



POLICIES

# Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy

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## 1. Introduction

At AB Agri, we are committed to promoting equal opportunities, valuing diversity and supporting an inclusive working environment for all our colleagues. We operate in increasingly diverse environments, both in the UK and internationally, and this is evident in our workforce, clients, customers, suppliers, communities and partners.

In the competitive business environment we operate in, we understand that the performance and engagement of our employees is central to our success. Our commitment therefore, is to build an environment in which each colleague is able to fulfil their potential and maximise their contributions.

At AB Agri we welcome diversity, and fully appreciate that everyone has something unique to offer. We respect and understand these differences and aim to make the most of everyone's talents.

### What is Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I)?

At AB Agri, equality, diversity and inclusion are important principles. To us, **diversity** is understanding, recognising and valuing differences both visible (e.g. race, gender, age) and non-visible (e.g. religious beliefs, values, preferences). It means we recognise that everyone is unique.

Likewise, **equality** means that we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities and access for all groups of people working for AB Agri.

**Inclusion** means that we focus on attracting and developing talent wherever it exists and encourage everyone in our organisation to reach their full potential in whatever they do. We aim to facilitate a working culture where differences are not merely accepted, but valued; where everyone has the opportunity to develop themselves consistently with our vision and values. Our aim is to be an organisation where people feel involved, respected and connected to our success.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) are championed at the highest level in the organisation by the Chief Executive and Board. We have a Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee which is chaired by a member of the AB Agri Board and its membership includes senior leaders and operators from across our organisation. The Steering Committee provides direction for ED&I programmes, promotes an inclusive workplace culture and facilitates the sharing of best practice across the organisation.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors and job applicants. It is not contractual and may be varied at AB Agri's discretion. Where employees are overseas and not employed by the UK company, AB Agri Ltd, alternative policies may be in place as required by local law and practice but the content and principles set out in this policy are standard.

## 3. Aims

At AB Agri and in line with legislation across the UK and Ireland, we aim to:

- ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace are fully supported
- offer fair treatment in every aspect of working life in AB Agri. This applies to all employment policies and practices including those relating to:
  - Recruitment, selection and retention;
  - Terms and conditions of employment;
  - Working environment;
  - Learning and development;
  - Promotion and career progression; and
  - Redundancy and re-deployment.
- promote a culture where employees recognise the value that a diverse and inclusive workforce brings.
- be recognised as an employer with a positive reputation for equality, diversity and inclusion practices.

## 4. Discrimination

Employees, Contractors, or any other persons associated with AB Agri, must not discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace and on work-related trips or events including social events.

It is against the law to discriminate against the following characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual

orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. By these characteristics we mean the following:

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Age	Refers to a person of a particular age (e.g. 32 years old) or belonging to a range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender Reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and civil partnership	Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now, in most of the UK, includes a marriage between a same-sex couple.  Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted under law).
Pregnancy & maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context.
Race (includes colour, nationality and ethnic origins)	Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion and belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex / Gender	Male, Female, transsexual or transgender.
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

In line with the legislation, those perceived as having one of these characteristics are also protected. We will also not discriminate because of working patterns or trade union membership nor will we tolerate harassment or bullying on these or any other grounds.

There are different types of discrimination such as: discrimination arising from disability; association discrimination; perceptible discrimination; discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity; direct discrimination; indirect discrimination; harassment; and victimisation. All of these forms of discrimination are unlawful and will not be tolerated at AB Agri. Further details of all these forms of discrimination and what is meant by each can be found in the Appendix of this policy.

Over and above legislative requirements, we aim to create an environment that does not discriminate against both visible characteristics (e.g. race, gender, age) and non-visible characteristics (e.g. religious beliefs, educational background, social status, values, preferences).

