



1. Purpose

The purpose of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is to establish the Company's principles regarding the equality of opportunity. It demonstrates a firm commitment to eliminating unlawful discrimination, to ensuring that all employees are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential and that people are valued as individuals.

2. Scope

All company employees, permanent and temporary. All job applicants, agency staff, contractors and consultants.

3. Policy Statement

The Company supports the principle of equal opportunities and it values the benefits a diverse workforce can offer. The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in all areas of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

The Company firmly believes that discrimination of any kind is harmful to employees and it is committed to eradicating unlawful discrimination. All allegations of discrimination will be investigated and if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

4. Aims

The Company aims to:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination and harassment;
- Promote equality of opportunity for all;
- Create an open and inclusive workforce where people feel valued; and
- Comply with our legal requirements.

5. Introduction

The Company recognises that it has a duty to all its employees to ensure that individuals are afforded equal opportunities to enter employment and progress within the Company. It appreciates the benefits of having a diverse workforce with individuals from different backgrounds, employed solely on personal merit and ability.

It is the policy of the Company to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is unlawfully discriminated against on the grounds of their gender (including sex, marital status and gender re-assignment), race (including ethnic origin, colour,

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nationality and national origin), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, because they work part time or because they are a member or non-member of a trade union.

Discrimination can take the following forms:

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another in comparable circumstances on a prohibited ground (see above paragraph).

Indirect discrimination is where the effect of certain requirements, conditions or practices has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other. Indirect discrimination generally occurs when a rule or condition, which is applied equally to everyone, can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group, the rule is to their disadvantage, and it cannot be justified on other grounds.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Victimisation which includes treating an individual less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances, because they have made a complaint or allegation of discrimination or have acted as a witness or informant in connection with allegations of harassment or bullying.

Harassment can be taken to mean unwelcome conduct related to sex, gender reassignment, race or ethnic or national origins, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or any other personal characteristic, which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment for that person, or is reasonably considered by that person to have had that effect.

The Company has a separate Dignity at Work policy for dealing with allegations of victimisation and harassment. This can be found on SharePoint- Safe & Sound.

All complaints of discrimination will be sensitively investigated and if proven will result in disciplinary action for the perpetrator. Failure to comply with the terms of the policy may also result in disciplinary action.

6. Commitments

6.1 Recruitment & Selection

The Company undertakes to recruit the person who most closely meets the requirements for the role, and to make all reasonable adjustments where necessary and practical. It will ensure that recruitment and selection policies and practices are non-discriminatory against any group of job seeker and will work towards ensuring that the composition of staff at all levels reflects the community that it serves.

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6.2 Training and Development

All employees will be afforded equal access to training and development opportunities in line with the Company's "Training Policy" and "Professional and Academic Policy". This could include training for their current job role, training to support a future career opportunity and for professional development leading to the achievement of professional qualification or status.

6.3 Communication

The Company's commitment to equal opportunities will be stated on all employment related communications.

6.4 Pay and Benefits

Pay and terms of employment will reflect the value of individual contributions and standards of job performance.

6.5 Redundancy and redeployment

When releasing employees, the Company will consider the future need for knowledge, skills and competence. The criteria and methods for redundancy and redeployment will be non-discriminatory and based on fair and objective grounds. Alternatives to redundancy will be considered wherever possible.

6.6 Positive Action

Appropriate lawful Positive Action will be taken if it is deemed necessary to encourage under represented groups to apply for employment / promotion.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Employees are responsible for:

- Upholding and promoting strong working practices to ensure that an environment of equality is maintained;
- Not discriminating against other employees or stakeholders of the Company, or inducing others to do so; and
- Challenging any behaviour in the workplace that could be interpreted as discrimination.

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7.2 Managers and Team Leaders have an additional responsibility to:

- Ensure that all their direct reports are aware of the policy and the reasons for the policy;
- Ensure that the systems and procedures they use do not discriminate;
- Set a positive example in everything that they do;
- Listen to and respect others; and
- Take immediate action if they become aware of discrimination and ensure that they are supportive towards any employee who complains of or reports discrimination

7.3 Human Resources are responsible for:

- Regularly monitoring and reviewing the policy to ensure that it is meeting its aims
- Supporting employees and Line Managers to uphold the policy

8. Grievances

Any individual who believes they have been denied equality of opportunity may pursue their complaint through the grievance procedure which can be found on SharePoint-Safe & Sound.

9. Dignity at Work

Anybody who believes that they have suffered the effects of bullying, victimisation or harassment, should pursue their complaint through the Dignity at Work policy and procedure which is outlined in SharePoint- Safe & Sound.

10. Records

Any documentation in connection with formal proceedings, including any disciplinary action taken, will be retained on employee files as appropriate.

11. Related Documents

Documents related to this procedure which can be found on the HR Intranet Pages: -

- The Employee Handbook
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Grievance Policy

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Change history

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