We are committed to valuing diversity and seek to provide all staff with the opportunity for employment, career and personal development on the basis of ability, qualifications and suitability for the work as well as their potential to be developed into the job.

We believe that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient.

We will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination against any person on grounds of any protected characteristic (set out below) in any part of our business, including, but not limited to employees, suppliers, visitors, management and in any of our policies.

It is also the responsibility of all staff in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote these concepts, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, clients, suppliers or any other person associated with the business. Your attention is drawn to our anti-harassment and bullying policy set out below.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

This policy covers all staff working for us and applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes, but is not limited to, job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

WHAT IS EQUALITY AND WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

‘Equality’ requires us, and you, to treat everyone equally and fairly, with equal opportunities and rights.

‘Diversity’ recognises that this world is full of differences. We should note, value and positively embrace these differences. It is important for differences to be recognised. But it is equally important that, whilst recognising them, each and every person does so positively, with the importance of equality at the forefront of their minds.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to communicate our commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

• Gender, including gender reassignment, and those who identify as non-binary and gender-neutral

 • Marital or civil partnership status

 • Having or not having dependants

 • Religious belief or political opinion

 • Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller)

 • Disability, including by association

 • Sexual orientation

 • Age

 • Pregnancy and Family Leave

 • Sex

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the business.

EQUALITY COMMITMENTS

We are committed to:

* Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
* Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
* Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
* Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
* Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
* Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
* Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

IMPLEMENTATION

We expect all our employees to abide by this policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy, we shall:

* Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants and relevant others (such as contract or agency workers)
* Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions and work objectives of all staff
* Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses.
* Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of their protected characteristic. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not "fit in" would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with certain characteristics at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to retire by a certain age may indirectly discriminate on the grounds of age. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

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. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination, harassment, supported someone else's complaint or asserted a statutory right.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the job and are not disproportionate. Shortlisting of applicants should be done by more than one person wherever possible.

We take steps to ensure that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse labour market

Applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with approval from your manager. For example:

* Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
* Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment.
* Positive action to recruit disabled persons.
* Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the decision-making process). Applicants should not be asked about past or current pregnancy or future intentions related to pregnancy. Applicants should not be asked about matters concerning age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.

We are required by law to ensure that all employees are entitled to work in the UK. Assumptions about immigration status should not be made based on appearance or apparent nationality. All prospective employees, regardless of nationality, must be able to produce original documents (such as a passport) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation.

STAFF TRAINING AND PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. 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.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

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 other disciplinary action. Everyone is treated equally, and it is the objective criteria/evidence looked at which forms the decision of those making them.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

If you are differently abled or become differently abled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate. If you experience difficulties at work because of your incapacity in certain, you may wish to contact your manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser(s) about possible adjustments. 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.

We will monitor our premises to consider whether they place differently abled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for differently abled staff and service users.

FIXED-TERM EMPLOYEES AND AGENCY WORKERS

We shall, if it becomes applicable, monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion and permanent employment opportunities. We will, where relevant, monitor their progress to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

PART-TIME WORK

We monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy.

COMPLAINTS

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through our Grievance Procedures. A copy of this is available in Your Staff Handbook. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.