

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies



A group of four independent statutory Land Drainage, water levels and Flood Risk Management Authorities working collectively under a partnership agreement in accordance with section 11(5) of the Land Drainage Act (1991).

*Four Independent Boards:*

- *Witham First District Internal Drainage Boards*
- *Witham Third District Internal Drainage Boards*
- *Upper Witham Internal Drainage Boards*
- *North East Lindsey Internal Drainage Boards*

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**Author:** Risk Manager

**Policy Owner:** Associate Director of Human Resources

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# 1.0 - Introduction

Witham and Humber Drainage Board (The Boards) are an equal opportunities employer. The Boards are committed to equality of opportunity, and follow practises which are free from unfair, and unlawful discrimination.

This policy provides detail how the Boards will ensure they provide a workplace with a positive and proactive equality, diversity and inclusive culture.

## 1.1 – What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

In summary, EDI can be broken into the 3 parts:

Equality – meaning offering the same rights and opportunities to all people

Diversity – understanding that each person is unique. It means embracing people’s differences, including their beliefs, abilities, preferences, backgrounds, values and identities.

Inclusion – is an extension of equality and diversity to ensure all in the workplace and treated fairly and everyone is valued.

This Policy document is written to meet the requirements of the Legislation within England, and specifically the Equality Act 2010.

[This link is to the Kings Printer Version of the Equalities Act 2010](#)

The Equalities Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace, and wider society.

It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the laws easier to understand that strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it’s unlawful to treat someone.

## 1.2 – What are protected characteristics

The Equalities Act 2010 names specific characteristics which are protected – these are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

There may be exceptions such as ‘age’ in relation to licensed establishments, but the legal exceptions, are not relevant to The Boards and their workplace.

### 1.3 – Policy Aim

To ensure that no applicant or members of staff receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.

It further seeks to ensure that no persons are victimised or subjected to any form of bullying or harassment.

### 1.4 – Witham and Humbers EDI values

The Boards' value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion.

The Board recognises that valuing EDI and ensuring compliance within the legislation is a positive benefit to the Boards. A diverse team provides a positive team with various skills, with the abilities of all employees being recognised and encouraged.

The Boards are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and value all employees. The Board are committed to eliminating discrimination against any individual on the grounds of gender, disability, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, language, religion or beliefs, appearance, nationality or culture.

The Boards selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be based on 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 and skills within the Boards.

## 2.0 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

### 2.1 – The Boards commitment to EDI

- Create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- Every employee, worker or self-employed contractor is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- Provide training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
- Understand equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- Treat all our service users with dignity and respect, as they are entitled, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class
- Provide clear procedures that enable candidates for jobs and employees to raise a grievance or make a complaint if they feel they have been unfairly treated
- Treat breaches of this policy as misconduct which may lead to disciplinary action.

### 2.2 – EDI statements

#### 2.2.1 – Age – we will...

- Ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- Ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger or older people.

#### 2.2.2 – Disability – we will....

- Actively encourage applications from disabled people, subject to any health and safety considerations for the role. All Board vacancies are open to people with suitable qualifications, and experience.
- Guarantee an interview to all disabled persons who meet the minimum criterium for the vacancy.
- Provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our employment opportunities
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people
- Seek to continue to improve access to information.

#### 2.2.3 – Race – we will...

- Challenge any form of racism, or discriminatory assumptions based on race

- Respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents

#### 2.2.4 – Gender – we will...

- Recognise that genetic factors typically defines a person's sex, but gender refers to how they identify on the inside. E.g. some examples of gender identify types include, nonbinary, cisgender, genderfluid, male, female, transgender, gender neutral, agender and pangender
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about men and women
- Take action to redress any negative effects of discrimination against women and men
- Offer equal access for women and men on representation, employment, training and pay
- Provide support to prevent discrimination against transsexual people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment
- Provide support to prevent discrimination to any individual with any gender identity.

#### 2.2.5 – Sexual orientation – we will...

- Recognise that sexual orientation refers to a person's attraction to others, both sexually and romantically.
- Ensure that we take account of the needs of all sexual orientations. E.g. some common sexual orientations - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, pansexual, queer, lesbian, gay, demis and polysexual.
- Use positive language and promote positive cultures.

#### 2.2.6 – Religion or belief – we will...

- Ensure employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible
- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate right of others.

#### 2.2.7 – Pregnancy or maternity – we will...

- Ensure people are treated with respect and dignity which is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnant employees or those on maternity
- Ensure no individuals are disadvantaged due to pregnancy or maternity
- Maternity and Parental Policies – in place (HSW 004)

#### 2.2.8 – Marriage or civil partnership – we will...

- Ensure people are treated with respect and dignity with positive culture regardless of marriage or civil partnership
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about marriage or civil partnerships
- Ensure no employees are disadvantages due to marriage or civil partnerships.

## 2.3 – Ex-offenders

We will prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their ‘spent’ offences under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

All new employees are required to declare any offences which are ‘unspent’ under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

## 2.4 - Equal Pay

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equipment work or work of equal value.

## 2.5 – The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The PSED requires organisations to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

PSED has 3 aims as part of the decision making process, which means to the Boards consider EDI for decisions reached by the Boards:

- How the Boards act as employers
- How the Boards develop, evaluate and review policies
- How the Boards design, deliver and evaluate services
- How the Boards commission and procure from others.

## 2.6 – Reporting incidents involving EDI, e.g. Direct and Indirect Discrimination.

Should such incidents occur, these must be reported.

