

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

This policy applies to all employees, workers, visitors, subcontractors, suppliers, ex-employees and persons applying for employment with MJ Hughes Limited. It is designed to attract the finest employees, and allow them to contribute to their full potential through recognising and supporting their diverse strengths and needs.

MJ Hughes Limited is committed to achieving equality and fairness for all in our employment and not to discriminate on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital and parental status, race, creed, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief focus, civil partnership status or age. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels valued, respected and able to give their best.

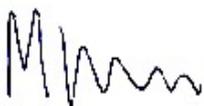
The Company therefore aims to ensure that workplace structures foster diversity, and allow employees to bring fresh ideas to the workplace. MJ Hughes Limited believe that capitalising on what is unique about individuals and drawing on their different perspectives and experiences helps to improve working practices and business, thus improving employee productivity and customer satisfaction.

All employees whether part-time, full time or temporary will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. The Company will not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, harassment or victimisation.

This policy applies at all times, and should influence the way in which we treat all individuals whether they are colleagues, clients or business associates. All employees are responsible for treating everyone with dignity and fairness at all times.

This Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.



Michael Hughes
Managing Director

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

PLAN

By implementing the strategies in the Equality and Diversity Plan, MJ Hughes Limited are better equipped to ensure customer and employee satisfaction.

To ensure that the Equality and Diversity Plan is successful it has to be compulsory throughout the Company, and therefore commitment is required from the entire workforce.

Senior Management are responsible for ensuring that the Policy is promoted and implemented to both existing and new staff, and to being fully supportive of the benefits of diversity.

Employees also have a responsibility to the Company under this Policy, and should they display discriminatory behaviour toward their fellow employees they will be subject to the company disciplinary procedure. All acts of this nature must be reported to Senior Management immediately. They can be deemed to constitute gross misconduct, and will result in dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

Unlawful Discrimination

It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, marital or parental status, race, creed, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief focus, civil partnership status or age. The Company will comply with this legislation, and no individual will be unjustifiably discriminated against.

Definitions

- Direct Discrimination – Where an individual is treated less favourably to another person in the same or similar circumstances because of a factor such as a disability, their age or race. E.g. not employing someone because they have a disability
- Indirect Discrimination – The imposition of a condition or requirement which has an adverse impact on a minority group of people unless it can be justified on the grounds of business need. E.g. a height requirement of 5'10" will eliminate some men but proportionately more women and so may be considered unlawful

Age

The company will actively encourage employees into the industry irrespective of their age. They will aim to eliminate age discrimination on the premise that employees should be assessed on their ability and potential, not their age. Employees will be encouraged to improve their skills and experience irrespective of their age.

Disability

The company recognises its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, and will ensure that they follow the appropriate Code of Practice for both employment and premises.

Applicants or employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the company and may also wish to advise the company of any "reasonable adjustments" to their employment or working conditions which they consider would assist them in the performance of their duties.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

Careful consideration will be given to any proposals of this nature and where reasonable and reasonably practicable for the company to accommodate those proposals they will, in accordance with the statutory provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its future amendments.

Race

It is unlawful to discriminate against an employee on 'racial grounds' i.e. race, colour, nationality, ethnic origins. The company will endeavour to promote racial equality in employment to promote and retain good relations between racial groups and organisations.

Religion

The company will endeavour to promote the understanding, awareness and tolerance of different religions or beliefs. They will aim to create a working environment which recognises and respects these beliefs.

Gender

The company will ensure the fair and equal treatment of all employees in relation to employment, training, promotion etc, regardless of their gender. All reasonable and legal steps will be taken to ensure that male and female staff receive equal pay for the same work, work rated as equivalent and for work of an equal value.

The company will strive to consider requests for flexible working hours to ensure that those with childcare responsibilities are not disadvantaged in any way.

Sexual Orientation

The company will work to ensure the terms and conditions of employment for all employees are applied regardless of their sexual orientation.

Bullying & Harassment

The company is committed to providing a working environment which is free from harassment and bullying, and ensuring that all employees are treated with the respect that they deserve.

Harassment and bullying show a lack of respect to fellow workers, and this behaviour will not be tolerated by the Company.

Definitions

- Harassment – Unsolicited and unwelcome workplace behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of the recipient. Harassment can be by either an employee, worker or a third party to the Company
 - Victimisation – When a person is treated less favourably due to having: Brought proceedings against a Company under a piece of employment legislation; given evidence of information in connection with such proceedings or made an allegation of a breach of employment legislation within the Company
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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

Unfair Treatment

If any employee of the company feels that he/she is being unfairly treated they should follow the Company's Grievance Procedure. All complaints received via this route will be dealt with seriously. If any employee is found to be in breach of the Equality and Diversity Policy they will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

Any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination will be protected from victimisation or harassment.

All complaints will be treated seriously and will be dealt with promptly and efficiently and, so far as is possible, in confidence. The main aim will be to resolve the complaint so that the unwanted treatment is remedied and stopped.

