



Equal Opportunities:

1. Policy Statement:

Hewer Facilities Management Ltd (The Company) is committed to Equal Opportunities. It recognises that discrimination is unacceptable and that it is in the best interests of the Company and the clients it serves to utilise the skills of the total workforce.

The Company recognises that the quality and nature of the services provided will be enhanced if the staff providing the service reflect, as far as possible, sex, ethnic and cultural origin.

The Company will not discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of age, sex, race, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, marital status, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status sexual orientation or gender reassignment. It is committed to remove any barriers to Equal Opportunities in employment to promote Equal Opportunities and to keep under review its policies, procedures and practices.

This policy will apply to all staff working at the Company and will through the contracting process ensure that all deliverers of subcontract labour purchased by the Company demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities.

This policy will be discussed with the management and the staff and all will be encouraged to participate fully in its implementation.

This policy and any association arrangements shall be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1975 the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Employment Equality Regulations 2003 and other relevant legislation. (Guidance notes on this legislation are attached as appendices to this policy) In addition full account will be taken of all available guidance and codes of practice.

While it is expected that all Hewer Facilities Management Ltd staff will accept personal responsibility for the application of the policy, lead responsibility for its implementation will rest with the management who will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy for both employees and job applicants.

2. Communicating the Policy:

Copies of this policy will be readily available on notice boards.

The policy will be made known to job applicants, learners and visitors.

3. Recruitment & Selection:

The purpose of the recruitment procedure is to ensure the most appropriate response to any employment vacancies. The Company wishes to ensure the highest quality of candidates for all vacancies.

3.2 The selection process will be carried out according to objective, job related criteria. The Board will ensure interviewing staff receive appropriate Equal Opportunities training and through appropriate

training ensure the staff making selection decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously in making these decisions.

- 3.3. No account will be taken of the applicant's race, sex, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or responsibilities or potential responsibilities for the care of children or other dependants.
- 3.4. It is recognised that a contribution can be made by people of all ages and no unnecessary restrictive age limits or requirements will be placed on posts.

4. Employment of People with Disabilities:

- 4.1 The Company is committed to ensure that people with a disability should have full and fair consideration for all job vacancies and accepts its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Every effort will be made to continue to maintain in employment, whenever practical an employee who becomes disabled during their Employment with the Company and the management will whenever possible assist with their rehabilitation and re-training.

- 4.2 Employees with disabilities will be encouraged to realise their full potential and will receive equal consideration for career development and promotion.
- 4.3 Whenever practical the management will authorise the modification of premises and equipment to improve opportunities for employment or make full use of an individuals potential.
- 4.4 Applicants for posts will be interviewed unless qualifications or lack of experience makes them ineligible. Suitability will be assessed objectively and a disability, which has no relevance to the performance of a job, will be disregarded.
- 4.5 Specialist advice will be sought from the Disablement Advisory Service on work methods, training aids or adaptations to premises where such provision could make it possible for an offer of employment to be made.
- 4.6 Every effort will be made in the design and implementation of performance related payment schemes to eliminate specific provisions which would exclude people with disabilities from employment in these areas.
- 4.7 Existing members of staff, supervisors and staff representatives will be fully involved in the introduction of any schemes for the employment of people with disabilities and induction procedures will be modified accordingly to ensure an individuals arrival and initial period in employment is well planned.

5. Cultural & Religious Needs:

- 5.1 Where employees have particular cultural and religious needs which may conflict with existing work requirements the Company will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adopt these requirements to ensure such needs can be met. It should be borne in mind that members of certain religions may request the opportunity to observe prayer times or other religious rites.
- 5.2 The Company will endeavor to provide appropriate translation facilities, for example in the communication of grievance and disciplinary procedures and use alternative or additional methods of communicating important information such as health and safety requirements.

6. Discipline & Grievance:

- 6.1 Direct Discrimination and instances of racial abuse or harassment or sexual harassment will be treated as disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary procedure.
- 6.2 Any employee who in good faith takes action against the Company under current legislation or who makes a complaint about discrimination, abuse or harassment shall not for that reason receive less favourable treatment than any other employee.
- 6.3 Any complaint of discrimination, victimisation or harassment will be dealt with effectively. It should not be assumed that such complaints are made by those who are over-sensitive.
- 6.4 In applying the disciplinary procedure care will be taken to ensure that members of one racial group or one sex are not disciplined or dismissed for performance or conduct which would have overlooked or condoned in another group or sex.
- 6.5 All employees have the right to raise a grievance through the Company's Grievance Procedure. Complaints related to the operation of this policy will normally be processed through the agreed procedure. It is however recognised that employees may find it difficult to approach their immediate supervisor or manager in most cases involving discrimination or harassment. The first point of contact in incidents of this nature may therefore alternatively be the Managing Director. If the individual remains aggrieved a formal complaint in writing may be made.

