**Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy**

**Change History**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Issue* | *Date* | *Summary of Changes* | *Initial* |
| A | Mar 21 | Revised policy created by Birketts | **ED** |
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**Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy**

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**1. General Statement**

1.1 It is the policy of HIL to ensure that all its employees are selected, trained and promoted on the basis of their ability, the requirements of the job and other similar non-discriminatory criteria. All employment decisions are based only on relevant and objective criteria. No one will be discriminated against on the grounds of:

* ethnic or national origin
* race, colour or nationality
* sex
* gender reassignment
* disability
* marital or civil partnership status
* pregnancy or maternity
* religion or belief
* sexual orientation
* age.

**2. Scope**

2.1 These Equal Opportunities in Employment procedure applies to all employees of HIL. It applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

2.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and HIL may amend it at any time.

**3. Introduction**

3.1 Employment decisions influenced by discriminatory views or prejudices are damaging to the organisation. They can often lead to the following:

* not getting the right person for the job,
* not giving employees the opportunities they need to progress
* not giving employees an environment in which they can work to the best of their ability.

3.2 Employees must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts [or when wearing a work uniform]), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

**4. Prohibited Discrimination**

4.1 Many types of discrimination are prohibited by law, including:

* + 1. **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
    2. **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
    3. **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
    4. **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
    5. **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

**5. Recruitment and Selection**

5.1 Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible. Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying. Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

5.2 Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

**6. Selection for Promotion, Transfer and Redeployment**

6.1 When selecting for promotion, transfer or redeployment, selection criteria must be non-discriminatory and all decisions should be based only on the employee’s ability.

6.2 Managers selecting employees for promotion must ensure that all employees are given an equal opportunity to progress within HIL, and where appropriate targeted training should be given to assist career progression, for example, Spring Forward or Springboard which are specifically targeted at female employees.

**7. Disabilities**

7.1 If an employee is disabled or become disabled, we encourage them to tell us about their condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

**8. Part Time and Fixed Term Work**

8.1 Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

**9. Ensuring that the Policy is Effective**

9.1 HIL is committed to ensure that the Equal Opportunities policies, procedures and guidance are effective. HIL takes a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

9.2 In support of this, HIL will:

* Monitor the employment activities to which the Equal Opportunities in Employment policy applies.
* Review on a regular basis all employment policies and procedures to ensure they reflect legal and policy obligations, and are effectively delivered. This will include consultation with employees and Unions.
* Provide advice and guidance to recruiters and other key employees so that they are aware of the legal requirements and their responsibilities under this policy.
* Ensure employees with disabilities are provided with an opportunity, at least on an annual basis, to discuss with their manager their developmental needs, including any reasonable adjustments which might be required, to enable them to perform to their full potential in the workplace.
* Carry out training for groups who are under-represented in certain areas.

9.3 If employee believes that they have suffered discrimination they should raise the matter through HIL’s Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate. Employees must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.