

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We promote a working environment in which diversity is recognised, valued and encouraged. We acknowledge the multi-cultural and diverse nature of the UK workforce and society in general. We are committed to principles of fairness and mutual respect where everyone accepts the concept of individual responsibility. It is therefore your responsibility to make sure you observe and adhere to this policy at all times. We view any breach seriously. We **will** investigate and potentially take disciplinary action. This may include dismissal in instances we consider gross misconduct.

We recognise that discrimination in the workplace in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. Our policy seeks to ensure job applicants and employees are treated fairly and without favour or prejudice. We are committed to applying this throughout all areas of employment. This includes recruitment and selection, training and development, benefits, rewards and promotion, dealing with grievances and disciplinary issues.

Our policy complies with current legislation. We review it regularly and will update it if the law changes. However, we recognise that equality of opportunity is best achieved by day to day commitment throughout the organisation. We offer support and training where necessary to achieve and maintain this.

Recruitment

The selection methods we use for recruitment are related to the requirements of the job. We do not seek irrelevant qualifications, experience or skills. Applicants for employment are short-listed/selected solely on the basis of their assessed capability for the role.

Protected Characteristics

No job applicant, employee or anyone our organisation deals with receives less favourable treatment because of their protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Your Responsibilities

Each and every one of us is a stakeholder in the success of this policy. We expect you to make a positive contribution towards maintaining an environment of equal opportunity throughout the organisation. Please make sure you observe this policy at all times. In particular, you have individual responsibility to adopt the following:-

- Do not take unlawful discriminatory actions or decisions contrary to the spirit of this policy.
- Do not discriminate against, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics.
- Do not place pressure on any other employee to act in a discriminatory manner.

- Resist pressure to discriminate placed on you by others and report such approaches to an appropriate manager.
- Co-operate when we investigate, including providing evidence of conduct which may amount to discrimination.
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equal opportunity.

Discrimination is not just treating one person less favourably than another. It can take place because:-

- Someone *associates* with a person with a protected characteristic.
- Someone is *believed to possess* a protected characteristic (even though they don't).
- Something *particularly disadvantages* people who share a protected characteristic more than others.

We expect you to treat, and be treated by, other employees and the people our organisation deals with considerately and with respect.

Where You Encounter Discrimination

If you feel subject to discrimination, make clear to the individual concerned that you find it unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage may be enough to resolve it without involving anyone else. Alternately, seek the help of a trusted colleague and ask them to approach whoever has caused you offence.

If discrimination continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please implement the grievance procedure. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

Should you feel an individual grievance is not appropriate to the situation, you may consider using our confidential reporting procedure.

5. Non-Harassment Policy

Our Policy

We support your right and opportunity to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination and with respect for your dignity.

Harassment in the workplace is a discriminatory act which in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. We are committed to providing a working environment which is harmonious and acceptable to all. We extend this principle to the people our organisation deals with.

What Is Harassment?

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which violates an individual’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Harassment is not only unacceptable language or behaviour which causes the *recipient* to be embarrassed, offended or threatened. Someone may complain about particular behaviour that they find offensive even though it was not directed at them. Neither does the person complaining need to possess the protected characteristic. It may also be behaviour directed at someone who *associates* with a person who has a protected characteristic or because they are *believed* to possess a protected characteristic (even if they don’t).

Your Responsibilities

It is your duty to treat people with respect; appreciating their feelings and considering their well-being in what you say or do. What may be acceptable to one person may upset and/or intimidate another. Harassment takes many forms and can range from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence. It can be delivered in many ways and this policy applies to all forms of communication including text messages, email and comments posted on social networking sites.

Some Examples

The following are examples of behaviour which we consider constitutes harassment:-

- Coarse or insensitive jokes and pranks.
- Coarse or insensitive comments about appearance or character.
- Display or distribution of offensive material whether written or pictorial.
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation from conversation or activities.
- Unwelcome familiarity or body contact.
- Abusive, insulting, or threatening language.
- Demands or threats to intimidate or obtain favours.
- Threatened or actual violence.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list.

We will investigate all allegations of such behaviour. Offenders are liable to disciplinary action and, in serious cases, dismissal.

Where You Encounter Harassment

If you feel you are being harassed, the first step is to make clear you want it to stop. Tell the person harassing you that you find such behaviour unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage is often enough to stop harassment. Alternately, you could seek the help of a trusted colleague and ask them to approach the person causing offence on your behalf.

If the behaviour continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please implement the grievance procedure. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

Where you make or support a complaint in good faith, you will not be victimised for doing so whatever transpires.

We are unable, however, to protect anyone who **maliciously** makes or supports an untrue complaint. We investigate such occurrences utilising our disciplinary procedure.

