



## Our equal opportunities policy

The Company is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be representative of the communities we provide our services to. No job applicant or employee, contractor, customer or supplier will be treated less favourably than another or discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (these are known as protected characteristics) We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. Furthermore, the Company will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification, which could disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds.

Any employee who considers that they have been the victim of discrimination or harassment by the company, its employees, contractors, customers or suppliers on any grounds whatsoever should draw this concern to the company's attention through the grievance procedure.

Any employee who is found to have discriminated against or harassed any fellow employee, contractor, customer or supplier will be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Our aim is to encourage, value and manage diversity. This policy reflects the Company's commitment to promoting equality and diversity in all areas of employment from recruitment, promotion and training to pay and reward.

### **1 Our Commitment:**

To create a work environment in which individual differences and everyone's contributions are recognised and valued.

To encourage all to promote dignity and respect in the workplace; we aim to create a work environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

To provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, casual, part-time, full-time or permanent.

To ensure that selection for employment, promotion, training and development opportunities will be available to all; staff will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential so that they can progress in the organisation.

To ensure that our policies and procedures and working practices are reviewed to ensure they remain fair and do not disadvantage any individual or group and that they are updated to take account of changes in the law.

To take appropriate action to address any inequality issues that may be identified.

### **2. Policy**

It is our policy as an employer to comply with the following enactments or Codes of Practice in relation to equal opportunities:

Equality Act 2010 and associated secondary legislation

Equal Pay Act 1970

Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 2003

The Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment

Human Rights Act 1998

The Employment Act 2002

Work and Families Act 2014

Discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated and we aim to ensure that no employee or job applicant is treated unfairly because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation or is put at a disadvantage because of requirements that are not essential to do the job.

If we know that an employee or applicant is disabled, as defined within the Equality Act 2010, we will make reasonable adjustments to help them in the recruitment process and in the course of their employment.

We will inform our employees and job applicants about this policy.

If we receive any complaint of discrimination or harassment, the Senior Manager at the location will be notified. They will then inform the Regional Director/Managing Director and the HR Department. Arrangements will be made to investigate the allegation with immediate effect.

Disciplinary action will be taken where there is evidence of discrimination, abuse or harassment.

The Equal Opportunities Policy will be included in all inductions provided for employees.

The policy should also be accessible to all employees at all times.

The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

### **3. Responsibility**

Responsibilities for ensuring compliance with, and monitoring of, the Equal Opportunities policy are allocated as follows:

#### **3.1 Managing Director**

The Managing Director is responsible for the overall implementation of the policy within the company. This includes recruitment, training, and internal promotions and communications.

#### **3.2 HR Director**

The HR Director is responsible for monitoring the policy.

#### **3.3 Managers**

All Managers responsible for the recruitment, training and promotion of the staff within their Contract/Department will ensure that the policy is complied with.

#### **3.4 Managers/Supervisors/**

Managers/Supervisors/are responsible for ensuring that no discrimination, abuse or harassment occurs in the workplace and they report any such incidents for investigation as required.

#### **3.5 Employees**

It is the responsibility of all employees to:

Co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity

Report any discriminatory acts or practices

Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination

Not to victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence or discrimination

Not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others

Have read, understood and comply with the policy.

The Human Resources Department will provide equality and diversity training for staff and design guidance for managers to help them respond appropriately to the diverse needs of their staff.

The Human Resources Department will produce an annual report for the Board on relevant monitoring data, including any complaints received under the Equality Act 2010.

### **4. Definition of Terms**

Protected Characteristics: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Gender, Sexual Orientation.

Direct Discrimination: results from treating a person that has a protected characteristic (race, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation), less favourably than others who do not have a protected characteristic

Associative Discrimination: applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and gender. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination: applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and gender. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: arises where a condition or requirement, although applied equally to the above groups, has the effect of excluding, penalising or treating less favourably any of these groups, and cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Victimisation: occurs if a person is given less favourable treatment than others, because the individual has exercised his or her rights under this policy or the relevant legislation, for example bringing proceedings under the Equality Act, gives evidence or information in connection with a complaint under the Act, or makes an allegation that the Act has been or is being contravened.

Harassment: unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying: is offensive, malicious or insulting behaviour, and abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

## **5. Disability**

Under the Equality Act 2010, disability is a protected characteristic. The Act seeks to end unfair discrimination against disabled people. The definition of a disabled person is anyone with: *"An employer treats an employee less favourably than they treat, or would treat, others to whom that reason does not apply, and the employer cannot show that the treatment in question is justified."*

Discrimination exists where:

*"An employer treats an employee less favourably than they treat, or would treat, others to whom that reason does not apply, and the employer cannot show that the treatment in question is justified."*

A disability within the definition of the act must be a medically diagnosed condition or, for mental illness, a clinically recognised illness. It includes past disabilities, reoccurring and progressive conditions and controlled and corrected disability.

Please contact the HR Department for further advice.

## **6. Complaints**

Any employee who considers that they have been a victim of discrimination or harassment by the company, its employees, contractors, customers or suppliers on any grounds whatsoever should draw this concern to the company's attention through the grievance procedure.

Any employee who is found to have discriminated against or harassed any fellow employee, contractor or supplier will be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

## **7. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviours**

Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone, particularly on the grounds of age, sex, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or nationality.

Ridiculing or demeaning someone.

Exclusion or victimisation

Unfair Treatment

Unwelcome sexual advances such as touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials etc.

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