## **5. Recruitment and Selection**

At AB Agri, recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be based on merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants particularly should not be asked questions that might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about their health or disability before a job offer is made; except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

Recruitment Agencies that are on the Preferred Suppliers List (PSL) at AB Agri are bound by specific terms which have been agreed in order to work with us and they will be measured against them on an ongoing basis. Failure to comply with these terms will result in a termination of their contract. For this reason, any supplier of recruitment related services must be first introduced to HR in order to carry out relevant checks prior to a contract being agreed. For further information please refer to "Agreement for the Supplier of Services" available on the intranet.

## **6. Disabilities**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate to enable you to perform your role fully.

## **7. Part-Time and Fixed-Term Work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **8. Third party harassment**

Third party harassment occurs when an employee is harassed by someone who does not work for their employer, such as a customer, visitor, client, or contractor. AB Agri aims to protect its employees from harassment from a third party and we encourage you to tell us about anything of this nature. Reasonable steps to prevent and stop harassment from people who are not employees of AB Agri will be taken.

## **9. Dignity at work**

We have a separate Dignity at Work policy (on the intranet) concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any grounds, and this explains how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

## **10. Policy Application**

To achieve our aims, AB Agri is committed to:

- ensuring that the principles of this policy are embedded in HR strategy and all HR policies and procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed;
- providing unconscious bias training and guidance to managers to ensure our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is known and understood;
- monitoring and measuring diversity using quantitative information to assist in identifying and removing any direct or indirect discrimination;
- challenging and investigating discriminatory behaviour and enforcing the disciplinary procedure, when this is considered necessary;
- communicating, through established internal communication channels, and regularly reviewing D&I initiatives that have successfully been implemented;
- working with external groups and advisory bodies to keep up to date with best practice from similar corporate organisations;
- measure diversity / bias in line with appraisal procedures and employee surveys.

## **11. Training**

We will provide diversity and inclusion training to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment, performance management, talent management and other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

## **12. Your responsibility**

We need your support, to meet our commitment to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

It is important to adhere to the spirit of the policy as you could be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, AB Agri for any act of unlawful discrimination. We consider acts of discrimination against those we employ, or our customers, as disciplinary offences that may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

### **13. Complaints**

Employees should disclose any instances of discrimination of which they become aware of to the HR Department (please see the Whistleblowing Policy, on the intranet). If you consider that you may have been unfairly treated or subjected to direct or indirect discrimination, you may use the grievance procedure to make a complaint, where every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution.

### **14. Measuring policy effectiveness**

Some ways in which we will measure the effectiveness of our ED&I policy include:

- Collating and reviewing quantitative and qualitative data to identify any areas requiring action;
- Publishing annual diversity data regarding the demographics of our workforce, for example in the Annual ABF Report.

### **15. Monitoring**

We continuously review this Policy, together with all of our employment policies and practices to maintain our focus on equality of opportunity.

To ensure that this Policy and other procedures are operating effectively, HR will continue to monitor and measure the records of our employees, benchmark our performance as a Company and ensure that any patterns or trends are identified and resolved.

## Appendix A Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Discrimination arising from disability	Occurs when someone is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and cannot justify such treatment.
Association Discrimination	Occurs when you treat another person less favourably because of their association with another person who has a characteristic (other than pregnancy and maternity).
Perceptive Discrimination	Occurs when you treat another person less favourably because you mistakenly think they have a characteristic.
Discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity	It is discriminatory to treat a woman less favourably because she is or has been pregnant, has given birth in the last 26 weeks or is breastfeeding a baby who is 26 weeks or younger.  It is direct sex discrimination to treat a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding a child who is more than 26 weeks old.
Direct discrimination	Occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a characteristic.
Indirect discrimination	Occurs when a policy, rule or procedure applies to everyone but has a disproportionate impact on people with a characteristic.
Harassment	Unwanted conduct related to a relevant characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.  Applies to all the characteristics except pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership. An employee can complain about behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.
Victimisation	Occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under legislation; or because they are suspected of doing so.

This policy is subject to change by the Company, in line with changes in statutory law, case law and best practice. They do not form part of the employee's contract of employment.