



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

1. Our Company is committed to equality of opportunity in all areas. Our aim is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment (discrimination) on the grounds of the following protected characteristics: -

Age	Disability
Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy and Maternity	Race
Religion or Belief	Sex (gender)
Sexual Orientation	

2. We will comply with Equality Act 2010 to achieve these aims.

### **Definitions**

3. Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- a. Direct Discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
- b. Indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- c. Harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- d. Victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

### **Harassment**

4. Harassment is defined as 'unwanted conduct' related to a relevant protected characteristic or be 'of a sexual nature'. It has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

5. Generally, harassment includes bullying, nicknames, threats, jokes, 'banter', gossip, inappropriate questions, excluding an employee (for example - ignoring them or not inviting them to meetings), insults or unwanted physical contact

### **Bullying**

6. Bullying is characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power through ways that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

7. There can be circumstances where an employee might experience conduct amounting to both bullying and harassment, with the bullying part of the behaviour not related to a protected characteristic, and the harassment part of the behaviour related to a protected characteristic.

## **Complaints**

8. Our Company does encourage staff to resolve misunderstandings and problems informally wherever possible, depending on the circumstances. However, whether dealt with informally or formally, it is important for staff who may have caused offence to understand that it is no defence to say that they did not intend to do so, or to blame individuals for being over sensitive. It is the impact of the behaviour, rather than the intent, that counts, and that should shape the solution found both to the immediate problem and to preventing further similar problems in the future.

9. Our Company will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, customers or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

10. All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Company's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

11. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to the equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour to ensure that employees, making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

12. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

13. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.

14. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do their job.

15. Short-listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.

16. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

17. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.