



KMP – 005 Employee Equality & Diversity Policy

EMPLOYEE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been developed to show and to put into practice, Group horizon's (hereafter called 'The Company') commitment to creating a diversity strategy of which equal opportunities is a part. Diversity recognises that we are all different and involves building an environment where people are respected as individuals and where their diverse range of views, perceptions, qualities, experiences and contributions are valued.

Diversity is about the culture and environment of work and whilst equality and diversity are different concepts, equality is an essential ingredient in achieving diversity.

The policy also sets out responsibilities of the Company, its employees and its learners.

Fair, objective and innovative practices

The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of employees, learners, visitors, clients, customers and suppliers.

The Company will access, recruit and develop talent and potential and recruit both staff and learners from the widest possible market cross section that is available. Through this, insight can be gained into different markets and will generate greater activity to anticipate customer need.

Our intention is that both our staff and our learners reflect the diversity of our nation's population.

All staff and learners have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description or from any other form of unwanted behaviour whether based on gender, trans-gender status, race, disability, age, political or religious belief or sexuality.

All staff and learners have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential.

Representation

Gender – both sexes are properly represented and rewarded for their contribution and their achievement at all levels of the organisation, through

- Challenging gender stereo-types and
- Supporting employees and learners in balancing their life at work and home

Trans-gender status – individuals who plan to undergo, or who have undergone gender – reassignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Marital status – Individuals are treated fairly and equally by the company or its representatives in respect of their marital or family status.

Race – The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is represented at all levels of the organisation and through its learners through

- Challenging racial stereo-types
- Understanding, respecting and valuing different backgrounds and perspectives

Disability – The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued at all levels of the organisation through

Focusing on what people can do, rather than what they cannot:

- Challenging stereo-types about people with disabilities and
- Making appropriate adjustments in the workplace and in the learning environment to help individuals achieve their full potential

Age – Age diversity within the workplace and in the learning environment is promoted, accepted and valued through

- Challenging age stereo-typing: and
- Recognising the benefits of a mixed age workforce

Religious belief and Political opinion – Individuals and groups are treated fairly in the workplace and learning environment regardless of political or religious opinion by recognising individual's freedom of belief and their right to protection from persecution and intolerance.

HIV/AIDS – Discrimination against an employee, a potential employee or a learner on the grounds that he/she is thought to have AIDS/HIV is not acceptable and confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Sexuality – Individuals are treated fairly in the workplace or the learning environment through:

- Respecting choice of lifestyle and
- Challenging negative stereotypical values

Types of discrimination

Direct – Putting a person at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the following grounds: gender, marital status, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origin, religion, belief, trade union membership, political affiliation, part-time or fixed term status, age or disability

Harassment – where unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct occurs which has the purpose or the effect of, affecting a worker or a learners dignity, or creating

an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person

Indirect – less obvious discriminatory treatment i.e. where an individual is subjected to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of their gender, marital status, gender reassignment, ethnic or national origin, nationality, race,, colour, sexual orientation, religious belief, trade union membership, part time or fixed time status, age or disability.

Victimisation – treating a person less favourably than another on the grounds that he/she has taken legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in some way.

Raising a complaint

In order for complaints about actions or conduct which breach this policy to be dealt with fairly and promptly, the employee /Learner should follow The Company's grievance procedure as set out in the Employee/Learner Handbook and raise the complaint in writing with a Director explaining the full the nature of the grievance.

In respect of a learner, the individual has the right to complain about any Group Horizon representative and would raise the complaint in writing with a Director explaining the full nature of the grievance.

The complaint must:–

- Identify the alleged person
- Give specific examples of the actions or conduct that the employee believes constitutes discrimination or harassment: and
- Include times, dates and names of any witnesses

A meeting would then be arranged where the complainant could have a working colleague present to help to explain the situation more clearly. Alternatively an official employed by a trade union or an official of a trade union who is certified as a worker's companion could accompany you at disciplinary or grievance hearings.

A further time would be agreed for discussion if no resolution of the problem is initially possible

The objective is to address situations positively and timely and correct them, so early advice of situations is far better than allowing them to deteriorate beyond a point where remedial action can be taken.

Breaches of policy

Group horizon will ensure that any breach of this policy or complaint is dealt with in a serious, sensitive and confidential manner, so that the matter can be resolved as quickly and as sensitively as possible for all concerned.

If after the investigation, it is proved that an individual has harassed any other worker on the grounds of gender, marital status, gender reassignment, ethnic or national orientation, nationality, race, colour, sexual orientation, religion, belief, trade union membership, part-time or fixed-term status, age or disability, or otherwise act in breach of this policy, they will be subject to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal or termination of the working arrangement.

Anyone who raises a complaint in good faith will be protected against victimisation or less favourable treatment as a result.

Malicious or fake allegations of a breach of this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

This policy will be reviewed annually and its effectiveness will be monitored regularly to ensure that it is achieving its objectives. Group Horizon are committed to providing relevant training for all employees on their responsibilities under this policy.

Group Horizon reserves the right to change the contents of this policy, as necessary, from time to time to comply with changing legislation and company policy and will inform employees of any significant changes within one month of the change taking place.

Positive Discrimination

In line with the Equalities Act 2010, Group Horizon may choose to employ Positive Action during recruitment exercises or when considering candidates for promotion.

Positive action in recruitment and promotion can be used where an employer reasonably thinks that people with a protected characteristic are under-represented in the workforce, or suffer a disadvantage connected to that protected characteristic.

In practice it allows an employer faced with making a choice between two or more candidates who are of equal merit to take into consideration whether one is from a group that is disproportionately under-represented or otherwise disadvantaged within the workforce.

This is sometimes called either a 'tie-breaker' or the 'tipping point'. But this kind of positive action is only allowed where it is a proportionate way of addressing the under-representation or disadvantage.

More detailed information can be found in the Government Equalities Office guide “Equality Act 2010: What Do I Need to Know?” which can be found on the website:

www.equalities.gov.uk

Accountability

The HR Manager is responsible for ensuring that this document is regularly reviewed and updated – and is the first contact point for managers seeking advice and guidance about the Equality & Diversity Policy.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that they and their team members follow the requirements set out in this document.