

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY POLICY

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

- 1.1 The Company is committed to promoting and ensuring all staff, whether temporary, contract, or permanent, full time or part time, and regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sex or sexual orientation or age (“**Protected Characteristics**”) are treated fairly and are offered access to opportunities on an equitable basis.
- 1.2 The Company is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination and will not tolerate harassment, victimisation or discrimination. This policy is extended to all third party contact with visitors, suppliers and clients.
- 1.3 All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. The principles set out in this policy apply in the workplace and outside the workplace in a work-related context.
- 1.4 This policy extends to, but is not limited to, job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training, pay, rewards, benefits, promotion and development, conditions of service, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures and termination of employment.

2. FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics. 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.
- 2.3 Harassment related to any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited and is dealt with further in our Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy. Victimisation is also prohibited.

3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 3.1 The Company aims to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the Protected Characteristics.

- 3.2 All advertised positions will seek qualified candidates who possess the necessary skills for the role. The Company will assess candidates for employment or promotion objectively against the necessary requirements of the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be needed to be made for disabled candidates.

4. STAFF TRAINING

- 4.1 All staff 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.
- 4.2 Managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training. Other staff may also be required to attend equal opportunities training.

5. 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 disciplinary action.

6. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

- 6.1 The Company will make all attempts to avoid any potential for indirect discrimination in employment practices when considering requests for variations to standard working practices. Such requests will only be refused if there are good reasons related to the needs of the business.
- 6.2 Acts of discrimination against employees, suppliers, contractors or clients are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedures. Discrimination may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 6.3 If you consider that you may have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure. 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. If you are uncertain which applies or need advice on how to proceed you should speak to the Chief Executive.

- 6.4 The Company will aim to resolve any complaints as quickly as possible. All complaints will be treated seriously and in confidence. Staff 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 Procedure.
- 6.5 The Company will investigate any allegations carefully and as discreetly as possible. Those conducting the investigation will not be directly involved in the allegation and the extent of the investigation will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.