

# EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY



## **What is this policy for?**

We are committed to ensuring that all employees will be given equal opportunities, irrespective of their sex, marital status, race, colour, religious beliefs, ethnic or national origin, age, disability or trade union membership.

The implementation of this policy stimulates a healthy and more productive atmosphere and creates better quality of life. Furthermore, fair representation at all levels of job responsibility and realising the potential of every individual makes sound business sense.

## **Who is this policy for?**

This policy applies to all of our employees in either a permanent, fixed term or temporary post, and to suppliers, consultants, contractors, agents and subsidiaries acting for, or on behalf of the Company within the UK, and all applicants for employment.

## **Definitions**

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others would be in the same or similar circumstances, on the grounds listed in the Equality Act 2010 (sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, religious belief, ethnic or national origin, age, disability or trade union membership). Discrimination can be direct or indirect and includes harassment and victimisation.

## **Policy Statement**

We will ensure that no job applicant, supplier, consultant, contractor, agents and subsidiaries or employee receives less favourable treatment than others on the grounds of sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, religion or belief, age, disability or trade union membership, in the fields of employment and training. We are committed to eradicating discrimination and will seek to find a means of dealing with it, should it occur.

We will ensure all employees and all other stakeholders have access to this policy.

We aim to select, promote and treat employees and all other stakeholders on the basis of their relevant qualifications, experience and abilities alone. Fair representation throughout all levels of the Company is a key element in maximising the potential of every individual employee. To achieve this, we believe that training has a major role to play. We will therefore provide training and guidance for all management to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities both legal and under the Company Policy, and that they take steps to ensure employees understand the policy.

## **Advertising**

Job advertising should be carried out in such a way as to encourage applications from suitable candidates from both sexes and all ethnic backgrounds. This can be achieved through appropriate wording of the advertisements and the placing of the advertisements in relevant publications. All advertising materials and accompanying literature relating to employment or training issues should be reviewed to ensure that it avoids any inference that it is discriminatory on the grounds of sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief. Where vacancies are filled by promotion or transfer, they should be published to all eligible employees in a way that they do not restrict applications from employees.

## **Applications and Interviewing**

We seek to select and promote employees on the basis of their individual qualifications, experience and abilities. Care is taken to ensure that recruitment information has an equal chance of reaching both sexes and does not indicate a preference for one group of applicants with regard to race, sex or sexual orientation, marital status, age, religion or belief, or disability. Similarly, care is taken to ensure that job requirements

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are justifiable and that interviews are conducted on an objective basis. Selection criteria and procedures are kept under continuous review and are modified, if necessary, to ensure complete equality of opportunity.

## **Promotion, Transfer and Training**

We seek to provide training on the basis of job requirements and the ability of the individual. Access to training opportunities will be irrespective of race, religion or belief, gender, marital status, age or disability. It is important that:

- a) where an appraisal system is in operation, the assessment criteria should be examined to ensure they are not discriminatory, and the scheme monitored to assess how it is working in practice;
- b) promotion and career development patterns are reviewed to ensure that the qualifications required are justifiable requirements for the job to be done;
- c) when general ability and personal qualities are the main requirements for promotion to a post, care should be taken to consider all candidates equally;
- d) policies and practices regarding selection for training / personal development should be examined for unwitting unlawful direct or indirect discrimination;
- e) if recruiters are in any doubt they will seek the advice from their line manager or HR.

## **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

It is important that:

- a) particular care is taken to ensure that an employee who has in good faith taken action under the discrimination legislation does not receive less favourable treatment than other employees, for example by being disciplined or dismissed;
- b) employees are advised and encouraged to use the internal procedures (e.g., the grievance procedure) where appropriate.

## **Harassment and Victimisation**

Harassment is unwanted conduct based on sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief affecting the dignity of men and women at work. Harassment or any form of victimisation (actual or perceived) will not be permitted or condoned in the workplace. All employees have the right to a working environment free from harassment or victimisation and to ensure this, we will carry out a thorough investigation if complaints are received and take appropriate disciplinary measures against the guilty employees if the complaint is upheld.