Even employees who have been witness and not directly unfairly treated are encouraged to use the Company's Grievance Policy and Procedure to bring any unacceptable behaviour to light.

An employee who raises a grievance knowingly untrue or maliciously may also be subject to the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Positive Action

Should inequalities among the workforce become apparent through monitoring, positive action may be taken to redress the imbalance. Such measures may include for example:

- Advertising jobs in ethnic or female interest publications, as appropriate
- Encouraging under-represented groups to apply for suitable posts
- Making contact with disabled people via the local JobCentre Plus

Diversity & Our Company

The principles of the Equality and Diversity Plan aim to use our employee's differences to improve our business outcomes and help us to achieve our goals. The company values these differences, and uses them to build better business practices.

The benefits of a successful Equality and Diversity Plan are:

- Improved customer satisfaction due to a greater understanding of their diversity needs and from higher employee satisfaction.
- Higher retention rate of employee's therefore higher skills levels at the company's disposal. Therefore reduced training costs due to less staff turnover.
- Improved workplace relations and staff morale.
- Reduced workplace stress and improved attendance at work.

Whistle-Blowers

The Company will not discriminate against anyone who under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 'blows the whistle' on account of any alleged wrong doing on the part of the Company. This applies to not only employees but workers as well.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

Training

The company is committed to equal opportunities in all aspects of its own working practices, and extends the scope of its Equality and Diversity Policy to include all training activities.

Staff, contractors, candidates and trainees will be treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, socio-economic background, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, or other irrelevant distinction.

In the development and monitoring of this policy, the company takes account of key current legislation relating to equality of opportunity.

Implementation

The company will apply this equal opportunities policy to ensure that:

- All trainees and candidates have open access to its awards
- Training staff apply the equal opportunities policy to the selection, training and assessment of candidates
- Reasonable adjustments are made so that unnecessary barriers can be eliminated for candidates with particular requirements
- Printed materials, including assessment materials, aim to reflect diversity in the community and are none discriminatory in style and content
- Staff are selected and recruited fairly and receive high quality training for the roles they will be undertaking, including the application of this equal opportunities policy to their work with candidates or trainees
- Complaints and appeals are dealt with promptly and fairly

Access to training courses

The company will enable candidates to have equal access to qualifications and recognises that it has a responsibility to advise candidates on the most appropriate course and to maximise the potential of all students. If a candidate with a physical disability wishes to undertake a practical training course the trainer should consult with the Training Co-ordinator to determine whether there are any parts of the course which could not be made accessible to the candidate. If the candidate is able to complete the training and assessment, they will be awarded. In all cases, candidates with special needs will be assessed against the same criteria as any other candidate.

Course Suitability

If young or vulnerable candidates attend a training course, it is the responsibility of the Approved Trainer or Assessor to ensure that any training materials used are appropriate and to carry out a specific risk assessment on the suitability of the course with regards to factors such as physical size, weight, lack of awareness to dangers and any others factors that are necessary for the wellbeing of the candidate.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY & PLAN

Assessment materials

Where The company produces assessment materials (e.g. written tests), they will be valid and reliable, free from any bias, non-discriminatory, strictly relevant to the syllabus content and marked in a consistent and non-discriminatory way. All examiners will receive training to ensure that their marking is strictly in accordance with a pre-defined marking scheme.

Printed materials

Where The Company produces materials to support its provision (e.g. candidate workbooks), they and all other printed materials, including assessment materials, will be non-discriminatory in style and content.

Appeals

All appeals to The Company will be followed up in accordance with the documented appeals procedure and will be dealt with promptly and fairly.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may be made where candidates are identified to have special needs at the registration stage.

Reasonable adjustments arrangements are intended to:

- Provide candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills or knowledge without being disadvantaged by the method of assessment
- Do not give the candidate an unfair advantage over other candidates
- Do not affect the assessment demands of the qualification
- Do not mislead anyone as to the candidate's achievements

The adjustment required will be specific to the individual candidates needs and made on a case by case basis and must be in accordance with HEA requirements. The trainer must consult the Training Co-ordinator in deciding what adjustments are practicable and allowable.

Distribution

Candidates will be informed of the equality and diversity plan prior to commencing training and copies will be made available to all candidates.

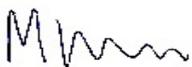
Monitoring and Records

All training programmes will be monitored to ensure that this equality and diversity policy is effective. To enable this, records will include information on candidates characteristics such as gender, age, special needs and ethnic origin and these will be used to measure against individual candidate's progress and achievements.

We will also confirm the presence of these arrangements to our supply chain partners.

The Managing Director, who has overall responsibility for this policy, will ensure the provision of adequate resources for its implementation and will regularly assess the continuing improvement of our Company's performance.

This policy will be brought to the attention of all employees and subcontractors working on behalf of the Company and reviewed at least annually.



Michael Hughes
Managing Director
