, and be an enriching life experience where talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

Valuing diversity means valuing the qualities that different people bring to their jobs, to the resolution of problems and to the development of business opportunities - rather than judging people's ideas by the extent to which they conform to our existing values or personal preference.

Managing diversity means recognising that our staff, volunteers and those who use our services are from differing cultural, ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds and have different religions or beliefs, nationalities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, physical and mental abilities etc.

By recognising those differences, JSA can make the most from our potential. It is about managing people who are not like you, and who do not necessarily aspire to be like you. It is about having the management skill to allow their different perspectives and views to improve the quality of your decisions.

In practice this means that we are committed to:

- ✚ giving all staff and volunteers the chance to achieve their full potential by striving to eliminate unfairness, discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying at work.
- ✚ dealing with staff and volunteers solely on the basis of merit and without prejudice, thus ensuring fair, reasonable and dignified treatment for all in:
 - recruitment
 - performance management/appraisal
 - access to training
 - career development
 - job allocation
 - promotion
 - grievance and disciplinary matters
- ✚ providing support and encouragement to all staff and volunteers to enable them to give their best, but with special consideration for members of staff and volunteers with particular needs such as those with domestic responsibilities or with disabilities
- ✚ treating staff employed by others (including agency staff and outside contractors) in a professional manner and making sure they are not harassed, bullied or discriminated against.

The Aim of our Policy

- ✦ To ensure all staff and volunteers are afforded equality of opportunity.
- ✦ To provide a fair structure of Policies and Procedures including Recruitment and Selection, Training, Disciplinary Policy and Procedures and Harassment.
- ✦ To ensure all employees have equality of access to promotion and equal pay.
- ✦ To attract a diverse workforce and utilise the skills, knowledge and abilities available.
- ✦ To create a positive image as an employer and service provider.
- ✦ Increase performance and efficiency, and prevent disciplinary and grievance cases.
- ✦ Zero tolerance of breaches of our Equality and Diversity Policy. All instances of alleged misbehaviour will be investigated under our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- ✦ To recognise the diversity of the local residents and their diverse backgrounds, culture and needs and ensure that services are delivered appropriately to maximise participation by all.
- ✦ Endeavour to remove any barriers to access the services we provide.

What we will do

JSA will uphold equality and diversity:

- ✦ in employment, by developing policies which ensure that no job applicant, employee, volunteer or trainee is unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their gender, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, age, physical or mental capabilities, marital status, gender identity, sexual orientation, social background, or organisation role;
- ✦ in service delivery, by providing appropriate, sensitive and impartial services and being accessible to all;
- ✦ by fostering a co-operative working environment which is free from harassment or victimisation, and which promotes good relations among staff to create the conditions for the full development of their potential

Specific actions and commitments

Gender

JSA will take action to promote gender equality.

- ✦ We will continue to work to ensure fair representation of women and men in our staff and service users.
- ✦ We will ensure that women are fully represented in all parts of the organisation at all levels.
- ✦ We will ensure our policies and procedures address gender issues and where appropriate take positive action. Our priorities in respect of gender equality will be identified in our Gender Equality Scheme and the associated Action Plan.
- ✦ We will ensure that we do not apply any direct or indirect discrimination to our clients or staff on the basis of gender and marriage.
- ✦ To tackle unequal pay between men and women, the Company will ensure that it has a transparent and non-discriminatory pay system.

Sexual Orientation

JSA is committed to creating a safe working environment for all its staff, volunteers and service users with due regard to their sexual orientation.

We want the company to be a place where people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender among our staff and volunteers, feel it is safe and comfortable to be open about their sexual orientation. We will challenge negative views and if necessary, provide training so that there is a better understanding of the issue amongst our staff.

Disabled People

The Social Model of Disability

“At present disabled people do not have the same opportunities or choices as non-disabled people. Nor do they enjoy equal respect or full inclusion in society on an equal basis. The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. This is known as ‘the social model of disability’, and provides a basis for the successful implementation of the duty to promote disability equality.” (*The Duty to promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice - England and Wales*)

We have adopted the social model of disability as a fundamental principle and recognise that people are not disabled by their impairments, but the way in which they are discriminated against by society.

The social model says that:

- ✦ Disability is caused by society’s failure to adapt itself to the different ways in which people accomplish activities
- ✦ Society in general (and the non-disabled majority in particular) bears the responsibility for disabling those people who are prevented from accomplishing activities in their own ways
- ✦ Disability can be best overcome by society learning to adapt to the variety of its citizens
- ✦ In the social model, disability is seen as the extra problems that people with impairments face because society is not geared up to take account of their needs.

JSA will:

- ✦ Create an appropriate Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and deliver against it.
- ✦ Increase awareness in the organisation about the needs of staff, users and visitors with disabilities.
- ✦ Work to ensure our practices do not restrict use of our services or the contribution people with disabilities can make to our work.
- ✦ Make regular assessments of the accessibility of our sites and will actively seek opportunities to improve access to our premises’ and services for people who have disabilities.
- ✦ We also recognise that disabilities may not always be visible and equally respect the wider needs of this group including individuals with mental health or debilitating conditions, including HIV and AIDS.

Race and Ethnicity

The company employs and serves people from diverse racial and ethnic groups. We will implement positive action initiatives to assist staff to access and enhance their career development opportunities, both within and outside the company.

We will:

- ✚ Create an appropriate Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan and deliver against it.
- ✚ Increase awareness in the organisation about race issues.

Religion and Belief

JSA is committed to creating a safe working environment for all its staff, volunteers and service users with due regard to their religions or beliefs.

We want the company to be a place where all staff, volunteers and clients who adhere to different religions or beliefs feel it is safe and comfortable to be open about their religion or belief. We will challenge negative views and practices and provide training so that there is a better understanding of the issues amongst our staff.

Age

JSA will continue to employ and serve people of all age groups and will ensure its policies do not adversely affect staff or services users because of their age.

We will ensure that we do not unfairly discriminate in the employment of staff and volunteers or the provision of services on grounds of age, both old and young.

Procurement

The company will strive to ensure that the purchase of goods, services and facilities is undertaken in line with our equality and diversity commitments. We want to engage with a diverse range of suppliers and ensure that businesses from diverse communities have an equal opportunity of competing for our contracts. We will endeavour, wherever practicable, to purchase from agencies or companies who share our values on equality of opportunity and diversity.

Training

JSA will provide in depth training for its entire staff and volunteers on all Equality and Diversity issues. This will include training on the new Equality Duties, and consideration of how equality impacts on all aspects of our business, not just employment issues.

Equality Impact Assessments

In accordance with the public duties in respect of Race, Gender and Disability, the company will train all relevant staff in Equality Impact Assessments. We will manage and deliver a programme of conducting Equality Impact Assessments on all our functions, identify areas of potential inequality and establish actions to close any gaps identified.

In implementing these principles, JSA will ensure that it meets all the necessary legal requirements and strive to set standards of good practice that others will follow.

Whose responsibility is it?

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for equality of opportunity within the organisation, with delegated responsibility to the General Manager for implementation throughout the Company. The General Manager has responsibility for chairing the company's Diversity Group.

The Role of the Diversity Group

The remit of the Diversity Group is:

- ✦ To review relevant current and pending legislation to ensure that JSA complies with its legal obligations.
- ✦ To review any aspect of JSA's activity to ensure that it does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its delivery of services to the public.
- ✦ To develop a relevant strategy supported by policies and procedures for consideration by the Managing Director
- ✦ To plan and effect communication of the groups existence and purpose so as to encourage help with its activities.
- ✦ To seek external support where appropriate in order to ensure that the company has access to the most appropriate advice in relation to Diversity issues.

Day to Day Operation of the Equality and Diversity Policy

Line managers are responsible for ensuring the Equality and Diversity Policy is implemented in their part of the organisation; for ensuring staff and volunteers understand the policy and their roles within it; and for providing reports and monitoring information.

In relation to this, managers should ensure that team and individual work programmes promote equality and diversity and keep this under review.

Every member of staff has an individual responsibility to ensure this policy is actively implemented. This should be reflected in the development of individual work programmes which take account of the needs of all potential users of services. It should also be reflected in all individuals' performance and conduct.

This policy will be made available to all company employees, volunteers, all candidates applying for positions with the company and all sub-contractors. This policy will be made available on our web site.

JSA actively encourages individual members of staff or volunteers who feel that they have in any way suffered from, been disadvantaged by, been discriminated against unlawfully, or have been subjected to harassment, to report these incidents to their appropriate line manager in the first instance, or alternatively, directly to the General Manager if they prefer. In the same way, members of staff who witness an act of discrimination or harassment against a fellow employee, volunteer and/or visitor should report this.

Any employee found to have acted in a discriminatory way in relation to colleagues, volunteers or visitors to the company will be dealt with in accordance with the company's disciplinary procedure.

Who is covered by this commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity?

All staff, volunteers, all visitors and all outside sub-contractors are covered by this commitment and have a right to fair, reasonable and considerate treatment at all times.

Some people are at greater risk of unfairness, discrimination, harassment and bullying. These include the following (but this list is not exhaustive):

- ✚ women, including married women
- ✚ people who have undergone, or who are in the process of undergoing gender reassignment
- ✚ people with caring responsibilities
- ✚ part-time workers
- ✚ ethnic minorities
- ✚ people with disabilities
- ✚ lesbians and gay men
- ✚ older people
- ✚ people in certain religious/political groups, because of their beliefs
- ✚ people diagnosed as HIV positive
- ✚ people who take part in trade union activities

Appendix I Legislation Annex A – Relevant Legislation

Equality Act 2010.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Disability Equality Duty

Employment Equality Act 2006

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

Employment Relations Act 1999

Employment Rights Act 1996

Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Equal Pay Act 1970

Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002

Gender Equality Duty

Gender Recognition Act 2004

Human Rights Act 1998

Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006. The regulations are effective from October 2006 and outlaw discrimination within employment and vocational training on the grounds of age.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulation 1999 prevent discrimination against different gender groups. JSA will seek to address the needs of different gender groups and transgender people in employment and the services it provides to the public.

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination 1975 and places a statutory General Duty on all public sector organisations to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women both in employment and in the provision of services to the public. The Act also places a Specific Duty on larger public sector organisations such as the Museum to produce and publish a Gender Equality Scheme. The Gender Equality Scheme will be the company's action plan of how we will achieve the statutory General Duty.

Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 prevent discrimination against and provide equality of opportunity for Lesbians, Gay Men and Bisexuals and requires employers to challenge homophobia in employment and in the services provided to the general public.

The Race Relations (Amendment) 2000 Act places a General Duty and a series of Specific Duties on specified public sector organisation. JSA is required to comply with these duties.

The General Duty requires public bodies to take the lead in eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between racial groups. The Specific Duty requires the company to produce a Race Equality Scheme which is our action plan stating how we are going to achieve the general duty.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 make it unlawful to discriminate against people because of their disability. The law requires organisations to make reasonable adjustments to their premises, services and employment practices to ensure that disabled people are treated equally.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 makes changes and strengthens the DDA 1995. In particular, it widens the definition of "disability" and also places a statutory duty on public sector organisations to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in relation to employment and the provision of services to the public. The company has a statutory duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme which will be the company's action plan as to how we are going to achieve our statutory duty.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 came into force in December 2003. Under these regulations it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against employees or potential employees on the grounds of their religion or belief.

Signed by John Straka Managing Director	<i>John Straka</i>
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