

Equality & Diversity Policy 2025



Background & Objectives of the Policy

The Company is committed to providing equality and diversity in line with The Equality Act 2010. We are committed to providing opportunities in recruitment, remuneration, training, and promotion of employees and to eliminating discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of any protected characteristics. These are age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We are committed to eliminating discrimination amongst our workforce and to comply with the Equality Act. We will strive to ensure that entry into our organisation and progression within it is determined solely by the application of objective criteria and individual merit. We will treat equally employees and applicants for employment. Furthermore, no employee or applicant will be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions relating to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, which cannot be shown to be necessary and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate objective. We want to attract and retain suitably qualified individuals or those who are able to develop sufficiently to undertake assignments within the company by virtue of job-related standards of education, training, experience or personal qualifications. We will reward people using market rates for our industry and ensure that we apply these fairly and consistently to all our people. We are equally committed to ensuring that we do not overlook or tolerate harassment or victimisation at work. Breaches of our Bullying and Harassment Policy will be treated seriously and may be considered as gross misconduct under our disciplinary procedures. The policy promotes the differences between people as strengths. People's attitudes and prejudices towards differences are the root causes of discrimination, which leads to unfair treatment.

Policy Details

Our objective is to create a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination and all decisions are based on merit. Discrimination can take a number of forms.

Direct discrimination is when someone is treated worse than someone else just because of a protected characteristic. It is also direct discrimination when someone is treated worse than someone else because they associate with someone with a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have protected characteristic.

Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral practice or requirement disproportionately disadvantages one group and cannot be justified by the needs of the business. Another example imposing a requirement that job applicants must speak fluent English disproportionately disadvantage non-English groups.

It is also discrimination when a disabled person is treated less favourably because of something connected to their disability and this cannot be justified by the needs of the business. In fulfilment of our objectives the Company will:

- Provide training and guidance for staff with managerial responsibility for staff and/or employees to monitor the application of the policy via Induction.
- We aim to ensure that our terms and conditions of employment, benefits, facilities and policies are free from unlawful discrimination.

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- Regularly review procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, assessment, promotion, redundancy selection and training.
- Have policies and procedures in place to deal with any complaints or grievances about discrimination, victimisation, harassment, and bullying. We will ensure that decisions made under our disciplinary policy are carried out fairly and without discrimination.
- Ensure the company's salary and benefit ranges and salary review process are applied fairly and consistently.
- Actively encourage more people from minority groups to apply to the company through positive recruitment methods.
- We will try to accommodate cultural or religious practise where reasonably possible.

Objectives

All employees have a duty not to discriminate against each other and not to help anyone else do so. We will not tolerate discrimination in our workforce. As part of our programme to deliver equality and diversity, we aim to eliminate discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of any protected characteristics of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. We will;

- Regularly review all employment-related policies and procedures, terms and conditions of employment, training and development and benefits to ensure that they do not discriminate against any employee on the basis of age.
- Eliminate discrimination against disabled people in employment, including recruitment, training, promotion, redundancy selection and retention, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We will make adjustments to accommodate disabled employees where possible and reasonable. If you think you have a disability, you are encouraged to tell us about this so that we can explore what adjustments might be appropriate.
- Eliminate discrimination where a person has proposed, started or completed a process to change his or her sex or is a transsexual and ensure we have an inclusive culture in which there is no oppressive behaviour including harassment or victimisation of any kind.
- Eliminate discrimination against married or all employees in civil partnership.
- Have in place an extensive range of family-friendly policies and regularly review these to ensure we comply with current legislation and offer as much support as possible to employees with families.
- Ensure that the balance of gender and ethnic origin among our staff better represents the community we serve.
- Consider the effect of company policies and procedures, training programmes and company events, on employees from different religions or beliefs. Including consideration of cultural or religious practices.
- Eliminate discrimination on the bases of sex or sexual orientation.

Training and Communication

The Company will provide support, advice and training that:

- Increases awareness of the prevalence and harm of discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or other disadvantages.

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- Examines the nature of discrimination, both direct and indirect, and the ways in which it can occur and be prevented.
- Provides information and advice on the implications of the relevant legislation any Codes of Practice arising from relevant legislation.
- Helps staff to behave in ways that are non-discriminatory by, explaining the operation of and access to Grievance and Disciplinary procedures. Identifying how to deal with discriminatory behaviour and processes. Improving awareness of help available.
- Ensure that promotion and training decisions will be made on the basis of merit. We will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee in making promotion or training decisions.

Monitoring

The Company will regularly monitor the following in its workforce. We ask all applicants to complete a monitoring form. We will use these forms to monitor the composition of our workforce and to help us assess our performance against our equality and diversity strategy.

Any information will be securely held by the HR Department and no information relating to an employee will not be released to anybody without the explicit signed consent of the employee concerned.

The Company will also monitor the application of its pay and reward strategy to ensure principles of equal pay are upheld.

The Company will use staff surveys to assess the success of its Equality and Diversity policy.

Recruitment, Selection, Assessment and Promotion

In furtherance of this Equality and Diversity the Recruitment and Selection policy aims to ensure that no job applicant is placed at a disadvantage by practises or requirement which disproportionately disadvantage protected groups and which are not justified by the demands of the job, Company best practice will be to:

- Use job profiles as the basis of all recruitment activity.
- Ensure that criteria for recruitment are job-related and demonstrate a direct link to the job profile.
- Expose vacancies to as wide a pool of potential applicants as practical, by considering the wording of advertisements and where these are published or publicised.
- Ensure staff involved in recruitment and promotion are aware how to eliminate the risk of discriminatory attitudes affecting decisions, and to ensure that they are conversant with the necessary legislation.
- Ensure that all employees have the opportunity to develop themselves and to progress within the organisation, through our Performance Review & Development Planning procedures.
- Ensure that we have succession planning in place to identify those employees who are ready for promotion.

Further guidance on Equality and Diversity in recruitment is available in the Recruitment Policy and Procedure on the Company drive or from the HR Department.

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Equality and Diversity Strategy

The Company has an “Opportunity for All” Committee whose purpose is to create an inclusive and supportive culture where all our people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and achieve outstanding performance.

The Committee is comprised of senior leaders who:

- Provide governance and direction for Group equality and diversity strategies and plans.
- Evaluate Group progress against equality and diversity objectives and
- Provide sponsorship and guidance on how to ensure objectives are met.

Signed:  Paul Dowling (Group Director)

Date : 20/03/2025