These will be investigated by the Line Manager, Associate Director for Human Resources/ SMT.

Where training needs are identified these will be actioned following any investigation.

Where learning can be positive, this will be shared.

Should it be necessary, the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy will be followed.



## 3.0 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Statement of intent

At Witham and Humber Drainage Boards (The Boards) recognise the importance of having team members who are from diverse backgrounds to offer positive and forward thinking opportunities and promote a well-rounded and positive team.

These policies are written in line with the legislation which is in place at the time of the policy review (2024).

The Board recognises that positive EDI cultures are vital for business/ organisations of today. The Board supports all persons to apply, and who work with the Boards and do not and will not tolerate bullying, harassment, direct Discrimination. Where any indirect discrimination occurs, the Board will take any allegations seriously, and will investigation to determine language and if support and guidance is required to support employees to ensure they fully understand.

To achieve this the Boards:

- Provide all applicants and employees with equal access to training, development and promotion where their skills, experience and personal qualities make them the best candidate for the role.
- Where any direct, indirect discrimination occurs, this will be taken seriously, and where required the bullying and harassment, or disciplinary policies may be used.
- Provide information, guidance and or support for any and all employee who requires advice, or support in relation to the content and or implementation of this policy.

## 4.0 - Glossary / Definitions

| Word/ term                                                                                                                   | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Equality**                                                                                                                   | Equality in the workplace means equal job opportunities and fairness for employees and job applicants.<br>You must not treat people unfairly because of reasons protected by discrimination law ('protected characteristics'). For example, because of sex, age or race.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Diversity**                                                                                                                  | Diversity is the range of people in your workforce. For example, this might mean people with different ages, religions, ethnicities, people with disabilities, and both men and women. It also means valuing those differences.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Inclusion**                                                                                                                  | An inclusive workplace means everyone feels valued at work. It lets all employees feel safe to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• come up with different ideas</li> <li>• raise issues and suggestions to managers, knowing this is encouraged</li> <li>• try doing things differently to how they've been done before, with management approval</li> </ul>                                                                                                                          |
| Disability*                                                                                                                  | You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Neurodiversity***                                                                                                            | Neurodiversity refers to the natural diversity in human brains.<br>Neurodivergence is the term for when someone's brain processes, learns, and / or behaves differently from what is considered "typical".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Equal Opportunities                                                                                                          | The structures, systems and measures of groups within society and within organisations. Equality of opportunity is about addressing representation and balance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Direct Discrimination*                                                                                                       | A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Indirect Discrimination*                                                                                                     | A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if A applies to B a provision, criterion or practise which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of Bs.<br>E.g. making assumptions on ability due to sex, or age, or setting a general rule, which is unjustifiable (e.g. not on the grounds of safety which may be justifiable) that all staff must be over 5'10" as this may indirectly affect women, or other racial groups if they don't meet the height. |
| Gender pay gap                                                                                                               | Is the different rate of pay between men and women with similar responsibilities. If women do more of the less well-paid jobs, the gender pay gap is generally exacerbated.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| * <a href="#">Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010</a>                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| ** these definitions have been taken from ACAS –<br><a href="#">Link to the ACAS equality, diversity and inclusion pages</a> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| *** <a href="#">Neurodiversity definition taken from the Royal College of Nursing</a>                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## 5.0 - Legislation

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Public Disorder Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Act 2002
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Duty 2010
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended by the Sex Discrimination Act 1986)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Health Bill 2009

## 6.0 - Policy roles and responsibilities

### 6.1 Arrangements for roles and reporting lines

The following key roles and responsibilities are in place for our Boards.

#### 6.1.1 – Board Members

- Support the Chief Executive Officer and SMT in the enactment of this Policy
- Approve and authorise the Policy at periodic intervals
- Lead by example, and support equality, diversity and inclusion within the Boards.

#### 6.1.2 – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Management Team (SMT)

- The CEO is ultimately accountable for all Boards Policies.
- Associate Director for Human Resources is SMT lead the EDI policies.
- SMT will support the review and enact the Policies, and continue to lead by example.
- Continue to provide a supportive culture equality, diversity and inclusion within the Boards.
- Promote EDI and eliminate unfair or unlawful discrimination.
- Investigate, support and guide if any EDI concerns are raised.

#### 6.1.3 – Risk Manager

- Support with review of Policy documents.

#### 6.1.4 - Operational / Supervisors / Foremen (line management responsibilities)

- Follow the Policies within this document.
- Lead by example, and support any team members in relation to these policies.

#### 6.1.5 – All Staff members

- Understand and comply with these policies.
- Treat each other with dignity and respect.
- For all employees to support equality, diversity and inclusion
- Are responsible for their own behaviour and compliance within this policy
- Raise queries or concerns to their line manager.

## 7.0 - Document review:

| Version | Date             | Reviewed by                              | Changes                                                                                                                         | Approved by/<br>date |
|---------|------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.0     | July 2020        | Associate Director of<br>Human Resources | New Policy                                                                                                                      | JSC<br>July 2020     |
| 2.0     | November<br>2024 | Risk Manager                             | Review and updated - Combined<br>Equality, valuing Diversity Policy<br>and Equal Opportunities Policy<br>relating to disability | JSC<br>December 2024 |

This policy is due for review at 5 yearly intervals, unless a review is required before e.g. change to management, process or anything which may affect the contents of this policy.

## 8.0 - Supporting documents and forms

No supporting forms

Further reading websites:

[.Gov – Equality Act 2010](#)