

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

The Company is committed to a policy of equal treatment for its employees and potential employees. No employee or potential employee shall be subject to unlawful treatment or consideration because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (the “Protected Characteristics”), or will be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment or requirements of the Company that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

### ***Principles***

There should be no discrimination because of a Protected Characteristic, save where the Company is satisfied that this is objectively justified in accordance with the law

- The Company will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit.
- All employees have personal responsibility for the practical application of the Company’s equal opportunities policy.
- Special responsibility for the practical application of the Company’s equal opportunities policy falls upon Managers and supervisors involved in the recruitment, selection, promotion and training of employees.
- The Company’s grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have suffered discrimination. Alternatively, the matter can be discussed in confidence with a Director. Please report any grievance to the HR Manager who will arrange any meeting, as required.
- Disciplinary action will normally be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination including sexual or racial harassment. In serious cases, such conduct will be treated as gross misconduct.
- In the case of any doubt or concern about the application of the policy in any particular case an employee should consult a Director.

### ***Discrimination***

Staff must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women

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because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.

- **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

### *Recruitment and selection*

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible. Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made or, if applicants have been included in a pool for selection except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability.

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

### *Disabilities*

If any member of staff is disabled or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to tell the Company about their condition so that the Company can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

### *Part-time and fixed-term work*

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

### *Harassment*

The Company is particularly concerned to ensure that no employee is subjected to unlawful harassment. Harassment is explained in more detail above. Conduct, gestures or remarks may amount to harassment even if this was not intended and whether or not they were intended to be light-hearted.

An employee who believes that he or she has suffered harassment may raise a [grievance under the grievance procedure](#). Alternatively, the matter can be discussed

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in confidence with a Director. Please report any grievance to the HR Manager.

The Company will seek to prevent harassment by:

- Making its policy clear to all employees
- Informing and educating employees wherever possible
- Challenging unacceptable behaviour when it occurs
- Responding quickly and fairly to reports of harassment
- Offering support to staff who experience harassment
- Taking action against those who commit harassment

### ***Complaints***

Any employee who has a complaint about any breach of this policy should raise it under the grievance procedure. Alternatively, the matter can be discussed in confidence with a Director.

The Company will seek to investigate and resolve complaints fairly and sensitively.

The Company is committed to taking action under its disciplinary procedure, as required, to ensure that employees comply with this equal opportunities policy.

Employees must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

### ***Implementation***

The Company takes equal opportunities seriously and for this reason the Directors are responsible for ensuring that this policy is carried out in practice.

This policy and the action needed to ensure that it is followed will be reviewed from time to time and employees will be informed of any changes.