

EQUALITIES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Westend Flooring Ltd recognises the dignity and worth of every individual and shall promote equality and equal opportunity for all. We support equality of opportunity and recognise the “protected characteristics” as defined in the *Equality Act 2010*. We are committed to opposing all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

LIABILITY

Westend Flooring Ltd acknowledge that the company has a legal liability for any act of discrimination (including harassment) and shall take all practical steps to prevent such events. We shall take action in all circumstances coming to our attention regarding a protected characteristic:

- **Direct discrimination** - Where someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination by association** - Discrimination against someone because others think they associate a person with a protected characteristic
- **Discrimination by perception** - Discrimination against someone because others think they poses a protected characteristic
- **Indirect Discrimination** - When a rule of policy applies to everyone but disadvantages another with a protected characteristic
- **Harassment (Unwanted conduct)** - An employee complaint or offensive behaviour even if it is not directed at them which may violate their dignity
- **Victimisation** - Where someone is treated badly because they have made/supported a complaint or grievance

This policy covers all aspects of employment, from vacancy advertising, recruitment, promotion and training to conditions of service and reasons for termination of employment. To ensure this policy is (and for no other purpose) the company shall maintain records of employees’ and applicant’s racial origins, gender and disability. On-going monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

The company’s long term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the community. Timetabled targets will be set for groups in the community that are identified as underrepresented in the workforce. Where necessary; special steps, as permitted by the relevant acts of parliament, will be taken to help disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups to compete for jobs on a genuine basis of equality.

Our equalities policy and the measures to implement it have been devised based on advice from the relevant bodies as well as in consultation with the appropriate union and/or employee representative. The policy will be displayed on all company notice boards and all employees will read and sign a copy of this policy.

The managing director is responsible for the effective operation of this policy. All employees have a duty and personal responsibility for the practical application of this policy, which extends to the treatment of their colleagues and customers. We will ensure active compliance with the *Equalities Act 2010* as detailed below.

RECRUITMENT

Advertising and Selection for Interview: Wherever possible, all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally. Steps shall be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches underrepresented groups internally and externally. Wherever possible, vacancies will be notified to job centres, career's offices, schools, colleges, polytechnics etc. with significant minority group roles. All vacancy advertisements will include an appropriate short statement on equality.

Application forms: All application forms will only include relevant and non-discriminatory questions that are essential at the initial stages of the selection process. We will not discriminate based on the postcode or the address of the applicant.

Interviews: All appointments will be based on merit, ability and any role specific requirements. No assumptions or pre-judgements will be made by interviewers about the suitability of a candidate for a particular role. All questions will be strictly relevant to the role applied for. Where the requirements of the job may affect the candidate's personal life, this will be discussed objectively and in an equal manner with all candidates. All applications will be given equal consideration.

AGE

It is our policy to endeavour to ensure that discrimination does not occur within the company in terms of age. We recognise that it is unlawful in terms of the provisions of the *Equalities Act 2010* for an employer to discriminate against a person due to their age. Where appropriate, we will ensure, and provide the necessary assistance to ensure that people are treated fairly in all aspects of company practices including the provision of opportunities, training, and career progression for all.

DISABILITY

It is our policy to ensure that discrimination does not occur on grounds of disability. We recognise that it is an offence under the *Equality Act 2010* for an employer of any size to discriminate against a person because of a disability. We have a duty to make reasonable adjustment for disabled job applicants or existing staff if a policy or practice, or a physical feature of their premises places the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. Where appropriate, we will provide the necessary support and assistance to ensure that people with disabilities are treated fairly, in all aspects of the company practices. Wherever possible, we will provide opportunities and training for disabled people, including those who become disabled, in order to make the best possible use of skills and potential.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

We acknowledge that a person's gender (the way they appear to others) may change/ be changed due to personal, social or medical reasons and that such persons are protected from discrimination under the *Equality Act. 2010*.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

We acknowledge that employees who are married or in a civil partnership are protected under the *Equalities Act 2010*.

PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

On receiving written notification from an employee that she is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months, or is breastfeeding, we shall conduct a specific risk assessment, which considers any advice provided by the woman's GP or midwife on her health. If the risk cannot be removed, we will adjust her working conditions and/or hours of work; or if that is not possible offer her suitable alternative work (at the same rate of pay) if available. If that is not feasible suspend her from work on paid leave for if necessary to protect her health and safety and that of her child. Where a new or expectant mother works nights and, provides a medical certificate from her GP or midwife stating that night work will affect the health of the woman, we will suspend her from work, on full pay, for as long as is necessary. However, the *Employment Rights Act 1996* the *Equalities Act 2010* states that where appropriate, suitable alternative work must be offered, on the same terms and conditions, before considering a suspension from work.

RACE

It is our policy to ensure that race discrimination does not occur and, in accordance with the *Equalities Act 2010*, to promote equality of opportunity for all. Where individuals have cultural and religious needs which may require modification to existing requirements, the company, where practicable, will endeavour to accommodate these needs, within the constraints of operational requirements. Each situation and request will be treated individually.

RELIGION OR BELIEFS

We are committed to ensuring fairness and equal access to all employees no matter what their faith or beliefs.

SEX

It is our policy to ensure that discrimination, due to a person's sex, does not occur. In accordance with the *Equalities Act 2010*, we shall promote equality of opportunity between males and females within the company and, to those applying for work with the company.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Employees acting in the course of their employment, shall be encouraged not to make assumptions/ presumptions about a person's sexual orientation or partner choices.

DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an unlawful act of discrimination. Serious breaches will be treated as gross misconduct, as will racial or sexual harassment. The company's grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the managing director.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Job Title:

