

Annex D: Equal Opportunities

1. Background

Spacecare Ltd is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplace is free from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex (including gender reassignment), age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, 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 opportunities policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

Such is the importance attached to the creation of equal opportunity that the Managing Director is responsible for ensuring the maintenance, review and effective implementation of this policy. The policy will normally be reviewed annually and this review will be recorded by the way of minutes.

2. What is discrimination?

2.1 **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.

Examples

- A woman with young children fails to obtain a job because it is feared that she might be an unreliable member of staff. This may be direct sex discrimination.
- A Sikh applicant for a senior post is not appointed because he might not 'fit in' with the existing (all white) team. This may be direct race discrimination.
- Failure to recruit a wheelchair user without first considering whether the working arrangements or premises can reasonably be adapted to his needs. This may be direct disability discrimination.

N.B. All staff should note that subjecting a person to sexual innuendo or other offensive conduct of a sexual nature at work is direct discrimination as is any abuse, bullying or harassment of a person on the grounds of that person's colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

2.2 **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

- Full-time work – this would have a disproportionately adverse impact on more women with small children as they are generally accepted as taking the primary childcare. It may not be justified if the business needs can still be met by more flexible working conditions. This may be indirect sex discrimination.
- 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. This may be indirect race discrimination.
- Requirements for staff to hold a valid driving licence for a job which involved little travelling. This may be indirect disability discrimination.

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

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

3. Implementing equality of opportunity

3.1 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. As a general rule posts of Grades 6 & 7 (which account most recruitment) will always be advertised via Job Centres thereby ensuring an additional independent objective-recruiting medium. When it is deemed that recruiting is best conducted through an advertising campaign then all adverts must convey the Companies intentions and adherence to equal opportunities.

3.2 The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that 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.

3.3 Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements, which are necessary for the objective basis and personal, or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

- 3.4 In accordance with recommended practice the ethnic and gender composition of our staff and applicants for jobs will be monitored at all levels. This information will be reviewed at the annual review of this policy carried out by the Managing Director.
- 3.5 Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity.
- 3.6 Working patterns will be reviewed so as to enable us to offer flexible working to staff where possible. Where necessary special provision will be made for training for staff returning to work following a break for domestic reasons.
- 3.7 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 under-represented in certain positions so that they can benefit from employment opportunities on equal terms.
- 3.8 Breach of this policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the Firms' Disciplinary Procedures (Annex C).
- 3.9 Employees who feel they may have been subjected to discrimination contrary to this policy should pursue this by way of a formal complaint under either the Company's Bullying and Harassment Policy (Annex A) or the Company's Grievance Procedure (Annex F).