

Equal Opportunities Policy



STATEMENT ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Company is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and declares its opposition to any form of less favourable treatment, whether through direct or indirect discrimination accorded to employees or job applicants, on the grounds of their race, religious beliefs, creed, colour, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, marital/parental status, sex or sexual orientation.

The aim of our Equal Opportunities Policy is to ensure that no individual is treated less favourably than another employee on the grounds of their:

1. Gender
2. Race
3. Colour
4. Nationality
5. Ethnic origin
6. Religious or philosophical belief
7. Disability
8. HIV status
9. Age
10. Marital status
11. Parental status
12. Sexual orientation
13. Political belief or trades union membership
14. Class
15. Responsibility for dependants
16. Appearance
17. Ex-offender status as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
18. Lack of formal qualifications where such qualifications are not directly relevant to a post
19. Or on any other grounds, which cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of this Policy.

The Company recognises and welcomes its responsibilities under the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equal Pay (Amendment) Act 1983, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Human Rights Act 1998, Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and Employment Equality (Religious Belief) Regulations 2003 and other relevant legislation and codes of practice that seeks to fulfill its commitments by recognising the expertise, abilities and needs of every individual and by acknowledging the right to dignity and respect of every human being.

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EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

1. The Company states its wholehearted support for the principles and practices of equal opportunity and recognises that it is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity and maintaining racial harmony.
2. The Company will actively promote equal opportunities throughout the organisation through the application of employment policies, which will ensure that individuals receive treatment that is fair and equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. All managers and supervisors will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles.
3. The Company will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected, promoted and trained on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills, experiences and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be taken where a disabled person is put in a detrimental position and such reasonable adjustments remove the detriment.
4. The Company recognises the problems that sexual or racial harassment may cause at work and is committed to ensure that such unacceptable behaviour does not take place. Sexual harassment includes (but is not limited to) unwanted physical contact, suggestive remarks or behaviour, compromising invitations, demands for sexual favours and similar unwanted behaviour. Racial harassment is similarly unwanted treatment but is concerned with derogatory treatment and language on racial grounds. All forms of harassment are abhorrent and will not be tolerated by the Company. Sexual and racial harassment are regarded as unlawful discrimination and additionally may also be subject to criminal proceedings. All such cases will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
5. The Company recognises that the detriment a disabled person endures as a consequence of their disability can, in many instances, be removed by the adoption of reasonable adjustments. The Company is committed to ensure that such adjustments will be effected where reasonably practicable and where the detriment is substantial.

MONITORING AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Company recognises that the regular monitoring of ethnic origin, sex and disabilities of employees and applicants is essential to the thorough review of the effectiveness of this Policy and to this end the Company will initiate equal opportunity monitoring.
2. The successful implementation of this Policy depends upon the regular examination and progress towards equal opportunity.
3. The Company will review the physical features and arrangements affecting any newly disabled employee and will take such steps as is reasonable to prevent substantial disadvantage.

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GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

1. The Company will ensure that any individual or group of employees who believe that they have experienced direct or indirect unfair discrimination is properly represented in any grievance proceedings. Any employee who feels that he or she has been treated unfairly in connection with their employment should raise their grievance through the Grievance Procedure when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. In addition the Company will ensure that any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination (or any employee assisting or representing) will be protected from any victimisation.
2. The Company will continue to treat unfair discriminatory conduct by any member of staff as a disciplinary offence.

TRAINING AND ADVERTISING

1. The Company will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability only. The Company will seek to encourage employees and applicants who may have been traditionally discriminated against or where there are none or very few of that sex or race or where there are few employees with a disability in any particular job or location.
2. When vacancies are advertised both internally and externally, the Company will continue to ensure that such advertising, both in placement and content, is compatible with the terms of this Policy. To this end, opportunities will be taken through language, images or declarations, as appropriate, to show that the Company is an equal opportunities employer. In practical terms this means that the wording of advertisements will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that any hidden discrimination is avoided or that sexually, racially or disability loaded wording is avoided. Every effort will be made to ensure that the advertisements are placed in newspapers and publications so that as wide a readership as possible has access to the vacancies. This may include the placing of advertisements in ethnic publications and women's magazines.
3. To this end, "word of mouth" advertising, personal contacts and family relationships will be discouraged as the only means of recruiting new staff or promoting existing staff.

COMMUNICATION

1. The principles in this Policy will be brought to the attention of all staff by means of publication in the Employee Handbook.
2. All employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of their immediate Superior any act of discrimination they observe.
3. Employees who are newly disabled are encouraged to bring this to the attention of their immediate Superior to enable a review of their treatment to be made. This review will include an assessment of physical features and arrangements to ensure that these do not place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where they do, then adjustments will be effected where reasonable to do so.