

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Background

Airedale is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, sexuality, age, marital status or disability.

We aim to ensure that our staff achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. We have adopted the following equal opportunity policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

What is discrimination?

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage on discriminatory grounds in relation to his or her employment. Direct discrimination may occur even when unintentional. It is a disciplinary offence to discriminate against a person under the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act and the Disability Act.

Examples

- A woman with young children fails to obtain a job because it is feared that she might be an unreliable member of staff.
- A Sikh applicant for a senior post is not appointed because he might not 'fit in' with the existing (all white) team.
- A person is subjected to sexual innuendo or other offensive conduct of a sexual nature at work.

Indirect discrimination occurs where the individual's employment is subject to an unjustified condition which one sex or race/nationality finds more difficult to meet although on the face of it the condition or requirement is 'neutral'.

Examples

- A requirement for GCSE English as a selection criterion. This would have a disproportionately adverse impact on people educated overseas and may not be justified if all that is needed is to demonstrate a reasonable level of literacy.
- A minimum height of 5'10" will eliminate some men, but proportionately more women and so can be unlawful.

Disability discrimination occurs where an individual is unjustifiably disadvantaged in employment/recruitment for a reason connected with his/her disability unless the discrimination cannot be avoided by making reasonable adjustments.

Examples

- A requirement for staff to hold a valid driving licence for a job which involves little travelling.
- Failure to recruit a wheelchair user without first considering whether the working arrangements or premises can reasonably be adapted to his/her needs.

Victimisation occurs where an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.

We are committed to ensuring that all our staff and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.

Implementing equality of opportunity

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and Selection is governed by the Company's principles of non-discrimination.

Our process is designed to achieve the best match between the individual's knowledge, skills, experience and character and the requirements of the vacant post, recognising the need for flexibility to respond to changing conditions.

Where appropriate recruitment will take place from within the existing workforce.

All vacancies will be advertised on the Company notice boards.

All applicants will be dealt with courteously and as expeditiously as possible. Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Our selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination.

The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that whatever possible reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participate fully in the workplace.

Person and job specifications shall be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

In accordance with recommended practice the ethnic and gender composition of our staff and applicants for jobs will be monitored [on an anonymous basis] at all levels.

Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity.

Working patterns will be reviewed and consideration will be made to those with staff with carer or childcare responsibilities where possible. Where necessary special provision will be made for training for staff returning to work following a break for domestic reasons.

Consideration will be given to developing action programmes to promote equality of opportunity. This will include, where appropriate, a programme of positive action to encourage the development of those who are comparatively underrepresented in certain positions so that they can benefit from employment opportunities on equal terms.

All staff have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Breach of the equal opportunity policy is potentially a serious disciplinary matter. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds is entitled to raise the matter through the grievance procedure.