

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### Introduction

It is the company's policy to give all employees and potential employees equal opportunities, discriminating between them only on grounds directly relevant to their capabilities to do the job we want them to do (and in some cases, their potential for possible future jobs). There may be a tiny number of exceptions, where sex, marital status, race or religion are genuine occupational qualifications, but these will be such exceptional jobs that the need to treat them differently should be obvious to all concerned.

The Company applies this policy firstly, because if we achieve full efficiency, we must attract to us those best suited to perform each job and must develop and use the full talents of all our employees in their work for the Company. Equal opportunities therefore, makes good business sense. In addition, however, we have a statutory duty to avoid discriminating on grounds of race (including ethnic origin), sex (including marital status) and disability. Certain forms of discrimination relating to trade union membership are also illegal.

It is the responsibility of every employee to abide by the Company's policy and of every manager and supervisor to see that the policy is applied.

The policy applies in all circumstances for instance, with regard to the recruitment, selection for training and promotion, discipline and the way employees are treated in every aspect of the job.

### Recruitment

All employees responsible for recruitment must ensure not only that they avoid direct conscious discrimination, but also accidental indirect indiscrimination. For instance, relying solely on word of mouth publicity for recruitment will generally discriminate against ethnic minorities which are not represented in our existing workplace.

It is of particular importance to establish the genuine needs of a job and those filling vacancies should normally obtain or prepare a job description and a person specification. It is important to avoid imposing qualifications, age ranges and other requirements that are not genuinely relevant to the performance of the job (although specifying higher qualifications to take account of future promotion potential is justified in cases where promotion is expected). Imposing qualifications of jobs which are not, in fact, relevant to the particular job is harmful and may discriminate unfairly. For instance, a minimum height qualification could be justified for certain jobs. If it was not justified, it would discriminate against women and possibly against members of certain ethnic minorities.

It is also important to see whether individual applicants meet the requirement rather than

applying generalised stereotypes. For instance, men are, on average, stronger than women. However, many individual women are stronger than many individual men. If physical strength is a requirement for the job, the strength of each individual needs to be assessed.

Advertisements must make clear that jobs are open to candidates of either sex and from any ethnic group. In most cases, this will be achieved most effectively by including the words “We are an equal opportunity employer” and these words must be included in every display recruitment advertisement.

Where an agency is used for recruitment, we should advise them of our equal opportunity policy and seek their written assurance that they will comply with equal opportunities law.

### **Trade Union Members**

Under the terms of the Employment Act 1990, employers are prohibited from refusing employment penalising or dismissing an employee on the grounds of membership or non-membership of a trade union. Our equal opportunities policy also covers trade union membership.

### **Harassment and victimisation**

Harassment and abuse of fellow employees or others for whom the Company has a responsibility are serious disciplinary offences in any circumstances. Harassment on ground of sex, race or disability is viewed as particularly serious by the Company and in law constitutes discrimination. Employees guilty of such harassment or abuse, whether to fellow employees or to others involved in the workplace will be subject to disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to take all reasonable steps to protect the Company's employees from acts of sexual, racial or disability related harassment or abuse in the course of their employment by third parties such as employees or other contractors on site.

Where an employee complains of discrimination, harassment or abuse, it is a very serious offence for anyone to victimise that individual or to take any action to dissuade them from using the Company's grievance procedure. All employees have the right to use the Company's grievance procedure without fear of victimisation.

## **Enforcement**

Any Company employee who considers that he/she has been discriminated against, harassed or abused on grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, ethnic origin or religion should raise the matter through the Company's grievance procedure. Managers must report all such cases to the Company Personnel Manager as early as possible after the claim has been lodged.

Where an employee believes that the act of discrimination, harassment or abuse was carried out by an immediate superior to whom he/she should normally raise the grievance, the matter should instead be raised directly with the Company Personnel Manager who will arrange for an alternative channel to hear the grievance.

Failure to abide by the Company's equal opportunities policy is a disciplinary offence and disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal will take place against any employee who deliberately defies the policy.

The Company's equal opportunities policy covers not only direct employees but also agency staff and self-employed workers working for the Company. It also covers those who act as the Company's agency in employment matters. The Company is not however, responsible for enforcing equal opportunities law on bona fide Sub-contractors.

The policy applies throughout the United Kingdom. The extent, to which it applies for employment abroad, depends on the laws of the country concerned. Employees who work abroad and all, or significant part of their job may not be fully covered by the policy since the Company has to have regard for the laws and customs of the other countries involved.



Signed: J.A. Wharfe  
Director

Dated: September 2015