



WORKSPACE[®]

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Policy Statement

Workspace Group aims to be an inclusive organisation where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and where there is equal opportunity for all whether part time, full time or temporary.

Workspace Group respects and values the diversity of its staff. The Company will take all reasonable steps to employ, train and promote employees on the basis of their experience, abilities and qualifications irrespective of:

- race,
- colour,
- ethnic origin,
- nationality or national origin,
- religion, belief or political opinion,
- sex,
- sexual orientation including gender reassignment,
- age,
- marital or civil partnership status,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- disability

Workspace will also take all reasonable steps to provide a work environment in which all employees are treated with respect and dignity and that is free of harassment based upon an employee's race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity gender reassignment, age, marital or civil partnership status or disability. The Company will not condone any form of harassment, whether engaged in by employees or by outside third parties who do business with the Company, such as clients, customers, contractors and suppliers.

Valuing diversity means that we recognise that we all have complex identities made up of many strands. These can include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical and mental aptitudes, nationality, socio-economic status, and religious, political or other beliefs. This means we embrace and celebrate our differences in a positive environment, and are committed to engage with the needs of our diverse staff to enable us, both individually and corporately, to achieve our aims.

It applies to all employees of Workspace and anyone else who applies for work, contract or temporary staff. Also within scope are third parties such as customers and clients.

Management Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all managers to:

- ensure that the standards established within this policy are adhered to within their own area of responsibility
- familiarise themselves with the procedures in all Equal Opportunities documentation
- ensure that they are not instructing employees to act in a discriminatory manner
- ensure they are not putting pressure on employees to discriminate
- bring the details of the policy and procedure documents to the attention of all staff
- ensure that information on equal opportunities is incorporated in all induction processes for new or temporary staff and is supported by ongoing training

Staff Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of employees at all levels to:

- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity
- report any discriminatory acts or practices
- not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination
- not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination
- not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others

Action will be taken under the Company's disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this equal opportunities and dignity at work statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

Definitions

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is where bias, prejudice, misconception or stereotyping result in denial of opportunity, or unfair treatment regarding selection, promotion, or transfer. It is evident when talent, skills, experience, competence and suitability are not given due consideration in decision making.

It can be direct or indirect, intentional or not intentional. What is most important is that certain forms of discrimination are not just unfair - they are illegal!

What is Bullying & Harassment?

It is persistent unwanted behaviour which a person finds intimidating, distressing, embarrassing, humiliating, hostile, frightening, degrading, malicious, insulting or offensive. It can be a misuse of power affecting the dignity of others where these actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

It refers to behaviour that is unsolicited, that is personally offensive and that fails to respect the rights of others or fails to respect the impact that such behaviour might have. It may be

intentional bullying which is obvious or violent but it can also be unintentional, subtle and insidious.

In the UK, harassment is a criminal offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. This means that as well as an employer being liable, an employee can be liable too and may have to personally pay compensation to the victim.

Recruitment & Selection

The recruitment process will be conducted in such a way as to result in the selection of the most suitable person for the job in terms of relevant experience, abilities and qualifications. The Company is committed to applying its equal opportunities policy statement at all stages of recruitment and selection in order to:-

- Ensure that selection decisions are based on objective, non discriminatory, job related criteria, consistently applied to all candidates for all jobs at all levels.
- Ensure that nationality requirements are applied correctly.
- Ensure that staff responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application or receive the appropriate guidance from Human Resources.
- Ensure wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two interviewers and all questions asked of the applicants will relate to the requirements of the job and that selection decisions for any post are taken by more than one person.
- Ensure that selection criteria and reasons for the selection or rejection of individual candidates are recorded.
- Ensure that decisions in relation to promotion opportunities including temporary promotion are non-exclusive and that extended use of temporary promotion is discouraged where it will give one individual an unfair advantage over others.
- Monitor the results of recruitment processes with particular regard for decisions which appear to be inconsistent

Employee Development

Workspace will provide development opportunities for all staff irrespective of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marital or civil partnership status or disability. Line managers will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote equal opportunity within the departments for which they are responsible.

(For full details please see "Employee Development Policy")

Equal pay

Workspace is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, Workspace will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is free from bias and based on experience, abilities and qualifications.

Bullying and Harassment

The definition of bullying & harassment is as above. Most forms of harassment are based on race or sex but it can also occur because one individual takes a dislike to another. It is of particular concern if the harasser is in a position of authority over the recipient. It can involve physical contact or be verbal, written or silent.

