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# Equality & Diversity Policy



## Policy Statement

The Company believes that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work.

Employees, potential employees and customers will not receive less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex or marital status. Neither will employees or potential employees be disadvantaged by any terms and conditions of employment or Company requirements which cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.

## What does this mean in practice?

**Equal opportunities means treating all individuals fairly and without bias, particularly in terms of recruitment, training, promotion and career development. It includes employees, potential employees, agency / contract workers, customers and suppliers. It is the duty of all managers and employees to accept personal responsibility for the practical application of the equal opportunities policy. Any indications of unacceptable behaviour should be dealt with promptly and decisively. It is essential that all employees understand the importance of drawing any discriminatory practices to the attention of their manager or the Employee Relations Department. Equal opportunities includes supporting and not wasting talent, creating a workplace where employees are confident of fair treatment, have fair access to opportunity and where the Company has successful mechanisms for solving any problems that do occur.**



## Why is Equal Opportunities important?

Equal Opportunities is an integral part of good management practice, aimed at developing people to the fullest extent possible for the good of the organisation and themselves. Equality of opportunity can raise morale and improve employee and customer relations.

The UK is a multi-racial society in which women account for almost half the working population. Increasingly it is recognised that people with disabilities can make a full contribution to working life. By ignoring these facts, the Company runs the risk of missing out on the talent and skills of a large percentage of society. The Company is unlikely to maximise its potential as a business unless it maximises the use of available talent in the community regardless of disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex or marital status.

Unfair discrimination in the employment field is morally wrong, it is bad for business and may be unlawful.

A number of legal acts render unfair discrimination unlawful. Complaints of discrimination will generally be covered by one or a number of the following Acts;

Employment Relations Act 1999

Human Rights Act 1998

National Minimum Wage Act 1998

Employment Rights Act 1996

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1991

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981

Race Relations Act 1976

Equal Pay Act 1975

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Sex Discrimination Act deals with discrimination on the grounds of gender, i.e. being male or female, together with discrimination on the grounds of marital status. The Race

Relations Act deals with discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origin.

## Types of Discrimination

### Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably than another person purely on the grounds of their sex or race. For example, not offering a person a job purely because she is a woman, refusing to promote a person because he is black, dismissing a woman because she is pregnant or deliberately harassing a person because of his nationality.

Direct discrimination is not justified even where the motive is full of best intentions. For example, if the best applicant for a job in a male dominated environment is a woman but the employer refuses to employ her because he is genuinely concerned that she will be subjected to sexual banter, innuendo etc that could amount to unlawful discrimination. In the eyes of the law, she is being treated less favourably purely because of her sex. In this situation the employer should be taking steps to address the problems with the male workforce, not disadvantaging women because of the men's behaviour.

It is direct discrimination to treat a woman less favourably for any reason due to pregnancy or maternity.

### Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination involves applying a requirement or condition, which, although applying to everyone, has a disproportionate effect on a particular sexual group or racial group when compared to another. This means that a considerably smaller proportion of one group can comply with the condition and that group is therefore at a disadvantage.

For example, advertising a job requiring 10 years service when 5 years would do could be indirect discrimination. Such a requirement could discriminate against women who have spent time bringing up a family, even though they may be well qualified for the position.

### Employee Relations July 2002

Genuine Occupational Qualifications (GOQ)

It should be noted that it may be lawful to discriminate in jobs where being of a specific sex or race is a genuine occupational qualification (GOQ). For example if the job needs to be held by one particular sex for reasons of privacy or decency or for reasons of authenticity. For example, the owner of an Indian restaurant may only wish to employ staff who are of Indian origin for authenticity reasons. GOQs are unlikely to apply within our Company.



## Employer Liability

Employers are responsible for acts of discrimination committed by employees during the course of employment, whether they were committed with or without the employers' knowledge or approval. This also includes acts that may be committed outside the workplace while representing the Company, or attending a Company function, such as a Christmas party. For example, if a male employee makes lewd suggestions to a female employee whilst under the influence of alcohol at a Company Christmas party, this could be regarded as sexual harassment (and vice versa). Or if an employee makes an offensive joke about a black persons skin colour, this could be regarded as race discrimination.

It is essential to note that while the Company may be held liable in the eyes of the law for an act of discrimination, the individual committing the act may be liable for personal prosecution. If the individual committing the act is an employee, they will be subject to the Company's disciplinary procedure as appropriate. This could result in dismissal, depending upon the particular circumstances and seriousness of the case.

## Who has the responsibility for the practical application of the Equal Opportunities Policy?

All employees share in this responsibility. It is essential to remind employees that they must bring to the attention of their manager, or the Employee Relations department, any discriminatory behaviour. The matter will then be fully investigated and appropriate action taken to stop the behaviour.

Managers and supervisors have special responsibility, particularly ensuring that they adhere to the principles of the policy when involved in the recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion of employees.

The Company's grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly discriminated against. (See procedure for dealing with complaints of discrimination).

## How does the Equal Opportunity Policy work in practice?

### Recruitment

- Job vacancies are open to all applicants and everyone is given equal consideration

- The most suitable people are selected for jobs with regard only to their experience, skills and qualifications
- No one is unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of disability (except for justified operational grounds), race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sex or marital status at any stage of recruitment
- The Company will only use Employment Agencies that adhere to the principles of Equal
- Opportunity Recruitment Advertising
- Efforts are made to ensure that the balance of the workforce recruited reflects that of the local community from which it is drawn, e.g. use of Employment Centres, local press
- Publicity does not stereotype people. Job titles and job content are not biased in any way

### Selection

- Application forms ask only questions that are relevant to the individual's ability to carry out the job
- Candidates are judged and selected against objective criteria,
- Selection decisions will not be based on assumption or unfair prejudices
- At interview candidates are only asked questions relevant to the job, their previous work experience, skills and qualifications
- No unnecessary or irrelevant questions are asked about personal or domestic circumstances and / or plans (e.g. a woman should not be asked a question that a man would not also be asked, such as who will look after your children when you are working / if they fall ill)
- Selection processes should accommodate disabled applicants to enable them to compare on a like for like basis with a non-disabled applicant. The Company will consider implementing reasonable adjustments to the working environment to enable a disabled person to consider a particular opportunity. The Company should make any necessary arrangements as is reasonable to allow a disabled applicant to attend a job interview.
- The Company does not assume that overseas qualifications are of a lower standard than their UK equivalent
- Any tests used should be free from any unjustifiable bias, either in the content or scoring mechanism, and should be relevant to the job being applied for
- If medical information is required, this will be obtained for disabled and non-disabled applicants.

## **Training and Development**

- Training and development opportunities are open to all full time and part time employees
- Promotion opportunities are open to all suitably qualified and experienced employees

## **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

- All employees are to be treated without bias with respect to pay and other conditions of employment, having regard to local or geographical benchmarks, skills and experiences.
- On commencement of employment all non UK citizens are required to produce the necessary documentation with regards to work permits etc. Infotel Solutions retains the right to request to see with documents at any given time
- Terms of employment will be determined solely by reference to the job, not personal characteristics



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