## **Racial Discrimination**

Racial harassment is a harassment towards an employee by another employee or group of employees which is of a racial nature, or which is based on a person's race, colour or origins, and which is regarded as unwelcome or offensive to the recipient.

The following are examples that illustrate the sort of conduct that may be treated as racial harassment:

- Jokes about race.
- Offensive names used.
- References to people by offensive racist descriptions.
- Verbal or physical abuse because of a person's race or colour.
- Detrimental behaviour because of a person's race.
- Denial of opportunity because of race.

This policy applies to verbal and physical actions as well as any other form of communication including electronic communication such as text messages, emails, and faxes as well as written communications.

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If an employee believes they are the subject of harassment you should make a formal complaint. Depending on the seriousness of the allegation, the alleged harasser may be suspended on full pay while the matter is being investigated under our disciplinary procedures.

The aim throughout is to resolve the complaint of harassment sensitively, impartially, effectively, and quickly.

There will be no victimisation of any employee for making or supporting or assisting a complaint of harassment – even if the complaint is not upheld – provided the action was taken in good faith.

## **Age Discrimination**

Discrimination or harassment on grounds of age by employers is prohibited in the areas of recruitment, promotion and training. There can be direct and indirect age discrimination. It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person in the arrangements made for the purpose of determining to whom employment should be offered; in the terms on which that person is offered employment; and by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, employment.

Similarly, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against that person in the terms of employment; in the opportunities for promotion, a transfer, training, or receiving any other benefit; by refusing or deliberately not affording that person any such opportunity; or by dismissing or subjecting that person to any other detriment.

There are certain circumstances when some of the Regulations may not apply in relation to genuine occupational requirements of employment.

## **Complaints Procedure**

If an employee feels that they have been the victim of unfair discrimination, harassment or victimisation they may raise a complaint through the Company's Grievance Policy. Every effort will be made to resolve the matter as we will not tolerate the victimisation of individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who have provided information about such discrimination.

In accordance with the Company Disciplinary Policy, discrimination of any kind, including harassment and victimisation, is seen as gross misconduct and will not be tolerated.

## **Dismissals, Redundancies and other disciplinary measures**

It is important that:

- a) we are consistent in the disciplinary measures taken against employees, and do not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief;
- b) redundancy procedures are undertaken carefully, so as to remove any effect which could be disproportionate or unjustifiable;
- c) all reasonable practical steps are taken to ensure a standard of conduct or behaviour is observed which prevents employees from being subjected to unfavourable treatment on the grounds of their sex, race, age, disability, religion or belief.

## **Management and Employee Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of every employee to be familiar with this policy and comply with its terms. It is the responsibility of management to effectively communicate the policy and to ensure that it is fully implemented. Managers should not instruct, or pressurise employees to discriminate, victimise, harass or bully others, nor should they suppress any complaints of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying

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in the workplace. The policy will be subject to continuous review by the Human Resources team and the Company's senior management team.

## **The Responsibilities of Individual Employees**

While the primary responsibilities for providing equal opportunities rest with the Company, individual employees at all levels have responsibilities too. To assist in preventing any unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity it is important that you should:

- a) co-operate in measures introduced by management designed to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination;
- b) draw the attention of management to suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- c) refrain from harassment or intimidation of other employees.

## **Monitoring and Review**

If direct or indirect discrimination is found it is brought to the attention of the senior management team and action will be taken to end it immediately. The Company is committed to operating all aspects of its business in an ethical manner. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Respecting the rights of all employees
- Promoting non-discriminatory employee practices
- Providing proper processes for complaint and redress
- Providing safe and healthy working conditions
- Treating customers, suppliers and others with whom we deal in a fair and honest way
- Dealing openly and reasonably with third parties affected by our operations