

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all Employees and job applicants in line with the Equality Act 2010 which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society and to promote the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out activities on behalf of MCFT.

We aim to create an inclusive working and learning environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination, victimisation or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We are a Disability Confident Employer and through our Safeguarding Working Group strive to ensure we are an inclusive employer and that our culture promotes this way of working through training, resources and communication.

We do not discriminate against Employees on the basis 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 (**protected characteristics**).

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which Employees treat each other, visitors, customers, suppliers and former Employee members. All Employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other Employees, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our separate Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (MCFTP017).

Scope and purpose of the policy

This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with Employees and to relations between Employee members at all levels as well as customers, suppliers and all other stakeholders.

This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, and termination of employment.

We will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of different religions, cultures, and where possible and reasonable, domestic responsibilities.

Promotion of Policy

MCFT promote this policy from day one with new employees entering the business and it is covered at Induction. We promote our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion in all advertised vacancies and our MCFT website.

Equal opportunities

If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about equal opportunities, you should contact your Line Manager/People Team/Recruitment Manager to request further information. There is also further information contained within our Recruitment Policy and Procedure (MCFTP008).

Forms of discrimination

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work over weekends may put people with particular faiths at a disadvantage due to religious beliefs or if there was a strict dress code in place this may also put people at a disadvantage. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (MCFTP017). Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment or supported someone else's complaint.

Recruitment and Selection

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the protected characteristics detailed in this policy. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate.

Job advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market. Although applicants should not be asked specifically about health or disability before a job offer is made, candidates will be asked if we need to be made aware of any reasonable adjustments to support them in attending an interview.

There are limited exceptions which should only be used with approval from The People Team.

For example:

- a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
- c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
- d) Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process).

Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts or on their first day of employment, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the UK Border Agency.

Due to the nature of our business and the customers premises that we have access to, that include but are not limited to schools, colleges and health settings, it is a requirement of MCFT and our customers that a DBS check is completed. New employees may not be permitted to commence employment or may be supervised until a satisfactory DBS check is received. For further information, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy (MCFTP012).

DBS checks are not comprehensive and can soon be out of date. References and identity checks will be sought for new employees and risk assessments and ongoing performance monitoring also have an important role to play.

Employee training and promotion and conditions of service

Employee training needs will be identified through regular Line Management discussions. All employees will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

MCFT's conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all employees who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Termination of employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

Disability Discrimination

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.

If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your Line Manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your Line Manager may wish to consult with you and the People Team who in turn may want to consult with your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or students at a substantial disadvantage compared to others; where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access.

Fixed-term employees and agency workers

We monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

Part-time work

We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately under our Flexible Working Policy (MCFTP019).

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Information

We will report on the statistical information including gender within each division, nationality and ethnicity, disability and age.

We are committed to monitoring our workforce and ensure we are inclusive to all. This will highlight any areas we are falling short on and also enable us to be able to report on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion to Ofsted and Senior Management.

Furthermore, with regard to our students we ask, record and monitor if they require any special arrangements or reasonable adjustments.

By obtaining this information it will ensure that we supply the right level of support and guidance that will be required throughout their programme.

Breaches of the policy

If you believe that you may have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure MCFTP004. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy MCFTP017. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak to your Line Manager or the People Team.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence as per our Whistleblowing Policy MCFTP015 and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Employees who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Rules & Procedure/Policy MCFTP005a/MCFTP005b.

Any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

This policy will, at a minimum, be reviewed on an annual basis by the People Manager.

Associated Policies

Whistleblowing Policy MCFTP015

Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy MCFTP017

Disciplinary Rules & Procedure/Policy MCFTP005a/MCFTP005b

Flexible Working Policy MCFTP019

Grievance Policy MCFT004

Recruitment Policy & Procedure MCFTP008

Safeguarding Policy MCFTP012