Individuals can be harassed for a number of reasons including:

- gender
- sexual orientation
- religious or political convictions
- membership or non-membership of a trade union
- disability
- physical appearance
- status
- age

It can also be on the basis of any other characteristic which is unacceptable and affects the dignity of the individual.

Examples of Harassment (list is not exhaustive)

- One person repeatedly touching another against their wishes, jostling or threatening touching
- unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, other conduct of a sexual nature
- the offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances or threats for rejecting sexual advances
- questions about a person's sex life
- the use of nick names related to an employee's sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion, age, disability, colour, nationality, ethnic or national background
- demeaning comments about an employee's appearance
- Use of explicit language either in jokes or general conversation in a way that may give offence.
- Jokes, derogatory comments, graffiti or pictures that relate to sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion, age, disability, colour, nationality, ethnic or national background
- obscene or other sexually suggestive or racist comments or gestures
- Stereotypical comments and gestures
- Deliberate use of comments or actions that highlight an individual's disability
- picking on or ridiculing an employee

- Isolating an employee or excluding him or her from social activities or relevant work-related matters.
- Shouting at individuals in a public environment
- Consistently targeting a single member of staff whose work has to be checked
- One group of staff refusing to talk to an individual
- Consistently undermining a line manager
- Outing an individual's sexual orientation against their wishes or without their permission

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person intended to offend. Claiming that a remark or action is a joke or as workplace banter is no defence and may offend another person. Harassment (as defined) is never a joke or harmless fun. This is because different employees find different levels of behaviour acceptable and everyone has the right to decide for themselves what behaviour they find acceptable to them.

Behaviour which a reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend an employee will always constitute harassment without the need for the employee having to make it clear that such behaviour is unacceptable, for example, touching someone in a sexual way. With other forms of behaviour, it may not always be clear in advance that it will offend a particular employee, for example, office banter and jokes. In these cases, the behaviour will constitute harassment if the conduct continues after the employee has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to him or her. A single incident can amount to harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

Harassment also occurs where, on the ground of the employee's rejection of or submission to unwanted conduct of the kind specified above, a person treats them less favourably than they would have treated them if they had not rejected, or submitted to, the unwanted conduct.

Bullying and Harassment of any form is contrary to Workspace Group's Equal Opportunities Policy. Any employee who is found to have discriminated against or harassed another employee in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. In addition, line managers who had knowledge that such discrimination or harassment had occurred in their departments but who had taken no action to eliminate it will also be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary procedure.

It should also be noted that harassment on the grounds of race, sex or disability is illegal.

Reporting complaints

All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and speedily. Workspace will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints of discrimination or harassment from any member of staff

In cases of harassment, while Workspace encourages employees who believe they are being harassed to notify the offender (by words or by conduct) that his or her behaviour is unwelcome, actual or perceived power and status disparities may make such confrontation impractical.

Workspace also recognises that that many victims of discrimination, harassment and bullying do not complain due to embarrassment, not wanting to be seen as a troublemaker, fear of not being believed, job security fears. It is important to report such matters as only then can they be dealt with.

If you wish to make a complaint of discrimination or harassment, whether against the Company, a fellow employee or a third party, you should follow the following steps:

1. First of all, report the incident of discrimination or harassment to your line manager. If you do not wish to speak to your line manager, you can instead speak to an alternative manager or to a member of the Human Resources Department.
2. Such reports should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed and any action taken expeditiously.
3. All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be taken seriously. The allegation will be promptly investigated and, as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed and asked to provide a written witness statement setting out the details of your complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigatory process to the extent that this is practical and appropriate in the circumstances. However, in order to effectively investigate an allegation, the Company must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the allegation. For example, the identity of the complainant and the nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser or discriminator so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations. The Company reserves the right to arrange for another manager to conduct the investigation other than the manager with whom you raised the matter.
4. Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and the Company's conclusions and decision as soon as possible. The Company is committed to taking appropriate action with respect to all complaints of discrimination or harassment which are upheld.
5. You will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if it is not upheld, unless your complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.
6. If your complaint is upheld and the harasser or discriminator remains in the Company's employment, the Company will take all reasonable steps to ensure that you do not have to continue working alongside him or her if you do not wish to do so. The Company will discuss the options with you.
7. If your complaint is not upheld, arrangements will be made for you and the alleged harasser or discriminator to continue or resume working and to repair working relationships.

Alternatively, you may, if you wish, use the Company's grievance procedure to make a complaint.

Monitoring equal opportunity and dignity at work

The Company will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions, personnel, pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equal opportunity and dignity at work are being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its

working practices. If changes are required, the Company will implement them. The Company will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

If you have any further questions regarding this subject matter please contact a member of the HR department for more details.