



FROM THE WEBSITE OF CELTIC KNOT –
SOLICITORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS



CELTIC KNOT STANDARDS B – CELTIC KNOT EQUALITY Our Anti-Discrimination Statement

A. Celtic Knot's Commitment

(1) General commitment

Celtic Knot is committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in its own policies, practices and procedures and in those areas in which it has influence. This applies to Celtic Knot's professional dealings with staff including associates, other solicitors, barristers, clients and third parties. Celtic Knot intends to treat everyone equally and with same attention, courtesy and respect regardless of their disability, gender, marital status, race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age.

Celtic Knot's policy has been modified from the model policy issued under Rules 3 and 4 of the Solicitors Anti-Discrimination Rules 2004, including to take account of subsequent developments in anti-discrimination law. It is believed to comply with rule 6, Solicitors Code of Conduct 2007.

(2) Regulation and legislation

In developing and implementing its anti-discrimination policy, Celtic Knot is committed to complying with rule 6 of the Solicitors Code of Conduct 2007 and with all current and any future anti-discrimination legislation and associated codes of practice including, but not limited to:

- (a) the Equal Pay Act 1970,
- (b) the Sex Discrimination Act 1975,
- (c) the Race Relations Act 1976,
- (d) the Disability Discrimination Act 1995,
- (e) the Employment Rights Act 1996
- (f) the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003,

(g) the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

(h) the Civil Partnership Act 2004,

(i) the Gender Recognition Act 2004,

(j) the Disability Discrimination Act 2005,

(k) the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006,

and any relevant amendments or re-enactments of such legislation;

(l) the Commission for Racial Equality code of practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment,

(m) the Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice on sex discrimination; equal opportunities policies, procedures and practices in employment,

(n) the Equal Opportunities Commission code of practice on Equal Pay,

(o) the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 codes of practice in relation to rights of access to facilities, services and premises in employment,

(p) the European Community code of practice on the protection of the dignity of men and women at work,

and any relevant amendments to such codes or further codes of practice.

(3) Forms of Discrimination

The following are the kinds of discrimination, which are against Celtic Knot's policy:

(a) **Direct discrimination**, where a person is treated less favourably on the grounds of race, racial group, colour, ethnic or national origins, sex, pregnancy, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or age.

(b) **Indirect discrimination**, where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put a substantially higher proportion of the members of one sex, or persons having a racial or ethnic origin, or a particular religion or belief, or a particular disability or a particular sexual orientation or age at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

(c) **Victimisation**, where someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against Celtic Knot under one of the relevant Acts.

(d) **Harassment**, when unwanted conduct related to any of the grounds referred to above takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Harassment may involve physical acts or verbal and non-verbal communications and gestures. This will include physical, verbal and non-verbal acts.

B. Employment and Training

(1) General Statement

Celtic Knot is not currently an employer, but includes the following provisions in recognition of the future possibility that it may become an employer. Celtic Knot intends that the general sentiments of this section C in addition to the specific provisions of section D(2) shall be reflected in how it deals with its third party suppliers such as outsourced administrative support.

Celtic Knot does provide services which are complementary to those offered by Birmingham Money Advice and Grants (B-Mag), and using personnel also employed by that organisation. Celtic Knot, while accepting that B-Mag itself has appropriate policies in place, nonetheless will keep under review whether the outcomes adequately reflect adherence to this policy.

As an employer, Celtic Knot will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not discriminate unjustifiably against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, bonus schemes, work allocation and any other employment related activities.

(2) Recruitment and selection

Celtic Knot recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

(a) it endeavours to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates possible;

(b) employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit;

(c) where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are under-represented in the workforce;

(d) selection criteria and processes do not discriminate unjustifiably on the grounds of disability; gender; marital status; race; racial group; colour; ethnic or national origin; nationality; religion or belief; age; or sexual orientation; other than in those instances where Celtic Knot is exercising permitted positive action;

(e) wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions (genuine occupational requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups;

(f) all recruitment agencies acting for Celtic Knot are aware of its requirement not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

(3) Targets

Celtic Knot will use its best endeavours to comply with Law Society policies and targets for the employment of ethnic minorities, as are produced from time to time in accordance with the provisions of the anti-discrimination legislation.

(4) Conditions of service

Celtic Knot will treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from discrimination and harassment and which respects, where appropriate, the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees. Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their gender; marital status; race; racial group; colour; ethnic or national origin; nationality; religion or belief; age; or sexual orientation; or unreasonably on the grounds of their disability. Where appropriate and necessary, Celtic Knot will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief; age or sexual orientation.

(5) Promotion and Career development

Promotion within Celtic Knot (including to partnership) will be made without reference to any of the forbidden grounds and will be based solely on merit. The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any particular group. Whilst positive action measures may be taken in accordance with the relevant anti-discrimination legislation to encourage under-represented groups to apply for promotion opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit. All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities. However, Celtic Knot will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by the anti-discrimination

legislation) to provide special training and support for groups which are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.

C. Partners

In due course, arrangements and procedures for selecting partners, their terms and conditions of partnership, access to benefits, facilities or services and termination arrangements will be such as prevent discrimination on any of the forbidden grounds. Maternity rights available to partners shall be no less favourable than those required by legislation for employees.

