

Equality Policy

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Policy Statement

The Centre recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the organisation and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the organisation to ensure that no employee or job applicant or learner or potential learner receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment or education on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics and whilst socio-economic background is not a legally protected characteristic, The Square Metre Ltd is committed to combating any discrimination on this basis and recognises the harm that discrimination has in terms of an individual's access to equality of opportunity).

1. Our aim is that our workforce and learners will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee and learner feels respected and able to give of their best.
2. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and to all learners.
3. All employees and learners, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for entry on to learning programmes and selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and learners will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
4. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics) in the provision of the Company's goods and services.
5. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements, particularly Equality Act 2010. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

Our Commitment

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and every learner is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities will be available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace and the learning environment, which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and/or employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

Responsibility and Implementation

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Executive. Directors / Managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- complaints/grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- Proper records are maintained.

The Chief Executive will nominate a person who will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic departmental audits.

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or learners or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Third Party

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee or learner of this Centre is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. The Centre will not tolerate such actions against its staff or learner, and the employee or learner concerned should inform their manager / supervisor/tutor at once that this has occurred. The Centre will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

Related Policies

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. This Centre's Policies will be reviewed annually and any discriminatory elements removed.

Rights of People of Disability

The Centre attaches particular importance to the needs of people with disabilities.

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- Make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee or learner opportunities who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working/learner hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment and on learning programmes);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- Give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs or for learning programmes, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job or the learning programme.

Equality Training

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes for both employees and learners.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

Records of equality training will be maintained.

Monitoring

- The Centre deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees and learners by age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). Analysis of employees by grade and length of service in current grade will be made. Information regarding the number of staff and learners who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.

- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- We will maintain information on staff and learners who have been involved in certain key policies: e.g. Disciplinary, Complaints.
- Where appropriate **equality impact assessments** will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the Centre policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the Centre, or areas within it, is not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Centre, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Centre policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

Complaints

Employees and learners have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Centre Complaints Policy.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Centre Disciplinary Procedure.

Review

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually under the direct supervision of the Centre's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).