**Equal Opportunities Policy**

1. **Policy Statement and Values**
2. We are committed to supporting, developing and promoting diversity and equality in all of our employment practices and activities.
3. We will not tolerate unfair treatment on the basis of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are defined in section 3.2.
4. Everyone should be treated fairly and considerately. Fair treatment is not only a moral duty but also makes good business sense.
5. Promoting equality and diversity:
6. Gives a better chance of successfully recruiting and possibly retaining the best staff from the widest pool of applicants from a diverse and competitive labour market;
7. Shows an inclusive workplace which values the differences between people and shows an environment of fairness, dignity and respect; and
8. Allows training, career development and progression opportunities based on merit, skill, knowledge and experience of the role.
9. This policy will apply equally to employees, workers, sub-contracted workers, candidates and applicants during the recruitment process.
10. **Aim**
11. Our policy aims to:
    1. Develop an inclusive company which will benefit from a diverse workforce;
    2. Encourage the best use of the available talent and experience; and
    3. Promote a culture which encourages open dialogue.
12. Our inclusive approach also aims to support underrepresented groups and, although recognises the legal responsibilities under statute, aspires to go further by monitoring equality and diversity.
13. We will strive towards a working environment free from harassment, victimisation and bullying where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
14. **Legislative Framework**
15. It is unlawful to discriminate because of a protected characteristic as defined in current equality legislation. This can include direct and indirect discrimination.
16. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
17. Discrimination can cover a variety of situations and is further defined within Appendix A.
18. **Application**
19. As a responsible employer, we will endeavour to avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment.
20. We promote equal opportunities as a core value of this company. This policy should be adopted by those as defined in section 1.5 to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
21. Candidates will be shortlisted based on the merits of their application set against the job specification, person specification and job description which should be drafted in line with this policy, National Working Rule 1.1.7 and the Code of Best Practice for the Employment of Operatives for JIB member companies (as contained within Section 7 of the JIB Handbook).
22. Shortlisting should be based on the principles of equality and in line with the aforementioned Code.
23. **Raising an Issue**
24. Employees who believe they have been subjected to a detriment in relation to any aspect of this Policy should utilise the Grievance Procedure set out in National Working Rule 20.
25. Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary proceedings. For information on disciplinary processes please see the employer’s Disciplinary Procedure document. Minimum requirements are contained within National Working Rule 19.
26. **Continuous Improvement**
27. We will monitor the composition of our workforce and ensure equality of opportunity for all.
28. In line with the Code of Best Practice for the Employment of Operatives, information requested in relation to equality and diversity monitoring should be included on a separate sheet which can be detached and returned anonymously.
29. Information provided by employees and candidates for monitoring purposes will be used only for the purposes as described and in accordance with current data protection legislation.
30. This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as appropriate.

**APPENDIX A**

* + 1. Discrimination can cover the following situations:
  1. **Direct discrimination** defined as treating someone less favourably than another because of one of the protected characteristics;
  2. **Indirect discrimination** defined as a provision, criterion or practice, which although appears neutral, upon application is discriminatory to those with a protected characteristic such as that it would be a detriment to this group when compared to those who do not have the protected characteristic;
  3. **Harassment** defined as engaging in unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic with the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person;
  4. **Associative Discrimination** defined as discrimination or harassment on the basis of association with someone who has that protected characteristic;
  5. **Perceptive Discrimination** defined as discrimination or harassment due to a perception that an individual has a protected characteristic which they do not have;
  6. **Third-party harassment** defined as where a person is harassed by a third-party such as a client or customer; or
  7. **Victimisation** defined as being subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a promotion because of undertaking a protected act, such as raising a grievance, bringing proceedings or giving evidence connected with current equality legislation.