
EQUALITY POLICY

J & E Hall Limited

Policy Owner – Director of HR

Document History

Issue	Date	Amendment Comment
Draft	01/10/17	Generated 1 st draft, submitted for approval
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Issue 1	16/04/21	General Issue
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Document Authorisation

Description	Name	Position	Sign
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Policy aims and objectives

We are committed to eliminating discrimination and our objective is to create a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination and all decisions are based on merit. This policy has the full support of our executive team. Our Governance Committee reviews all aspects of compliance, including Equality, on a quarterly basis, and reviews any potential breaches.

Eligibility

This policy applies to all employees, workers, agency workers, contractors and job applicants, whether their normal place of work is a company site or home

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is unlawful when it takes place on one of the following grounds (the 'protected characteristics'):

- age
- disability
- gender re-assignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Discrimination can take a number of forms:

- Direct discrimination is when someone is treated worse than someone else just because of a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if a manager excludes an employee from a training course just because she is gay.
- It is also direct discrimination when someone is treated worse than someone else because they associate with someone with a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. For example, it would be direct discrimination if an employee ostracised a colleague because the colleague has a gay flatmate or because he thinks the colleague is gay.
- Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral practice or requirement disproportionately disadvantages one group and cannot be justified by the needs of the business. For example, imposing a requirement that job applicants must speak fluent English disproportionately disadvantages non-English groups and would be unlawful unless it could be justified on genuine business grounds.
- It is also discrimination when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and this cannot be justified by the needs of the business or when the business fails to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person.
- Not sharing an opportunity to a home worker because they are not onsite or seen. If their reason for home working is due to a disability or a protected characteristic, then there could be a case for indirect discrimination.

Our responsibilities and approach

We aim to avoid discrimination in all aspects of employment and recruitment. Our approach to different aspects of employment and recruitment is set out below.

Recruitment and selection

We aim to ensure that job requirements and job selection criteria are clear and based only what is required to get the job done effectively. We will avoid making stereotypical assumptions based on protected characteristics about who is able to do a particular job.

We aim to ensure that no job applicant is placed at a disadvantage by practices or requirements which disproportionately disadvantage protected groups and which are not justified by the demands of the job.

For all jobs, we will draw up a clear and accurate job description to ensure that we remain focussed on what the job involves and the skills, experience and qualifications which are relevant and necessary to do the job. If a job can be done flexibly, we aim to say so in the job description. If we hold interviews, we will try to ensure that more than one person conducts them to ensure that we avoid unintentional bias.

We will not ask for personal or irrelevant information on application or in interviews. We will focus instead on whether someone has the relevant skills, qualities and experience to do the job.

Promotion, training and appraisals

Promotion and training decisions will be made on the basis of merit. We will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee in making promotion or training decisions. We believe all employees should have an equal opportunity to progress and develop.

We will advertise opportunities through the HR portal and on notice boards and we will try to ensure that training and development opportunities are made known to all relevant employees. Training needs will be identified through regular reviews and appraisal discussions. These conditions are irrespective of the place of work to avoid visibility bias. Home workers will be offered equal access to opportunities and receive equal treatment.

We have a formal appraisal system which helps us to ensure that employees are being assessed fairly on the basis of job performance and are not being discriminated against. We will conduct appraisals objectively and measure performance in a transparent and objective way, without prejudice or bias.

Working conditions and terms of employment

We will try to accommodate cultural or religious practices such as prayer requirements where we reasonably can. Making separate rooms available for prayer and separate fridge shelves can be organised for food that needs to be kept separate.

We will ensure that decisions made under our disciplinary, grievance policies are carried out fairly and without discrimination.

Termination of employment

We will ensure that we avoid discrimination in making decisions about dismissal or redundancy.

Where possible we will ensure that any manager's decision to dismiss an employee is endorsed by another manager and the HR department. We will encourage leavers to give feedback about their employment in exit interviews.

Disabled employees

We will make adjustments to accommodate disabled employees where possible and reasonable. For example, we can provide extra equipment or support, we can re-arrange duties and we can make changes to our premises in appropriate cases. If you think you may have a disability, you are encouraged to tell the business about this so that we can explore what adjustments might be appropriate.

Training on equalities

We will train all our employees on understanding and avoiding discrimination annually via our corporate E-Learning platform.

Your rights and responsibilities

You have the right not to experience unlawful discrimination in our workplace. You also have a responsibility to understand this policy and help us to implement it.

All employees, workers, agency workers and contractors have a duty not to discriminate against each other and not to help anyone else do so.

Our relationships with customers and suppliers

You must not discriminate against any of our customers or suppliers. Equally, we expect our customers and suppliers not to discriminate against you and we will take appropriate action against any customer or supplier found to have done so.

What to do if you have been discriminated against

If you believe you may have been discriminated against, please tell us. You can speak informally with your manager or anyone in HR. If you want to make a more formal complaint, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance procedure.

Allegations of potential breaches of this policy will be treated seriously. Employees and contractors who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Breaches of this policy

Any breach of this policy will be taken seriously and may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches will be regarded as gross misconduct and may lead to immediate dismissal under our disciplinary procedure. You must co-operate to the fullest extent possible in any investigation into suspected breaches of this policy. If the effect or meaning of any part of this policy is unclear you should seek clarification from HR.

Status of this policy

This policy does not give contractual rights to individual employees. The company reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you of any changes. We will review our Equality Policy on a regular basis.

We will promote and publicise our Equality Policy as widely as possible using our intranet, website, application packs, induction packs, notice boards and handbooks.