

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

## POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Reflect Recruitment Group (“the Company”) not to discriminate against workers on the grounds of an individual’s “protected characteristic” under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) on the basis of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will not discriminate on the grounds of an individual’s membership or non-membership of a Trade Union, or the fact that they are a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee.

All staff have an obligation to respect and comply with this policy. The Company is committed to training its staff in equal opportunities and diversity. The Company will avoid stipulating unnecessary requirements which will exclude a higher proportion of a particular group of people and will not prescribe discriminatory requirements for a role.

Our workers and applicants for employment shall not be disadvantaged by any policies or conditions of service which cannot be justified as necessary for operational purposes.

The Company will not discriminate unlawfully when deciding which candidate/temporary worker is submitted for a vacancy or assignment, or in any terms of employment or terms of engagement for temporary workers. The Company will ensure that each candidate is assessed in accordance with the candidate’s merits, qualifications and ability to perform the relevant duties for the role.

The Company shall, at all times, strive to work within legislative requirements as well as promoting best practice. The board of the Company's long-term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the community and that all workers should be offered equal opportunities to achieve their full potential. This policy and the measures we take to implement it have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant government and professional bodies. We are committed to a programme of action to make this policy effective and to bring it to the attention of all workers. The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, applicants, temporary workers, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-employees.

The Directors have overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Company’s equal opportunities policy (**EOP**) and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework prohibiting discrimination. The board may delegate day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Managers.

Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote the aims and objectives of the Company with regard to equal opportunities. To facilitate this process, managers will be given training on equal opportunities awareness and equal opportunities recruitment and selection best practice.

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and

disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy. We will ensure that each candidate is assessed in accordance with the candidate's merits, qualifications and ability to perform the relevant duties for the role. The Company shall also undertake not to act upon instructions from a client which states that certain persons are unacceptable due to a protected characteristic, unless an exception applies. These provisions are referred to as occupational requirements.

The Company will use best endeavours to comply with the Act and will not accept instructions from clients that will result in unlawful discrimination.

If you are involved in management or recruitment, or if you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact the Training & Compliance Manager to request training.

This policy is for guidance only and is available for all workers but does not form part of your contract of employment.

### **TO WHOM DOES THIS POLICY APPLY?**

This policy applies to the Company's employees, whether permanent, temporary, casual, part-time or on fixed-term contracts, to ex-employees, to job applicants and to individuals such as agency staff and consultants who are not our employees, but who work at or for the Company (collectively workers).

All workers have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, the Company may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual members of staff and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.

The policy statement above applies equally to the treatment of our visitors, clients customers, candidates, applicants and suppliers by our workers.

### **WORKING PRACTICES**

The Company will ensure that its' employees receive appropriate training and supervision with regards to their conduct, all employees are instructed not to harass any individual.

The Company will ensure that employees do not victimise any individual. Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably as a result of their disability.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a provision, criterion or practice (PCP) is applied by or on behalf of an employer, or any physical feature of the employer's premises, but this results in people who share a protected characteristic being placed at a disadvantage in comparison to those who do not have the protected characteristic. If the PCP can be objectively justified, it will not amount to discrimination.

If the vacancy requires characteristics which amount to an occupational requirement or the instruction is discriminatory but there is an objective justification, the Company will not proceed with the vacancy unless the client provides written confirmation of the occupational requirement, exception or justification. The Company will use best endeavours to comply with the Act and will not accept instructions from clients that will result in unlawful discrimination.

## DISABLED PERSONS

Discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably as a result of their disability.

Indirect discrimination occurs where a provision, criterion or practice is applied by or on behalf of an employer, or any physical feature of the employer's premises, places a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled.

In recruitment and selection there may be a requirement to make reasonable adjustments. For example, it may be necessary to have different application procedures for partially sighted or blind applicants that enable them to use Braille. With testing and assessment methods and procedures, tests can only be justified if they are directly related to the skills and competencies required for the job. Even then, it might be appropriate to have different levels of acceptable test results, depending on the disability. For example, an applicant with a learning disability might need more time to complete a test, or not be expected to reach the same standard as other non-disabled applicants.

Reasonable adjustments in recruiting could include:

- modifying testing and assessment procedures;
- meeting the candidate at alternative premises which are more easily accessible;
- having flexibility in the timing of interviews;
- modifying application procedures and application forms;
- providing a reader or interpreter.

The above list is not exhaustive, and potential applicants are encouraged to discuss their specific needs with the Company, to allow the Company to make such adjustments.

Wherever possible the Company will make reasonable adjustments to hallways, passages and doors in order to provide and improve means of access for disabled employees and workers. However, this may not always be feasible, due to circumstances creating such difficulties as to render such adjustments as being beyond what is reasonable in all the circumstances. The Company will assist its' clients in complying with the policy.

