



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Policy Statement

The Main Project (“the employer”) is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to a policy of treating all its employees, volunteers and job applicants equally.

It is the policy of the employer to take all reasonable steps to employ and promote employees on the basis of their abilities and qualifications without regard to race, religion, colour, sex, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation, or offending background that does not create risk to children and vulnerable adults.

The employer will appoint, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability alone.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with the employer to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper discrimination. Serious breaches of the equal opportunities policy will be treated as gross misconduct.

Employees must not harass or intimidate other employees on the grounds of race or sex, disability or sexual orientation. Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with disciplinary procedure.

Employees should draw the attention of their immediate superior to suspected discriminatory acts or practices.

Employees must not victimise or retaliate against an employee who has made allegations or complaints of sex or racial discrimination, or discrimination on the grounds of disability or sexual orientation, or provided information about such discrimination. Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Employees should support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are making a complaint.

Sources of Recruitment

The recruitment process must result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in respect of experience and qualifications.

People with criminal records applying for jobs should be treated according to their merits and to any special criteria of the post (e.g. caring for children and vulnerable adults, which debars some in the category).

Questions are asked at short-listing stage about criminal records in order to ensure that people with such records are not inadvertently placed in vulnerable positions within the organisation. Having a criminal record, in itself, should not necessarily prevent a person from being appointed to any post, unless the offence debars the person. Where it is felt, however, that a recent or serious offence might mean that a person presents a risk to children or vulnerable adults then that person should not be appointed. Discrimination either in favour of or against those persons currently in employment who have disclosed their criminal record is not permissible (unless the offence debars them), and such information is strictly confidential.

Advertisements

Recruitment publicity must positively encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced people.

When advertising job vacancies, in order to attract applications from all sections of the community, the employer will, as far as reasonably practicable: -

- a. Ensure advertisements are not confined to those areas or publications which would exclude or disproportionately reduce the numbers of applicants of a particular gender or racial group;
- b. Avoid prescribing any unnecessary requirements which would exclude a higher proportion of a particular gender or racial group;
- c. Avoid prescribing any requirements as to marital status;
- d. Where vacancies may be filled by promotion or transfer, they will be published to all eligible employees in such a way that they do not restrict applications from employees of any particular race or gender;
- e. The employer will not recruit new employees solely on the recommendation of an existing employee;
- f. The setting of age limits, as a matter of general recruitment policy or as a criterion of any specific job must be justifiable and non-discriminatory.

Selection Methods

The selection process will be carried out consistently for all jobs at all levels. The employer will ensure that this Equal Opportunities Policy is available to all staff and in particular is given to all staff with responsibility for recruitment, selection and promotion.

Short-listed applicants are required to complete a declaration of criminal record using the standard organisational form. If an applicant reveals a serious criminal record, particularly if it is recent, then the 'responsible person' should consult a senior member of the management. Generally, a decision to reject an applicant because of, or partly because of, a criminal record should relate to an aspect of the person specification which is seen to be unmet. If possible, an applicant in those circumstances should be advised of why their application has had to be rejected.

The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or to train for the job in question.

Selection Tests

Selection tests, which are used, will be limited to questions relating to the particular job and/or career requirements. The tests will measure the individual's actual or inherent ability to do or to train for the work or career. Thus, questions or exercises on matters which may be unfamiliar to racial minority applicants or applicants of a particular sex will not be included in the tests if they are unrelated to the requirements of the particular job.

The tests, which are used, will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that they remain relevant and free from any unjustifiable bias, either in content or in scoring mechanism.

Applications and Interviewing

All applications will be processed in the same way.

The staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria, and of the need for their consistent application.

All applicants will be interviewed by at least two people.

All questions that are put to the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves unsociable hours or extensive travel) this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on assumptions about race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, children and domestic obligations.

Promotion, Transfer and Training

The employer will take such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper training, supervision and instruction for all staff in order to familiarise them with the employer's policy on equal opportunities, and in order to help them identify discriminatory acts or practices and to ensure that they promote equal opportunity.

All persons responsible for selecting new employees, employees for training, whether induction or promotion training, or for transfer to other jobs, will be instructed not to discriminate on gender or racial grounds and on the grounds of the employee's disability or sexual orientation.

Where a promotional system is in operation, the assessment criteria will be examined to ensure that they are discriminatory.

The promotional system will be checked from time to time in order to assess how it is working in practice.

When a group of workers predominantly of one race or sex is excluded from access to promotion, transfer and training and to other benefits, the promotional system will be reviewed to ensure that there is no unlawful, indirect discrimination.

Where general ability and personal quality are the main requirements for promotion to a post; care will be taken to consider favourable candidates of all races and both sexes with different career patterns and general experience.

Terms of employment, benefits, facilities and services

All terms of employment, benefits, facilities and service will be reviewed from time to time, in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, gender or marriage or any discrimination based on disability or sexual orientation.

Grievance, disputes and disciplinary procedures

All allegations of sex or racial discrimination or discrimination on the grounds of disability or sexual orientation will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily.

The employer will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints from members of a particular sex or racial group on the assumption that they are over sensitive about discrimination.

Monitoring equal opportunity

The employer will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity is being achieved.

The employer will, from time to time, look at; -

- a. The sex and ethnic composition of the work force and changes in distribution over periods of time;
- b. The selection decisions for recruitment, promotion, transfer and training, according to the sex or racial groups of candidates, and the reasons for those decisions.

The employer will, from time to time, review the selection criteria and personnel procedures to ensure that they do not include requirements or conditions, which constitute, or may lead to, unlawful indirect discrimination.