
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

It is the policy of this organisation to provide equal opportunities for all employees and trainees. The Company will also take every action possible to avoid discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion or belief or disability (Protected Characteristics). It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. A copy of this policy will be found on the notice board or can be obtained from your Manager.

Discrimination

You must not unlawfully 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 (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

To uphold this policy, the Company will undertake the following:

In recruitment

- Ensure that job titles are not sex biased and are accurate.
- Avoid over inflated or unnecessary job criteria in person specifications when recruiting new employees.
- Check that job requirements are really necessary to do the job and are not reflections of traditional practices that may be operating to the disadvantage of men or women, minorities, the disabled or older people.
- Guard against sex/race stereotyping, particularly in illustrations, advertisements and recruitment literature. Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market.
- Ensure that recruitment methods used are fair to all potential applicants and do not effectively screen out minorities or members of one sex. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.
- Conduct recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.
- Do not use age as a primary discriminator in recruitment and selection.
- Ensure that only trained or experienced interviewers conduct preliminary selection interviews.
- Ensure that interviewers avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

- Maintain clear interview notes and records of all applicants.
- Job applicants should not be asked about 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.

Training and Promotion

- Check that all staff and minorities, regardless of their sex, are being trained and developed along with other employees and have the same opportunities for advancement within the Company.
- Do not use age as a primary discriminator in training and promotion decisions.
- Examine selection criteria for training and promotion opportunities to ensure they do not indirectly discriminate.
- Monitor the progress of all trainees against the equal opportunities policy and its requirements.
- Ensure that equal standards are being operated when undertaking performance reviews and assessments.
- Where appropriate encourage all staff and minorities, regardless of their sex, to put themselves forward for training and promotion.

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.

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.

Victimisation and harassment

- Investigate all complaints of discrimination and harassment thoroughly however minor they may be considered to be at first sight.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee found to have discriminated against another employee on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic.
- Take disciplinary action against any employee found to have harassed another employee on the grounds of a Protected Characteristic.

Publication of this Policy

- Ensure that all employees, especially new employees and those in positions of authority, are made aware of this Policy.

Breaches of this Policy

- We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
- You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.