In this document, references to partners are included in recognition of the future possibility of partnership.

D. Barristers and Third Parties

(1) Barristers

Barristers should be instructed on the basis of their skills, experience and ability. Celtic Knot will not, on any of the forbidden grounds, avoid briefing a barrister and will not request barristers' clerks to do so. Clients' requests for a named barrister should be complied with, subject to Celtic Knot's duty to discuss with the client the suitability of the barrister and to advise appropriately. Celtic Knot will discuss with the client any request by the client that only a barrister who is not disabled or who is of a particular gender; marital status; race; racial group; colour; ethnic or national origin; nationality; religion or belief; age; or sexual orientation be instructed. In the absence of a valid reason for this request, which must be within the exemptions permitted by the anti-discrimination legislation, Celtic Knot will endeavour to persuade the client to modify their instructions in so far as they are given on discriminatory grounds. Should the client refuse to modify such instructions, Celtic Knot will cease to act.

(2) Suppliers

All lists of approved suppliers and databases of contractors, agents and other third parties who, or which, are regarded as suitable to be instructed by those within Celtic Knot have been compiled only on the basis of the ability of those persons or organisations to undertake work of a particular type and contain no discriminatory exclusion, restriction or preference.

E. Clients

Celtic Knot is generally free to decide whether to accept instructions from any particular client, but any refusal to act will not be based upon any of the forbidden grounds. Celtic Knot will take steps to meet the different needs of particular clients arising from its obligations under the anti-discrimination legislation (such as the

Disability Discrimination Act) and the Solicitors Anti-Discrimination Rule 2004. In addition, where necessary and where it is permitted by the relevant anti-discrimination legislation (for example, provisions relating to positive action or exemptions) Celtic Knot will seek to provide services which meet the specific needs and requests arising from clients' ethnic or cultural background; gender; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation or other relevant factors.

Subject to any other legal obligation arising out of the retainer with a client, Celtic Knot reserves the right to refuse to act for a client, or to cease to act for a client, in consequence of that client's expression in any way of sentiments of prejudice against others (including but not limited to staff and other clients) on the basis of their gender; marital status; race; racial group; colour; ethnic or national origin; nationality; religion or belief; age; or sexual orientation.

F. Promoting Equality and Diversity

Celtic Knot is committed to promoting equality and diversity in Celtic Knot as well as in those areas in which it has influence. Employees, partners and associates will be informed of this anti-discrimination policy and will be provided with equality and diversity training where this is considered appropriate to their needs or responsibilities. All those who act on Celtic Knot's behalf will be informed of this anti-discrimination policy and will be expected to pay due regard to it when conducting business on Celtic Knot's behalf. In all its dealings, including those with suppliers, contractors and recruitment agencies, Celtic Knot will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity. Celtic Knot will make every effort to reflect its commitment to equality and diversity in its marketing and communication activities.

G. Implementing the Policy

(1) Responsibility

Ultimate and operational responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the Principal Solicitor of Celtic Knot. All employees, partners and associates of Celtic Knot are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of its anti-discrimination policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their jobs or representing Celtic Knot. Acts of discrimination or harassment on any of the forbidden grounds by employees, partners or associates of Celtic Knot will result in disciplinary action. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in a similar fashion. The policy applies to all who are employed in Celtic Knot and to all partners and associates. Acts of discrimination or harassment on any of the forbidden grounds by those acting on behalf of Celtic Knot will lead to appropriate action including termination of services where appropriate.

(2) Complaints of discrimination

Celtic Knot will treat seriously, and will take action where appropriate concerning, all complaints of discrimination or harassment on any of the forbidden grounds made by employees, partners and associates, clients, barristers or other third parties. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with Celtic Knot's grievance or complaints procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

(3) Monitoring and review

The policy will be monitored and reviewed in a manner proportionate to the size and nature of Celtic Knot on a regular basis (and in any event at least annually) to measure its progress and judge its effectiveness. In particular, Celtic Knot will, as appropriate, monitor and record:

(a) The gender and ethnic composition of the workforce and partners as well as the number of disabled staff, at different levels of the organisation.

(b) The ethnicity, gender and disability of all applicants, short-listed applicants and successful applicants for jobs and training contracts.

(c) The ethnicity, gender and disability of all applicants for promotion (including to partnership, to the role of a member of a limited liability partnership or director of a recognised body) and training opportunities and details of whether they were successful.

(d) Where it is possible to do so, and where doing so will not cause offence or discomfort to those whom it is intended to protect, the sexual orientation and religion or belief of all partners, associates and staff will be monitored so as to ensure that they are not being discriminated against in terms of the opportunities or benefits available to them. Celtic Knot is, however, aware that partners, associates and staff may not choose to disclose their sexual orientation or religion or belief and that care should be taken to avoid inadvertent discrimination in such cases. This policy being publicly available, this information is not recorded here.

(e) The number and outcome of complaints of discrimination made by staff, partners and associates, barristers, clients and other third parties

(f) the disciplinary action (if any) taken against employees by race, gender and disability.

This information will be used to review the progress and impact of the Anti-Discrimination policy. Any changes required will be made and implemented.

This policy has been adopted by Celtic Knot on 12th July 2006.