



## **Equality and Diversity Policy**

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

TCN is committed to promoting equality and diversity.

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### INTRODUCTION

The Company is committed to providing and supporting an environment that promotes equality of opportunity and diversity amongst our entire workforce. Our aim is for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best. The Company is committed to creating a working environment that ensures fair and equal treatment of all employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors.

### SCOPE

All employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors must abide by this policy. Those in senior or managerial positions or with specific responsibilities for recruitment, selection, training, appraisal and promotion should be especially mindful of the policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Company values equality and diversity and are determined to ensure:

- That we treat all individuals fairly, with dignity and respect.
- That the opportunities we provide are open to all.
- That we provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment, for employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors.

### WHY THE COMPANY IS COMMITTED TO EQUALITY & DIVERSITY?

Equality and diversity is important for all employees not only because of the legal aspects but because of the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring to the organisation, including:

- Having the ability to attract and retain the best employees.
- Ensuring that our employees are fully utilised and operating to their full potential.
- Improving the organisations competitiveness in a diverse labour market.

- Ensuring that the workforce represents the community it serves.
- Better management of employees.
- Improvement on employee morale and engagement.

## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

There is legislation that refers to discrimination and harassment at work. Failure to deal effectively with allegations or incidents may lead to legal action against the Company as well as individual employees. The Company also has a legal responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 consolidated discrimination legislation. This legislative framework includes protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation; in services and public functions, premises, work, education, associations and transport. 'Protected Characteristics' is the new language used to cover a number of different factors:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality or colour)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

### **Discrimination**

The Company opposes all forms of discrimination against individuals on the basis of any protected characteristic or as a result of any conditions or requirements that do not accord with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

### **Definitions of Discrimination**

#### Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have.

#### Associative discrimination

Associative discrimination is discrimination against a person because they have an association with someone with a protected characteristic.

#### Perceptive discrimination

Perceptive discrimination is discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic that applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

#### Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in the Company which applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

If an employee considers that they have been unlawfully discriminated against they must raise their complaint through the Company's Grievance Policy.

## **BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION**

All employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors have a right to be treated with consideration and respect within the working environment. The Company aims to create a culture that is free from bullying, harassment and victimisation and where concerns are raised there should be a confidence that they will be investigated fairly and promptly.

### Harassment

Harassment is 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the individual.'

### Third party harassment

Third party harassment is harassment by individuals (third parties) who are not employees of the Company, such as visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors.

### Victimisation

Victimisation is where an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance or because they are suspected of doing so.

### Bullying

Bullying involves repeated negative action and practises that are directed at one or more employees. If any employee considers they are or have been bullied, harassed or victimised, they must raise their complaint through the appropriate Company procedure.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Company recognises the need to tackle barriers to create a culture in which equal opportunities and equal treatment are reflected in working practices and are a priority for all employees, visitors, customers, suppliers and contractors.

The recruitment, selection and promotion process will be based on ability to do the job and other objective relevant criteria.

Training and Development will be based on the requirements of the job and individual needs by the provision of appropriate and accessible training methods.

Full consideration will be given whether reasonable adjustments can be made where a person has a disability or to enable an individual to observe their religion or belief.

The Company strives to support a family friendly work/life balance. To this end the Company meets its statutory responsibilities.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

As an employer, the Company will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training, promotion, other areas of career development, grievance and disciplinary processes and outcomes, selection for redundancies, dress code, references and any other activities related to the employment lifecycle.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

The Company recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will ensure that where possible it will endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of suitable candidates and where appropriate take positive measures to attract applications from all sections of society. The Company will ensure that the selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

All employees will have equal access to training and other aspects of career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities. Promotion within the Company will be based solely on merit and non-discriminatory.

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The Company will protect the confidentiality of any equal opportunities monitoring data on employees and will safeguard any information disclosed within regulations or as set out by the Data Protection Act 1998.

**BREACHES**

The Company takes seriously any breaches to the Equality and Diversity Policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.