



Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

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Introduction:

To drive our business forward and build an environment of trust, we need to invest in and support our colleagues and create a culture of service and high performance. To meet this aim, it's essential to have a diverse workforce where everyone has the same opportunities for success.

1. Who's this policy for?

This policy covers all prospective and current colleagues, temporary and agency workers and anyone else working directly for CCS McLays Ltd on a permanent or temporary basis. This policy doesn't form part of your contract and may be amended or withdrawn at any time.

2. What do we mean by equal opportunities?

Equal opportunities means that everyone deserves to be treated equally and have the same opportunities to develop and grow their skills within our business.

We are committed to ensuring that during all aspects of your employment with us including recruitment, training and development, that you are given the same opportunities as everyone else.

Having the same opportunities doesn't necessarily mean the same treatment and it may be appropriate in some circumstances, to have a different approach with different groups of people.

We won't unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origin, colour, nationality, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or political belief/opinions.

We also won't unlawfully place colleagues at a detriment on the grounds of employment status – fixed term or part time, or membership/non-membership of a trade union or other such organisation.

3. What is our commitment?

We are committed to maintaining a good harmonious working environment in which no colleague feels under threat or intimidation because of their protected/equality characteristic(s), religious or political belief.

To support this commitment we don't allow flags, emblems or posters to be displayed, materials to be circulated or slogans or songs to be recited which are likely to cause offence or apprehension to particular groups of colleagues. In addition, we don't condone the display of any racially, ethnically or sexually offensive emblems or material.

4. What is diversity?

Diversity is about recognising and accepting the different elements and abilities that make us individual and understanding and respecting that we all have different beliefs and live our lives in different ways.

Having a diverse workforce can bring many benefits to our business and it's important that we maximise the opportunity that diversity can bring.

5. Do we monitor diversity?

Within the UK we ask prospective job applicants to complete an 'equal opportunities' monitoring form when they apply. This information is kept strictly confidential.

6. How do we ensure our disabled colleagues are treated equally?

To make sure our disabled colleagues are given equal opportunities we may need to consider making reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments will also be considered for job applicants and our recruitment process is designed to ensure disabled applicants aren't disadvantaged as far as reasonably practical, and that the process remains fair.

We are committed to equal access to training and development for all our colleagues and will make every effort to accommodate differing needs.

If you become disabled during your employment, we will look at ways we can support you and explore any reasonable adjustments we could make with advice from Occupational Health and/or your medical advisor.

It's your responsibility to let us know if you believe you may have a disability and you should let us know as soon as possible, if we don't know, we can't help you.

7. What is a protected/equality characteristic?

Under the Equality Act 2010 the following characteristics are protected by law:

Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; those in a Marriage or Civil Partnership

this doesn't cover those who are:

Single; Pregnant or in Maternity Leave; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation

This legislation makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with these characteristics.

8. What is discrimination?

Discrimination is where someone is disadvantaged or not treated the same as everyone else because of one or more of the protected characteristics listed in point 7.

There are several types of discrimination, these are listed below:

Direct discrimination happens when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, you're not given a job because you're a certain gender or disabled.

Associative discrimination is discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, if a man is not given a promotion because his wife has had a baby and the manager thinks he will not be able to concentrate with added workload – then he has suffered discrimination by association.

Perceptive discrimination is discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic, even if the person doesn't actually possess the characteristic. For example, a colleague is discriminated against because there is an assumption made that they are gay.

Discrimination arising from disability is where an individual is treated less favourably because of something arising from their disability and this treatment can't be justified as a reasonable act in managing the business. For example, someone is not allowed additional breaks to use the toilet and they have diabetes, this could be discrimination arising from a disability.

If we don't know and could not have reasonably have been expected to know of a colleague's disability, then legally the unfavourable treatment will not be regarded as discrimination. However, we must do all we can reasonably be expected to do to find out if a person has a disability. Please be aware that this is different to direct disability discrimination.

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or practice in place which applies to everyone, but is particularly disadvantageous to people who share a protected characteristic. For example, if we didn't allow any part time working, there's a chance that this would indirectly discriminate against women, as it's still widely believed that more women than men are children's primary carers.

Indirect discrimination can be justified, if it's a reasonable act in managing the business, for example, you have to be over the age of 18 to sell alcohol.

Discrimination on the grounds of age can also be justified, if it's a reasonable act in managing the business, for example, to support succession planning e.g. enabling younger workers to access more senior roles or allowing older workers to stay longer in employment. Age is the only protected characteristic where discrimination could be justified.

9. What is harassment?

Harassment can take many forms but is generally seen as unwanted behaviour that's intended to be or has the effect of being intimidating, embarrassing, humiliating or offensive. A one-off incident can be classed as harassment if it's serious enough. Harassment can occur both inside and outside of the workplace, for example at a work social function e.g. Christmas party.

10. What is third party harassment?

A third party is someone who provides services or goods to us or is a customer. When you report an incident, we will take reasonable steps to prevent this from happening again.

11. What is victimisation?

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint; or because they're suspected of doing this.

A person is not protected from victimisation if they have supported or made a malicious complaint.

12. What should I do if I feel I am being discriminated against or harassed?

Firstly, you should report it to your line manager, but if the complaint is against your manager you should report it to a Director who will advise you on the correct process to follow. If you feel uncomfortable reporting it to a Director you could consider reporting it to another senior manager within your area.

13. What should I do if I feel someone else is being discriminated against or harassed?

You should talk to the person and try to get them to report it to their line manager or a Director.

14. What will happen if I discriminate or harass someone?

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment. Any reports will be thoroughly investigated, and anyone found to be breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action which could lead to their dismissal (either with or without notice).

15. Is there any other support available for colleagues?

If you have experienced discrimination, you can get help from the Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) discrimination helpline.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

FREEPOST

Equality Advisory Support Service

FPN4431

Telephone: 0808 800 0082

Textphone: 0808 800 0084

Monday to Friday: 9am to 8pm

Saturday: 10am to 2pm

These are confidential and impartial helplines that provide advice and support on a range of topics.

You should be aware however, that because these helplines are confidential, we would not know about your concerns unless you raise them directly with us.

16. What are my responsibilities?

Everyone working here is responsible for supporting this policy and promoting a culture of fairness and equal treatment. We're all accountable for making sure that our business and its processes don't discriminate against any individual or group of colleagues and if you feel that something or someone is discriminating, then you must report it.

17. What are my manager's responsibilities?

It's your manager's responsibility to ensure that they and their teams understand and follow the **Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy**. They must make sure that everyone in their team have the same opportunities during their employment, including training and development, secondments and promotions.

18. What are the Directors' responsibilities?

It's the responsibility of the Directors' to ensure that any complaints are thoroughly investigated, and appropriate action is taken. They must ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a confidential and sensitive nature.

It is also the Directors' responsibility to ensure that this policy is kept up to date and reflects any changes in legislation.