

PROLOG



putting
people
first

equal opportunities policy

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy statement is to outline the intent and application of Prolog's commitment to Equal Opportunities in all employment practices.

- 1.2 The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 are race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

2 Why establish equal opportunities?

- 2.1 We need to establish Equal Opportunities in order to:
- a) Select and recruit the very best people, basing our judgements solely on suitability for the job.
 - b) Maximise people's abilities by removing artificial and irrelevant barriers to their development, training and promotion.
 - c) Draw from the widest pool of possible talent.
 - d) Maintain a working environment free from discrimination and intimidation.
 - e) Encourage diversity in the workforce reflecting the diversity in the working population.
 - f) Satisfy legal requirements.
 - g) Assist in the achievement of business objectives as employee development is an essential objective of a proactive company.

3 Nature and scope

It is the policy of the company that Prolog does not discriminate on the grounds of race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

- a) The company recognises its responsibility to ensure that the terms of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation are observed.
- b) The Company will ensure a positive attitude towards equality of opportunity and will communicate the terms of this policy to each employee.
- c) The overall implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer.
- d) All employees have a personal responsibility for the practical application of equal opportunities in their day-to-day activities and working relationships with colleagues and customers.
- e) The HR Department is responsible for producing and maintaining policies, procedures and guidelines and supplying training to support this policy and for monitoring compliance.
- f) The company will ensure that policies including compensation, benefits and other relevant issues associated with Terms and Conditions of Employment are formulated and applied without regard to race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

4 **Types of discrimination**

- 4.1 Discrimination is defined by the Acts of Parliament as direct, associative, perceptive or indirect. It is unlawful to discriminate against individuals either directly or indirectly with regard to equality of opportunity and the Acts of Parliament place responsibilities on employers and employees in this respect.
- a) Direct discrimination is obvious and occurs when a person is treated less favourably than somebody else, purely by reason of race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.
 - b) Associative discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
 - c) Perceptive discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic, when they actually do not.
 - d) Indirect discrimination is less obvious and occurs when an unjustifiable requirement or condition is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse affect on one particular group of employees.

5 Harassment, third party harassment and victimisation

- 5.1 Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (excluding pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Complaints can be made as a result of behaviour found offensive even if it is not personally directed.
- 5.2 The company could be liable for any harassment of its employees by third parties (i.e. customers or clients) if it fails to take reasonable steps to resolve if the harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions.
- 5.3 Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

6 Recruitment

- 6.1 The company will not discriminate directly or indirectly when advertising posts by including any requirements or criteria which are unnecessary for the effective performance of the job.
- 6.2 All vacant posts will be advertised by the appropriate method.
- 6.3 The company will place advertisements in locations which attract from a broad range of the population and will take positive steps to encourage applications from all groups in the wording used in advertisements.
- 6.4 Application forms will include a statement to the effect that the company is an equal opportunities employer. Data regarding race will be obtained on commencement of employment and monitored. Appropriate action will be regularly taken in respect of recruitment, training etc.
- 6.5 Recruitment will be based on up to date job descriptions, or job specifications where appropriate.
- a) The contents of job descriptions will be reviewed when a post falls vacant in order to ensure that it complies with the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- b) When preparing job descriptions, requirements should not be unnecessarily restrictive so as to exclude any protected characteristics.
- 6.6 Objective criteria for short listing and selection will be applied consistently and fairly to all candidates. The final decision will be made based solely on the merits and abilities appropriate to the job.
- 6.7 Questions asked at interviews must be related to the requirement and circumstances of the job, and must not be of a discriminating nature or biased against any protected characteristic.
- 6.8 Staff responsible for short listing, interviewing, and/or selecting candidates shall be informed through training programmes of the effects that generalised assumptions and prejudices about race, religion or belief, sex, sexual

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orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity can have on selection decisions.

- 6.9 Staff shall be advised during their Induction of this policy.
- 6.10 Age limits will not be specified on job advertisements.



7 Training, development, promotion

- 7.1 Equal opportunities must be integrated into all training concerned with selection skills, assessments, counselling, development and the management and supervision of people on a day-to-day basis. The importance of equal opportunities in customer care initiative is recognised.
- 7.2 The race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity of a person has no relevance when assessing ability or potential.
- 7.3 Staff involved in recruitment, transfers, promotions, appraisal, counselling and training must be able to demonstrate that any decision made is based solely on objective criteria, after a careful assessment of the individual and in competitive situations, the merits of other candidates. Preconceptions and assumptions have no place in the company's equal opportunities policy and practices.

8 Employees with disabilities

- 8.1 It is the policy of the company to give full and fair consideration to every application for employment from disabled persons, the abilities and aptitudes of each disabled applicant being examined in relation to the vacancy available. People with disabilities should not feel discouraged from applying for employment merely because of their disability when in other respects they might be suited to the job.
- 8.2 When interviewing a disabled candidate, the interviewer should:
- a) Be prepared to leave out of the assessment a disability which has no relevance to the performance of the job.
 - b) Consider minor adjustments to the job, to equipment or to the working environment.
- 8.3 Following normal induction, any problems should be identified and discussed with a view to finding ways to overcome them. Appropriate training should be considered for the immediate Manager/Supervisor in understanding the nature of the disability in order to provide appropriate supervision.
- 8.4 With regard to employees who become disabled, it will be standard practice either to provide the means for such staff to continue their existing duties or, if this is not possible, to seek to redeploy them on other suitable duties within the company. Consideration will be given, so far as practicable, to provide any special facilities and equipment.
- 8.5 Where appropriate, a flexible approach will be adopted in respect of work procedures if this would enable a suitable job to be adapted for a disabled person.
- 8.6 Care should be taken to ensure that disabled employees are not denied opportunities for training, extra responsibility or more demanding work because of pre-conceived ideas about the limitations imposed by their disability.
- 8.7 The development of disabled people should be based on a realistic assessment of their abilities, with specialist advice where appropriate.

9 Monitoring

- 9.1 Examining the effects of policy and programmes of action on a regular and structured basis is fundamental to the success of establishing equal opportunities. The objectives of monitoring are:
- a) To identify areas of and reasons for under-representation of particular groups in the workforce. The system will review jobs, career progression, women moving into non-traditional areas, the numbers of women, disabled people and ethnic minorities receiving training and help with career development.
 - b) To assess the effect of employment procedures and practices and identify any unintentional adverse impact on particular groups.
 - c) To enable appropriate corrective action to take place, including defining targets for future change.
 - d) To enable the company to review and reshape its equal opportunities policy and programme of action.
 - e) To identify if any employees are discriminating against others and to enable the company to take appropriate disciplinary action.
- 9.2 Monitoring will be undertaken by the HR Department who will:
- a) Centralise Equal Opportunity monitoring within the company.
 - b) Collect information on the individual's race, sex and disability for the sole purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.
 - c) Ensure such information is not misused.
 - d) Collate the statistical information and review it at 12 monthly intervals.

10 Grievances and discipline

- 10.1 The company will take seriously and deal with all complaints of discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity. Anyone who makes a complaint or who gives evidence will not be victimised or treated less favourably than other employees.
- 10.2 Employees who believe that they have experienced unfair or unlawful discrimination, racial or sexual harassment or abuse should raise their concern through the grievance procedure.
- 10.3 Unfair and unlawful discrimination including racial and sexual harassment and abuse will not be tolerated within Prolog. Such offences will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to dismissal.