



## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

It is the policy of this company to provide equal opportunities in employment irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, colour, ethnic or national origins, marital status or physical or mental disablement.

All employees are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity and the company will not tolerate the victimisation, bullying or harassment of employees on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or disability. We will not accept any inappropriate behaviour towards any of our employees for any reason whatsoever.

All employees have a personal responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

### **APPLICATION OF POLICY**

This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. All terms and conditions of employment and related benefits shall be non-discriminatory, other than where there are legal grounds for discriminating in the case of gender specific jobs. Applicants for employment will be assessed according to their skills, experience and suitability for the job.

This policy also applies to the treatment of our clients and customers.

### **REMEDIES**

If any employee believes that he or she has been the victim of discrimination he or she may raise the matter informally with his or her immediate line manager or the Director. If the employee wishes to raise the matter further, he/she should invoke the company's complaints procedure.

### **HARRASSMENT**

Harassment is a distressing, unpleasant experience and the company seeks to maintain a non-discriminatory working environment, which is free of harassment and bullying, particularly of a sexual (including sexual orientation), racial, religious and/or any disability (physical or mental).

All allegations of harassment will be dealt with sensitively, thoroughly, promptly and, where possible, in confidence.

Harassment on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion and disability is unlawful, and both the company and the harasser may be legally liable.

Harassment may take many forms, from "banter" to actual physical violence. It may be repeated behaviour, or in serious cases, may involve only a single incident.

Examples of harassment:

- Insults, derogatory comments, ridicule, pranks or "jokes" of a sexual or racial nature
- Lewd or suggestive comments about appearances or personal life and sexual activities
- Inappropriate body contact

- Display or circulation of sexually suggestive material (e.g. pin-ups), or racist material
- Requests for sexual favours, including the threat of dismissal, loss of promotion for refusal
- The above are examples only of what may be considered inappropriate. It must be borne in mind that it is for each individual to determine what behaviour is acceptable to them and what they consider offensive.

## REMEDIES

- Employees who feel that they are being harassed, or are uncomfortable about an aspect of the work environment should make it clear to the harasser that the behaviour is unacceptable. The company recognizes that the employee may feel unable in some cases to approach the harasser directly, and advice can be sought from your line manager or Director on how the matter can be dealt with informally.
- If any informal approaches are ineffective, or in the cases of serious harassment or bullying, employees should bring a formal complaint in writing under the Company's Complaint procedure. In view of the sensitivity of the complaint, the employee may wish to approach the Director at first instance directly rather than his/her immediate line manager.
- Any employee who is accused of harassment or bullying will be dealt with under the company's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may be necessary to temporarily transfer the alleged harasser to another department, or where this is not possible to suspend him or her on full pay until the issue is resolved.
- All parties involved in any complaint are expected to respect the need for confidentiality during the resolution of any complaints, and disciplinary action may be taken against any party who breaches this.
- Where an employee is found guilty of an act of harassment or bullying, he or she will be dealt with in terms of the company's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases of harassment or bullying, the harasser may be summarily dismissed and where appropriate, legal action taken.
- No detriment will occur against any employee who brings a complaint of harassment or bullying, unless it can be shown that the complaint was brought in bad faith or spitefully. In this case, the employee will be dealt with through the company's disciplinary procedure.

Chris Ewing  
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