

## **Equality Policy**

We are committed to the principle of equality in employment. Accordingly, our Employment Policies for recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion are designed to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favorable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, political beliefs, trade union membership or non-membership, sex, age or marital status. The objective of this policy is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities. This policy follows guidance notes and legislation in conjunction with the Equality Act 2010.

**Management has the primary responsibility for the successful implementation of the policy by:-**

- Not discriminating in the course of employment against fellow employees or job applicants.
- Not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Bringing to the attention of employees that they will be subject to disciplinary action for failure to
- Adhere to the policy
- Training all persons responsible for recruitment, selection, promotion and transfer of staff for better equal opportunity practices
- Encouraging existing employees and potential employees from underrepresented groups to apply for jobs or occupations at all levels within the Company
- Offering training to prepare all existing employees for promotion
- Monitoring the make-up of its existing workforce

**Individual employees have the responsibility to ensure that they assist the Company in achieving these objectives by:**

- Not discriminating in the course of employment against fellow employees, customers, suppliers or members of the public with whom they come into contact during the course of their duties
- Not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination reporting any discriminatory action to J. Holcroft, Managing Director.

The Company recognises the right of every employee to work in an atmosphere free of harassment and to complain about it should it occur. The Company agrees to take appropriate steps to promote such a workplace.

It is against the policies of this Company for any employee to harass another employee in any way. Such conduct will not be tolerated. All employees will be expected to comply with this policy, and appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy.

### **What is Harassment?**

There is not a single simple definition of harassment. This is because harassment can take many forms, occur on a variety of grounds and may be directed at an individual or group of individuals. Harassment may occur between people of the same sex or the opposite sex. It is not the intention of the perpetrator but the deed itself and the impact on the recipient, which determines what constitutes harassment. Ultimately, the question which has to be asked is has an individual or group of individuals been treated in a detrimental way on improper ground?

### **Grounds of Harassment**

Individuals may claim that they are subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- Their race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- Their sex or sexual orientation
- Their religious or political connections
- Their willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- Their membership or non-membership, of a trade union
- Their disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- Their status as ex offenders
- Their age
- Their real or suspected infection with Aids/HIV

The above are examples and should not be regarded as an exhaustive list.

### **Forms of Harassment**

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence and bullying, to less obvious actions like ignoring an individual. Whatever the form of harassment it will be unwanted behaviour, which is unwelcome and unpleasant. Forms of harassment may include:

- Physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- Verbal harassment
- Sexual harassment, for example:

#### **Physical conduct of a sexual nature:**

Unwanted and repeated physical contact including unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault, coercing sexual intercourse.

#### **Verbal Conduct of a Sexual Nature:**

Unwanted sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendoes or lewd comments.

#### **Non Verbal Conduct of a Sexual Nature:**

The display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, or written materials, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.

#### **Sex Based Conduct**

Conduct that degenerates or ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of an employee because of his or her sex, such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender related.

- Verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letter...
- Visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, emblems...
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities...
- Coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours or pressure to participate in political/religious groups...
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following...
- Through communication channels; email, telephone system

## **The Effects of Harassment**

Harassment carries with it a high price for both Company and employees. The Company recognises that harassment can cause employees to be subject to fear, stress and anxiety which can put great strains on personal and family life. It can lead to illness, increased absenteeism, an apparent lack of commitment, poor performance and even resignation. All these have a direct impact on organisational effectiveness.

The damage, tension and conflict within the workplace which harassment creates not only results in poor morale; but higher labour turnover, reduced productivity, lower efficiency and divided teams. Although the effects may be difficult to quantify, they will eventually show through in the performance of the Company.

## **Duty of Supervisors and Managers**

All supervisory personnel are responsible for eliminating any harassment or intimidation of which they are aware. Failure to do so will be considered a failure to fulfill all the responsibilities of the position.

### **In particular:**

- a) Take prompt action to stop harassment as soon as it is identified; in some cases by pointing out that the behaviour is unacceptable. Line Managers will be able to effectively put a stop to the problem without the need for further action.
- b) Ensure that offensive or potentially offensive material is not displayed in the workplace.
- c) Make clear to staff that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable and where appropriate will be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- d) Investigate all complaints made by any member of staff against another or others. No Supervisor or Manager shall threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's rejection of sexual advancement will be used as a basis for an employment decision affecting that employee. Such conduct by the Supervisor or Manager will be treated as a serious offence.

## **Harassment Complaint Procedure**

1. Wherever possible, an employee who believes that he or she has been subject of harassment should, in the first instance, ask the person responsible to stop the harassing behaviour, as it is unacceptable to them. Person to person reproof at an

early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behaviour, which is causing the offence without involving third parties.

2. If the recipient needs help or advice, they should seek the involvement of trusted friends. This would still be short of making the matter official by involving management.
3. If the harassment continues the employee should take their complaint through the grievance procedure.
4. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. Employees shall be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter investigated thoroughly.
5. If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt attention and disciplinary action designed to stop the harassment immediately and prevent its recurrence will be taken. In such circumstances, if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser and not the victim.
6. Employees shall be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against an employee for complaining about harassment is a disciplinary offence.

**NB; Whilst the objectives of this policy are clearly stated, and are to be followed, for reasons of equity and justice, it must also be advised that any employee who raises a complaint, which upon investigation is proven to be deliberately vexatious, then that employee will themselves become the subject of disciplinary proceedings.**

The successful operation of this policy necessitates a contribution from each employee and all Employees have an obligation to report any act of discrimination known to them. Employees who consider that they are a victim of unlawful discrimination may raise the issue through the Grievance Procedure.

This policy is authorised by



**JOHN HOLCROFT**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
January 2012