



Equality, Diversity & Dignity at Work Policy

1. Definitions

This policy outlines the company's approach to equality and diversity at work. It is important to understand the difference between the concepts of equality and diversity.

- Equality (or equal opportunities) is about protecting certain groups of people against unfair treatment based on a particular personal characteristic. This protection is normally based on those groups covered by legislation, i.e.; age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief.
- Diversity is about recognising, valuing and embracing the differences that people have.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage an atmosphere in which all workers embrace the benefits of working in a diverse workforce. The company aims to promote harmony at work and to ensure fair and equal treatment for all employees, job applicant, customers, suppliers and visitors, irrespective of their individual differences or any personal characteristics.

3. Scope

This policy relates to all aspects of employment, including individual standards of behavior, the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, appraisal, pay, promotion and leaving the company. The principles apply equally to all dealings with customers, suppliers and visitors.

4. Statement of Policy

The company is committed to the principle of valuing diversity. The company recognizes the benefits that can be secured through employing a diverse workforce and harnessing the individual talents of staff from different backgrounds and with different skills. Furthermore the company believes in dignity at work for all of our employees, workers and colleagues and encourages the ethos of reciprocated respect to build an environment, which embraces fair and unbiased treatment, with mutual understanding and wider tolerances of peoples' differences. The aim is that these will lead to:

- Tangible business benefits such as improved staff morale, reduced absence levels, customer satisfaction and profits.
- An improved company image leading to wider customer base and a wider pool of people to recruit from.
- The avoidance of costly legal proceedings caused by breaches of equality legislation.

The company is committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all staff, workers, customers, suppliers and visitors and all workers are expected to treat everyone with whom they come into contact with dignity and respect. Employees should be aware of the importance the company attaches to this policy and that breaches will be classed as disciplinary offences and dealt with accordingly.



5. Legal Obligations

In valuing diversity the company commits itself to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality. However, in applying this policy the company still needs to take account of the current and future equality legislation (and assorted codes of practice) including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Equal Pay Act 1970**
- **Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended) and including the Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999**
- **Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended – 2005)**
- **Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003**
- **Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003**
- **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**

The above legislation protects individuals against direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment (including bullying) and victimization because of their age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

- Direct discrimination is treating a person less favourably because of a particular personal characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination is applying a criteria or practise equally to all people but which has the effect of disadvantaging one group of people.
- Harassment is unwanted behaviour that affects the dignity of others.
- Bullying is a form of harassment which is normally but not always, related to an abuse of power.
- Victimisation is treating a person less favourably because they have asserted their rights under this policy or equality legislation (i.e. made or assisted with a complaint)

In pursuing this policy we believe that the principles that underpin the above legislation should be extended to all staff members and workers, regardless of any personal characteristic.

6. Responsibilities

The company is responsible for facilitating the training and providing the support which may be required, to enable a better understanding of the importance and benefit of this policy, and how to ensure it is enacted by everyone concerned.

All staff and workers are expected to have read and understood this policy and to have undertaken any training as is appropriate. They are also expected to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles, encourage the same level of behavior in colleagues and immediately report any breaches witnessed.



All managers are expected to have undertaken any training as is appropriate and to be responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and complied with by staff in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints (whether reported or not) seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity principles within the organization.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for this policy and for reviewing and providing advice on this policy, encouraging the adoption of its principles throughout the organization and ensuring complaints are adequately investigated.

7. Policy Breaches

If legal requirements are contravened, both the company and the employees/workers concerned may be liable to legal proceedings and the risk of having unlimited damages awarded against them.

Follow up/review training or education may be more appropriate where minor breaches have occurred due to a lack of understanding of equality and diversity principles.

8. Implementing this Policy

It is impossible to define all of the characteristics which make people different. Some are protected by legislation whilst others are not.

Communicating this policy

In order to ensure the principles of this policy are embedded in everything we do, all existing employees will receive a copy of this policy and training regarding how it should be interpreted. This policy will also be covered in all future inductions.

Below are some examples to illustrate how this policy impacts on all other work policies and practices. This list is not exhaustive as each situation must be considered on its merits.

General standards of behavior

The company expects staff to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. The company will not tolerate behavior such as;

- Physical violence
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Shouting or swearing
- Rudeness
- Isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- Telling offensive jokes or name calling
- The display of offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons
- Distribution of offensive material via email, text messages etc.

It is no defense for staff to say they did not intend their behavior to cause offence, or to blame individuals for being over-sensitive as it is for the recipient of the behavior to decide what they consider to be offensive. It is the impact of the behavior rather than the intent which is



Recruitment and selection

Individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff will ensure the following criteria are adhered to and that:

- A carefully worded and objective job description/person specification is produced for all vacancies, outlining the essential skills, knowledge and experience required.
- Job advertisements are agreed by a senior manager and published to encourage applications from all sections of the community. Advertisements will not contain any age limits.
- Application forms will explain our aims to be an equal opportunities employer, to recruit a diverse workforce which reflects the make-up of the local community and to generally promote diversity principles.
- Short-listing and selection will be based on objective criteria relevant to the job and decisions made by suitably trained staff, purely on the basis of merit.
- The reasons for all decisions will be recorded.

Training, Development and Promotion

The company will ensure that irrespective of any personal characteristics:

- The training necessary to implement this equality policy is provided
- All employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential
- Selection for all training, career development opportunities and job moves will be purely on the basis of merit
- Appraisals of performance will be conducted timely and objectively
- Selection for promotion will be purely on the basis of merit

Meeting Individual needs

As far as possible the company will try to meet the needs of individuals at work.

For example:

- Caring and domestic responsibilities – time off may be appropriate to allow staff to care for children or sick relatives to help them balance their work and home responsibilities
- Working patterns – wherever possible training courses and meetings should be planned to allow attendance by staff working non-standard hours
- Disability – disabled staff and customers should be consulted about any reasonable adjustments which could be made to allow them to better perform their functions
- Religious practises – it may be necessary to provide unpaid time off for prayer or religious festivals or relax dress standards to meet religious needs



9. Review and Consultation

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and links appropriately with other policies. Staff and workers will be consulted as part of the review process. The principles of this policy will also be considered when developing other new organizational policies.

10. Business Needs

The company gives a commitment to fair treatment and flexibility where possible and whilst it recognizes and believes in the benefits of this policy, every employee and worker must not lose sight of the fact that along with the needs of an individual employee or indeed a group of employees or workers, the overriding principle must be that the service the company provides should not be adversely and unreasonably affected by the implantation of this policy.

11. Complaints

If any employee feels this policy has been breached he/she should try to speak to his/her manager in the first instance, who will ensure that all issues are investigated and dealt with appropriately.

Formal complaints about breaches of this policy should be made in writing and submitted to a member of management.

Signed:

Position: Managing Director

Review Date: 01/04/2024