

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

v.2
Issued: May 2024
Next review: February 2025
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## **1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

Hoop Recruitment is committed to fostering an environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or any other characteristic. We believe that embracing diversity and promoting inclusion not only enriches our workplace culture but also enhances our ability to innovate and achieve our goals. This policy outlines our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and sets forth the principles and practices that guide our actions in this regard.

## **2. ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 2.1 This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment. We recognise the value of diversity in perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique talents and ideas. We actively promote diversity in our workforce and strive to eliminate barriers to participation for underrepresented groups.
- 2.2 This policy covers all employees, workers, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers.
- 2.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

## **3. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS POLICY?**

- 3.1 The company Founders have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with anti-discrimination law.
- 3.2 All Staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and all managers have responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, led by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers & the SLT will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice: HR has overall responsibility for equal opportunities training.
- 3.3 If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact HR to request training or further information.
- 3.4 Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting HR.

## **4. DISCRIMINATION**

4.1 Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else, because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

4.2 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, while on Company business, outside the workplace when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts [or when wearing a work uniform]), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

4.3 The following forms of discrimination are expressly prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 and under this policy and are unlawful:

- (a) **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they are gay.
- (b) **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and which is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- (c) **Associative Discrimination:** where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

- (d) **Perceptive Discrimination:** where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).
- (e) **Harassment or Bullying:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them, whether or not the behaviour is directed at them personally. The procedures for handling complaints of harassment or bullying are dealt with in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- (f) **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained, or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment, or has exercised their rights under this policy.

## 5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 5.1 We are dedicated to providing equal opportunities for all employees and applicants. External recruitment will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective job-related criteria that avoid discrimination, as described in the job description and person specification. Shortlisting of candidates should be done by more than one person in order to reduce the risk of personal bias, and with the involvement of the person responsible for overseeing Human Resources matters, where possible. Our recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, and also that our procedures remain compliant.

Vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible in order to reach as many diverse sections of the labour market as practicable. The content of advertisements should avoid stereotypical language or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. For this reason wherever possible, vacancies will be advertised as being suitable for flexible working, to encourage applications from individuals seeking work on a part time or job share basis.

- 5.2 Job interview questions and candidate selection decisions will be based on job-related criteria, and job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 5.3 In order to avoid potential disability discrimination job applicants should not be asked about health or disability, or sickness absence record, verbally or in writing before a job offer is made. There are limited exceptions which should only be used with the approval of the (Human Resources Department. For example:

- (a) Questions necessary to establish if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job requirement (subject to any reasonable adjustments).
- (b) Questions to establish if an applicant is fit to attend an assessment or any reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview or assessment. If necessary and where practicable we will make any reasonable adjustments to the process to enable a disabled applicant to participate fully.
- (c) Positive action to recruit disabled persons. The Company will consider taking appropriate positive action to enable or encourage applications from groups that are under-represented in the organisation.
- (d) Equal opportunities monitoring (which will not form part of the selection or decision-making process).

5.4—We are required by law to ensure and record that all employees (including existing UK nationals) 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 or birth certificate) before employment starts, to satisfy current immigration legislation. The list of acceptable documents is available from the Home Office on this link. <https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk>

5.5 To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and to identify groups that may be underrepresented or disadvantaged in our organisation, we monitor applicants' ethnic group, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure. Provision of this information is voluntary and it will not adversely affect an individual's chances of recruitment or any other decision related to their employment. The information is removed from applications before shortlisting and kept in an anonymised format solely for the purposes stated in this policy. Analysing this data helps us take appropriate steps to avoid discrimination and improve equality and diversity.

## **6. TRAINING AND PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

6.1 We provide regular training and education on equality, diversity, and inclusion to all employees, including line managers and the SLT. Training needs will be identified in a variety of ways, including through regular appraisals, 1:1 reviews of job performance, changes to job requirements, upon return to work from maternity/paternity/adoption leave etc. All employees and workers regardless of working pattern 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. Training will include equality training as part of the induction process.

6.2 We will do our best to enable all employees to access any training that they require by providing it in a way that takes account of individual needs, working patterns, preferences and personal circumstances subject to the Company's resources

- 6.3 We will ensure that terms and conditions of work, benefits, facilities, working arrangements etc do not discriminate against any employee with protected characteristics,
- 6.4 We will ensure that pay rates for male and female employees will be transparent and will reflect the principles of equal pay for work of equal value, and the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage.
- 6.5 We will ensure that communications processes and access to information and meetings will take account of people's needs and working patterns.
- 6.6 Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all of you who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

## **7. TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

- 7.1 We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.
- 7.2 We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

## **8. DISABILITIES**

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment (including clinical illnesses as well as learning difficulties) that has a substantial and long term (at least 12 months) adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- 8.2 If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate.
- 8.3 If you experience difficulties at work because of your disability, you may wish to contact your line manager to discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. Your line manager may wish to consult with you and your medical adviser 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.
- 8.4 We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **9. PART-TIME AND FIXED-TERM WORK**

Part-time and fixed-term staff should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **10. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY**

- 10.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.
- 10.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure as appropriate. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.
- 10.3 There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## **11. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

- 11.1 We are committed to continuously reviewing and improving our equality, diversity, and inclusion practices. We solicit feedback from employees, stakeholders, and external experts to identify areas for enhancement and to ensure that our policies and initiatives remain effective and relevant.

### **MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES;**

<https://www.rec.uk.com/about-the-rec/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>

<https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law>

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/diversity-factsheet/>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality-act-2010-amendment-regulations-2023>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>