



Appendix 1 Example Equal Opportunities Policy

Input name of Organisation

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out our approach to equal opportunities and avoiding discrimination in the workplace. It applies to all aspects of the employment relationship, before it begins, though to its eventual termination and everything in between including decisions about pay, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, and grievance matters. However, the policy does not form part of your contract of employment and it may be amended from time to time.

Our commitment

As an organisation we are committed to:

1. Encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion;
2. Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination;
3. Promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued; and
4. Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

As an employer we are therefore committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. Our employees and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of carer status, disability, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or

national origin), religion or belief, sexual orientation or sex (including pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marital status) (Protected Grounds). At the time of writing there is no approved legislation requiring employers to ensure that they do not discriminate on the ground of age. However, employers who are thinking ahead to phase two, may also wish to consider whether to include age discrimination as well.

What is discrimination?

No one should unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies both when an individual is at work, but also potentially outside too, for example when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts in the course of their employment, or on work-related trips or social events.

There are different types of discrimination and often discrimination can be unintentional or due to sub-conscious biases. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy:

- **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Ground. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of the colour of their skin or their sexual orientation.
- **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice (e.g. a policy) that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Ground more than others, and is not objectively justified. For example, refusing to allow employees to wear religious symbols due to a dress code will adversely affect people of a particular religion. In order to be lawful this would need to be objectively justified, for example by reference to health and safety grounds.
- **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected ground, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. For example, this might include making unwanted sexual advances to another member of staff.
- **Victimisation:** this occurs where there is retaliation against someone who has either complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. For example, this might include an

employee being disciplined who has raised a grievance against their manager.

- **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability that can't be objectively justified, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability. For example, this includes including disability-related absences when carrying out a redundancy scoring exercise.

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

We commit to avoid stereotyping or using wording in advertising that may discourage particular groups from applying, and will target as wide a range of candidates as possible. Everyone working in our organisation should adhere to this and should also include a short policy statement on equal opportunities.

Generally, job applicants will not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Ground except in the very limited circumstances: for example, to check that that an applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job – taking account of any reasonable adjustments.

Where necessary, job offers might be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms. These will not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

We will endeavour to ask all applicants if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability.

Disabilities and reasonable adjustments

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate. Disability for these purposes has a wide meaning and includes any long-term impairment, including chronic diseases or illnesses, malfunction or disfigurement of a person's body, a condition which affects a person's ability to learn, or a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, social interactions or emotions.

Where it is identified that you have a disability or might have a disability we will contact you to consult with you in relation to any potential reasonable adjustments. In addition, if you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, we would encourage you to raise this with your line manager so we can arrange a time to consult with you to explore any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. From time-to-time we may also discuss with you whether or not it would be appropriate to seek medical guidance relating to potential reasonable adjustments and their effectiveness.

We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate your needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

Complaints of discrimination

We take our commitment to equality very seriously and the [Managing Director] is the person who has ultimate responsibility for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.

If breaches of this policy occur, this may result in disciplinary action being taken in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Where this involves serious cases of deliberate discrimination, harassment or victimisation this may be considered gross misconduct and may result in your summary dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter either informally or formally under our Grievance Procedure. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. You will not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination, even if the complaint is not ultimately upheld. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.