**Procedure**

We believe one of our strengths is the friendliness within the team with everyone being valued for the contribution they make. It is in everyone's interests that the environment in which we work is harmonious and respectful, irrespective of people’s background.

This policy sets out our approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our aim is to encourage and support diversity, equity and inclusion and actively promote a culture that values difference and eliminates discrimination in our workplace.

**Our commitment**

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment and creating a workplace culture in which diversity and inclusion is valued and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. As part of our zero-tolerance approach to discrimination in any form, you and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**). We are also committed to providing equitable treatment to all those we deal with as an organisation, including customers and suppliers.

We will take all reasonable steps to:

* Promote awareness and provide training to all staff and all managers on all aspects of equality and diversity in the workplace.
* Apply the principles of equity to all staff and all job applicants so that there is equality of opportunity. Our aim is that no individual is denied employment opportunities for reasons unrelated to ability.
* Establish programmes and processes that ensure a diversity of candidates at all career stages beginning with recruitment, including the development and promotion of talent through to the appointment of senior leadership.
* Implement all internal policies and procedures (on a fair and impartial basis).
* Create an inclusive working environment that is sensitive to the needs of staff of differing cultures, religions and beliefs. For example, in connection with festivals, religious observance and dress.
* Make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with disabilities to function effectively and to their full potential.
* Ensure that all work environments are free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying.
* Monitor how this policy is working in practice.

**Discrimination**

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people, including current and former staff, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts and on work-related trips or events including social events.)

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

* 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 might be gay.
* Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and 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.
* Harassment: 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.
* Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment. This includes where someone mistakenly believes that the person victimised has done so.
* Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

**Disabilities**

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

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.

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

**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.

**Recruitment**

Recruitment and promotion will be conducted on against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. When recruiting or promoting, we will aim to take steps to improve the diversity of our workforce and provide equality of opportunity.

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.

Job 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 the approval of the HR Department. 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 selection or decision-making process).

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check.

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. The list of acceptable documents is available from the HR Department or UK Visas and Immigration.

**Training, promotion and conditions of service**

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals which will be based entirely on an objective assessment of performance and will not be influenced by any Protected Characteristics that you may have. You will be given appropriate access to training to enable you to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

**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.

**Breaches of this policy**

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 and victimisation may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered harassment, bullying or discrimination, or witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

There must be no victimisation or retaliation against staff who complain about or report discrimination. If you believe you have been victimised for making a complaint or report of discrimination or have witnessed it happening to someone else in the workplace, you should raise this through our Grievance Procedure.

We encourage the reporting of all types of potential discrimination, as this assists us in ensuring that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are adhered to in the workplace. However, making a false allegation in bad faith, or that you know to be untrue, will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

**Further Guidance**

**www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law**