

SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICY
FOR THE KNIGHTS GROUP
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GROUP SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICY

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of Knights Group Limited, (permanent, fixed term and temporary).

POLICY STATEMENT

Knights Group Limited is committed to supporting, developing and promoting equality and diversity in all of its

Practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect.

Knights Group Limited encourages, celebrates and values diversity within the workforce. It believes that the company will benefit from engaging employees at all levels of responsibility, and across all areas of work regardless of their sexual orientation.

Knights Group Limited recognises the right of every person to be treated in accordance with these values. Such an environment cannot be created or sustained if employees are subject to any type of discrimination because of their sexual orientation.

This Policy forms part of Knights Group Limited commitment to equal opportunity and diversity and is complemented by other equal opportunity and employment policies and procedures.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the responsibilities for both managers and employees in ensuring that Knights Group Limited is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Knights Group Limited employees of all sexual orientations have a statutory right to fair treatment under the Equality Act 2010 and that members of the public using Knights Group Limited services have a similar right not to be discriminated against on grounds of their sexual orientation. The Equality Act set out a framework for eliminating employment or occupational inequalities based on sexual orientation i.e. to ensure there will be no discrimination against employees, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of sexual orientation in access to employment, training, promotion or dismissal, in the provision of work-place benefits, or the provision of references.

Under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, same-sex civil partners have the same pension legal and financial rights as married couples. Knights Group Limited entitlements and benefits for married couples will apply equally to civil partners, and those for non-married heterosexual couples will apply equally to same-sex partners.

The Adoption and Children Act (2002), the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations (1999 – amended 2002), Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations

(2002) and the Employment Rights Act 2002 have provided for lesbians and gay men and bisexual people to have the same parental leave entitlements as heterosexual people. Knights Group Limited will seek to ensure that equal access to leave arrangements is clearly stated within relevant policies and procedures.

DEFINITION

Within the Equality Act, sexual orientation is defined as an orientation towards:

- People of the same sex
- People of the opposite sex
- People of the same sex and of the opposite sex

In other words, it covers heterosexuals, lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

The Equality Act prohibit discrimination "on grounds of sexual orientation". This includes the actual or perceived sexual orientation of an individual.

MEETING OUR LEGAL DUTIES

Recruitment and Selection

- Knights Group Limited will not discriminate on grounds of sexual orientation in the way it recruits and selects employees, and will include reference to this in recruitment materials.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

- Knights Group Limited should ensure that any benefits [facilities and services] which it offers to heterosexual staff will be equally available to lesbian, gay, and bisexual staff.
- This includes offering any benefits available to spouses to civil partners, and any benefits available to unmarried opposite-sex partners to unregistered same-sex partners.
- This includes offering any provisions for special leave relating to partners, including paternity and adoption leave and pay arrangements, ante-natal leave etc.

Training and Promotion

- Knights Group Limited will ensure that all employees regardless of their sexual orientation shall have equal access to training, promotion and other aspects of career development, and will include reference to this in the appropriate materials.

Bullying and Harassment

- Bullying and harassment on the grounds of sexual orientation is viewed as a very serious offence, which after full investigation and if upheld, may be treated as gross misconduct which could result in summary dismissal. If an employee is harassed by a student, this will be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

Dismissal

- Knights Group Limited will ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in relation to dismissal of employees. In particular, should a redundancy situation occur, it should ensure that sexual orientation is not a factor in the selection of those to be made redundant.

References

- Knights Group Limited will ensure that any references provided to employees who are leaving are not influenced in any way by the sexual orientation of the departing employee.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND 'COMING OUT'

For many lesbian, gay and bisexual employees maintaining confidentiality will be very important. If due to a complaint being made or for any other reason, a manager, trade union representative or member of Human Resources learns about someone's sexuality, they must keep that information confidential. Action could be taken against employees found to have breached confidentiality in this way.

Lesbians, gay men and people who are bisexual can be subject to a particular form of harassment related to 'coming out'. Many people do not want others to know their sexuality. If managers or colleagues deliberately 'out' an employee, then this could be construed as harassment. 'Outing' an employee could have serious consequences for the 'outed' employee.

Alternatively, for some employees, it may be very important to their dignity at work that they are 'out' and open about their sexuality. It is unlawful for managers to put pressure on lesbian, gay or bisexual employees to hide their sexuality as this could be viewed as harassment.

Confidential Support

Knights Group Limited recognises that because of the existence of heterosexism and homophobia, confidentiality is a major issue for some lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. Human Resources staff can provide support and information on issues including:

- a confidential complaints procedure;
- confidential handling of special leave relating to partners;
- confidential managing of partner benefits etc.

MONITORING

Knights Group Limited is committed to ensuring that it is making progress in achieving equal treatment for employees regardless of their sexual orientation. To ensure that progress is made, it may

undertake monitoring of the following in relation to sexual orientation:

- job application and selection success rates;
- the take up and outcomes of grievance and harassment procedures;
- the content of equality training;
- a question in anonymous staff attitude surveys
- equal access to family/partner benefits;
- language and images used in internal and external communication.

Once the results of any monitoring are available, Knights Group Limited will consider relevant action to reduce any disadvantage suffered by employees of any particular sexual orientation.

DIGNITY AT WORK

KNIGHTS GROUP

Knights Group Limited has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with. Disciplinary action will be taken against employees who bully or harass other employees. If, in the course of their work, employees feel they are being harassed or discriminated against on the grounds of sexual orientation by members of the public, Knights Group Limited will take appropriate action and provide appropriate support. Any unacceptable behaviour directed against employees by students should be dealt with under the student disciplinary procedure.

Examples of harassment

- deliberately 'outing' someone without their permission
- violence or threat of violence
- direct verbal abuse, including threats, derogatory name-calling, insults, ridicule or belittling of an individual
- spreading malicious lies or making insulting comments
- display or circulation of abusive or offensive materials, for example by email, on the internet or on posters
- sending offensive emails or text messages
- ostracism or exclusion from normal conversation in the work environment, or from social events
- intrusion by pestering, spying or stalking