

13. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Company's aim is to be an equal opportunities Company and have a policy in place for this purpose. The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Company and themselves.
- Achieve an ability-based workforce, which is in line with the working population mix in the relevant market areas.
- Ensure clients of the Company receive consistently high standards of service and treatment whilst in our care.
- Provide facilities and access to training and development for all employees regardless of race, colour, religion or philosophical belief, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, nationality, age, fixed-term, marital status or part time status.

The co-operation of all employees is essential for the success of this policy, however, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives, and for ensuring compliance with the relevant acts of parliament as well as the various codes of practice, lies with the Company. Behaviour or actions against the spirit and letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be considered a serious disciplinary matter and may, in some circumstances lead to dismissal.

PRACTICE

There should be no discrimination on account of race, colour, religion or philosophical belief, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, nationality, age, fixed-term, marital status or part time status.

We seek to fulfil our commitment to equal opportunities through the application of policies and procedures which are consistent and equitable. We may be required to depart from these procedures but we shall do so only if it is the case that being of a particular sex, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation is a genuine occupational requirement for a particular role.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

We recognise that the Company's success depends on the calibre of its people and that an offer of employment indicates a long-term commitment. We want to enable all employees to reach their full potential to the mutual benefit of the individual and the Company.

As a Company we aim to provide support to the individual, each department and the Company by working to the guidelines set out below. Discretion, integrity and confidentiality are considered to be of paramount importance within the business.

- Our recruitment practices will be viewed as fair and professional to both internal employees and potential employees.
- We will encourage Managers to review their department structure in order to review the necessity for recruitment.
- We will actively promote the appointment of internal candidates whilst ensuring that this does not compromise our recruitment standards. The recruitment process will be geared to identifying the key skills, knowledge and attitudes required. Individuals will be assessed according to their personal capability to carry out a given job.
- Assumptions that only certain types of person will be able to perform certain types of work must not be made.
- Where the Company's arrangements for recruitment and selection put disabled people at a substantial disadvantage due to a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements should be made to eliminate or if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage unless objectively justified.
- All external advertising will be professional and portray the desired Company image.
- Careful consideration will be given to every applicant, regardless of age, gender, marital status, colour, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, religious beliefs, nationality or disability, in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Written records of interviews and reasons for appointment and non-appointment

should be kept.

- All job offers will be made on condition that the successful candidate can provide two satisfactory references.
- We will continuously review the success of our recruitment process and in doing so continue to improve upon it.

The following principles should apply to appointments for promotion, transfer and training:

- Assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be carefully examined to ensure that they are not unlawfully discriminatory.
- Assessment criteria and appraisal schemes should be monitored and, where such criteria or schemes result in predominantly one group of workers gaining access to promotion, transfer or training, they will be checked to make sure this is not due to any hidden or indirect discrimination.
- Promotion and career development patterns will be monitored to ensure that access to promotion and career development opportunities in particular groups of workers are not unjustifiably being excluded.
- Traditional qualifications and requirements for promotion, transfer and training, such as length of service, and age, which may discriminate against certain groups of workers shall be reviewed and will only continue to be applied if genuinely justified.
- Policies and practices regarding selection for training, day release and personal development should not result in an imbalance in training between groups of workers unless this is objectively justified.
- Where the Company arrangements in relation to promotion, transfer or training put disabled workers at a substantial disadvantage for a reason connected with their disability, reasonable adjustments to the arrangements should be made to eliminate or, if that is not reasonably practicable, reduce the disadvantage unless objectively justified.

COMPLAINTS

The Company's grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly discriminated against. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, we would urge any such individual to pursue the matter by means of the procedure

MONITORING

To ensure this policy is operating effectively (and for no other purpose); we will review employees' and applicants' racial origins, religion, gender and disability on a periodic basis. Ongoing monitoring and regular review of such provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote a genuine basis of equality.



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