- The Company's premises in Newark and Lincoln have flat entrances.
- The Company's premises in Grantham requires one small step in order to enter the office. Representatives of the Company can alternatively offer to meet an applicant at a more accessible premises for meetings upon request.

The Company will not discriminate against a disabled person:

- in the arrangements i.e. application form, interview or arrangements for selection for determining whom a job should be offered; or
- in the terms on which employment or engagement of temporary workers is offered; or
- by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering the disabled person a job for reasons connected with their disability; or
- in the opportunities afforded to the person for receiving any benefit, or by refusing to afford, or deliberately not affording them any such opportunity; or
- by subjecting the individual to any other detriment (detriment will include refusal of training or transfer, demotion, reduction of wage, or harassment).

The Company will make career opportunities internally and in connection with their clients, available to all people with disabilities and every practical effort will be made to provide for the needs of staff, candidates and clients.

## **AGE DISCRIMINATION**

Under the Act, it is unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate against or to harass or victimise a person because of age. Age discrimination does not just provide protection for people who are older or younger. People of all ages are protected.

A reference to age is a reference to a person's age group. People who share the protected characteristic of age are people who are in the same age group.

The Company will not discriminate directly or indirectly, harass, or victimise any person on the grounds of their age. We will encourage clients not to include any age criteria in job specifications and every attempt will be made to encourage clients to recruit on the basis of competence and skills, and not age.

The Company is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are suitable for the requirements of the various positions regardless of age. No age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements on behalf of the company, save for where there would be a legal basis for doing so, for example due to work/shift patterns.

The company requests applicants' dates of birth as part of its recruitment process to ensure that suitable vacancies and assignments are offered in compliance with the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 and the Working Time Regulations 1998, based on the applicant's age. The information is not used as selection, training or promotion criteria or in any detrimental way and is only for compilation of personal data, which the company holds on all employees and workers as part of its equal opportunities and monitoring process.

Where a client requests age or date of birth, this will have to be under an occupational requirement or with an objective justification which should be confirmed in writing.

## **PART-TIME WORKERS**

This policy also covers the treatment of those employees and workers who work on a part-time basis, the Company recognises that it is an essential part of this policy that part time employees are treated on the same terms, with no detriment, as full time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity leave, parental and domestic incident leave and access to our pension scheme. The Company also recognises that part time employees must be treated the same as full time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

## **GENDER REASSIGNMENT POLICY**

The Company recognises that any employee or worker may wish to change their gender during the course of their employment with the Company.

The Company will support any employee or worker through the reassignment.

The Company will make every effort to try to protect an employee or worker who has undergone, is undergoing or intends to undergo gender reassignment, from discrimination or harassment within the workplace.

Where an employee is engaged in work where the gender change imposes genuine problems, the Company will make every effort to reassign the employee or worker to an alternative role in the Company, if so desired by the employee.

Any employee or worker suffering discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment should have recourse to the Company's grievance procedure.

The Equality Act 2010 makes the legal definition of 'biological sex' clear, however protections are in place for those who have decided to change their gender. The Company is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace culture and is also committed to staying up-to-date with regard to any legislative changes.

## **RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS**

Where the Company has registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and has the authority to apply for criminal records checks on individual because they are working with children or vulnerable adults or both, we will comply with the DBS's Code of Practice which includes having a policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

## **STAFF TRAINING AND PROMOTION AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All workers will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

The composition and movement of workers at different levels will be regularly monitored to ensure equality of opportunity at all levels of the organisation. Where appropriate, steps will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or under-represented groups.

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

## **TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

We will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all workers, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.

## **FIXED-TERM EMPLOYEES, AGENCY AND TEMPORARY WORKERS**

We will 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 within The Company to ensure that they are accessing permanent vacancies.

## **BREACHES OF THE POLICY INTERNAL BREACHES & COMPLAINTS**

If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed within the Scope and Purpose of Policy, you are encouraged to raise the matter through the Company's grievance procedure. If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed within the Scope and Purpose of Policy, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our anti-harassment policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on the grounds of the unlawful grounds, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. The Company will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

As this policy applies equally to the Company's workers' relations with visitors, clients, applicants, temporary workers, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed an applicant, temporary worker, client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

We will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the EOP statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of its workers.

The Company is committed to providing relevant training for all staff on their responsibilities and duties under this policy.

## **EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS**

In the case of an applicant for a potential internal role of Reflect Recruitment Group or one that it is advertising, or a current Temporary Worker of Reflect Recruitment Group, the individual should make an immediate report to the Managing Director. The details of the complaint should include:

- Details of the incident
- Name(s) of the individual(s) involved
- Name(s) of any witness(es)

Please refer to the Company's Complaints Procedure for instructions on how to raise a formal complaint. This will be made available immediately upon request. Any discrimination complaint will be investigated fully.