

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Organisation is committed to providing and supporting an environment that promotes equality of opportunity amongst our entire workforce. The Organisation's aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give their best. Encouraging a diverse workforce will not only meet but also exceed our obligations under current and future equality legislation. The Organisation is committed to creating a working environment that ensures fair and equal treatment of all employees, visitors, customers, contractors and suppliers.

### **2. SCOPE**

All employees, visitors, contractors, customers and suppliers must abide by this policy. Those in senior or managerial positions or with specific responsibilities for recruitment, selection, training, appraisal and promotion should be especially mindful of the policy. Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action.

### **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Organisation values equality and diversity and is determined to ensure:

- All individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- All employment and training opportunities are accessible and open to all.  
A safe, supportive and welcoming environment is provided for employees, visitors, contractors, customers and suppliers.

The Organisation is committed to promoting equality and diversity.

### **4. COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Equality and diversity are important to the Organisation not only because of the essential legal compliance but because of the benefits that a diverse workforce brings to the Organisation, namely:

- Having the ability to attract and retain the best employees;
- Ensuring that employees are fully utilised and able to achieve their full potential;
- Improving the organisation's competitiveness in a diverse labour market;
- Ensuring that the workforce represents the community it serves;
- Better management of employees;
- Improvement on employee morale and engagement.

### **5. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

There is legislation that refers to discrimination and harassment at work. Failure to deal effectively with allegations or incidents may lead to legal action against the

Organisation as well as individual employees. The Organisation also has a legal responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

## **5.1 The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 consolidated discrimination legislation. This legislative framework includes protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; in services and public functions, premises, work, education, associations and transport. The phrase 'Protected Characteristics' can describe a person's:

- Age;
- Disability status;
- Gender reassignment status;
- Being married or in a civil partnership;
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave;
- Race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality or colour);
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation.

## **5.2 Discrimination**

The Organisation opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of any protected characteristic or as a result of any conditions or requirements that do not accord with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

## **5.3 Definitions of Discrimination**

### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have.

### Associative discrimination

Associative discrimination is discrimination against a person because they have an association with someone with a protected characteristic.

### Perceptive discrimination

Perceptive discrimination is discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic that applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

### Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the Organisation which applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

If an employee considers that they have been unlawfully discriminated against they must raise their complaint through the Organisation's grievance policy.

### **6. BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION**

All employees, visitors, contractors, customers and suppliers and have a right to be treated with consideration and respect within the working environment. The Organisation aims to create a culture that is free from bullying, harassment and victimisation and where concerns are raised there should be a confidence that they will be investigated fairly and promptly.

#### Harassment

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

#### Victimisation

Victimisation is where an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance or because they are suspected of doing so.

#### Bullying

Bullying involves repeated negative action and practices that are directed at one or more employees.

If any employee considers they are or have been bullied, harassed or victimised, they must raise their complaint through the appropriate Organisation procedure.

### **7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Organisation recognises the need to tackle barriers to create a culture in which equal opportunities and equal treatment are reflected in working practices and are a priority for all employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors.

The recruitment, selection and promotion process will be based on an ability to do the job and other objective relevant criteria.

Training and development, and its access, will be based on the requirements of the job and individual needs. Training and development will be by the provision of appropriate and accessible training methods.

Full consideration will be given to whether reasonable adjustments can be made where a person has a disability or to enable an individual to observe their religion or belief.

The Organisation strives to support a family friendly work/life balance and to this end meets its statutory responsibilities.

### 8. EMPLOYMENT

As an employer, the Organisation will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training, promotion, other areas of career development, grievance and disciplinary processes and outcomes, selection for redundancies, dress code, references and any other activities related to the employment lifecycle.

### 9. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Organisation recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will ensure that where possible it will endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of suitable candidates and where appropriate take positive measures to attract applications from all sections of society. The Organisation will ensure that the selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

### 10. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All employees will have equal access to training and other aspects of career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities. Promotion within the Organisation will be based solely on merit and non-discriminatory.

### 11. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Organisation will protect the confidentiality of any equal opportunities monitoring data on employees and will safeguard any information disclosed within regulations or as set out by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

### 12. BREACHES

The Organisation takes seriously any breaches to the equality and diversity policy. Failure to comply with this policy could result in disciplinary action.



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