

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. OUR COMMITMENT

Sunrise is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against customers.

This policy is intended to assist the company to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment. The company has a separate anti-harassment policy, which deals with these issues.

2. THE LAW

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

Staff should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

3. TYPES OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied 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.

Harassment includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.



Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Victimisation is retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

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 enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT

The company will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.

The company will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the company considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The company will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The company will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The company cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but the company may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of any group that the company identifies as being under-represented in particular types of job.

5. DIGNITY AT WORK

The company has a separate anti-harassment policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

6. CUSTOMERS, SUPPLIERS AND OTHER PEOPLE NOT EMPLOYED BY THE COMPANY

The company will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the company.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their line manager who will take appropriate action.

7. TRAINING

The company will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.



8. YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employee is required to assist the company to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the company for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the company's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

9. GRIEVANCES

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use the company's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the anti-harassment policy.

The company will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