7. Training & Career Progression:

The Company will not discriminate in the provision of training.

Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively and to pursue career development opportunities. In addition the Company will strive to ensure that disadvantaged groups are offered, through training, equal opportunities for promotion and career development.

The responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity in training and development lies with the Manager. The Company is committed to the continued implementation of individual performance appraisal and personal development planning for all staff and the Manager will ensure career counselling is offered to all staff particularly for staff at critical points in their career, e.g. Prior to maternity leave.

Where possible the structure of training and development activities should be designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and therefore part time training opportunities and distance learning programmes will be encouraged.

Age limits for entry or access to training shall not be unnecessarily restrictive.

Any selection procedures for training opportunities shall be free from direct or indirect discrimination.

The content of all training programmes provided or purchased by the Company will be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are compatible with and promote this policy.

8. Training in Equal Opportunities:

The Company recognises that training is an essential part of the implementation of this policy.

In addition to the provision of training specifically related to the policy, equal opportunities will be included in all appropriate training courses such as induction, appraisal, communications, supervisory skills, recruitment and selection, interviewing, counselling and management training.

9. Equal Pay:

The Company is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, the Company will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on objective criteria.

10. Monitoring:

The Company will create and maintain employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring will involve: - The collection and classification of information regarding the ethnic origin, disability, sex and marital status of all current employees and job applicants. Examination by ethnic origin, disability, sex and marital status of the distribution according to grade, job category and department. Such examination to include examination of trends.

Monitoring will, where practical, be extended to include monitoring of promotion and career development, changes in the availability of part time or flexible working and selection of training opportunities, average hourly earnings, selection for employment, promotion or training of staff with responsibility for dependants. Monitoring may also include specific surveys of staff groups or surveys of a sample of staff group where appropriate.

11. Removing Barriers to Equal Opportunities:

The Company recognises the need to remove barriers to Equal Opportunities and will work towards the introduction and implementation of specific policies and undertake special initiatives to encourage access to employment and to promotion and career development opportunities for all.

Among positive action initiatives the Company supports the creation of self development groups, women in management groups, the extension of assertiveness training and the involvement of personnel staff and staff representatives in local and national Equal Opportunity networks and involvement with and membership of local community relations groups.

The Company will strive to ensure that women and staff from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities are represented whenever possible in groups, committees, working parties and other bodies formed by or promoted by the Company and that the language or images used in publications, external or internal communications reflect the commitment to equal opportunities in employment.

Sympathetic consideration will be given to employees requesting paid or unpaid leave to visit relations overseas.

12. Equal Opportunities Reviews:

Although the responsibility for the implementation of the policy rests with the Board, the Company recognises that the continued development, monitoring and implementation of the policy will be greatly assisted by periodic review by at the Business Planning Meetings.

13. General Statement of Equal Opportunities:

13.1 This Equal Opportunities Policy will apply equally to all users of the Company, whether they be learners, visitors, staff, management and all other groups not specified.

13.2 All Staff, management and any other groups within the Company will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is complied with.

Outline of Legal Position:

The key Acts which provide the framework for equal opportunities are:-

Disability Discrimination Act 1995:

This act provides definitions and meanings of disabilities and puts an onus on employers not to discriminate in any selection, recruitment, terms & conditions, opportunities for promotion and employee benefits. Employers must make reasonable adjustments to their workplace environment and the employment process so as to ensure that disabled persons are not discriminated against, but may enjoy equal employment opportunities with others.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended 1984):

This Act makes it unlawful to pay one sex less than the other if the work being carried out by both employees is like work or work regarded as equivalent.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974):

This act laid down the rehabilitation periods for when a sentence is regarded as spent.

Sentence	Over 17yrs old	Under 17 yrs old
Less than 6 months	7 years	3-5 years
Between 6 months	10 years	5 years and 2.5 years

There are some posts for which applicants must always declare a conviction, even though it is "spent".

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986:

It is unlawful to discriminate against a person in relation to employment on grounds of sex or marital status.

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000:

This Act made it unlawful to discriminate against a person in relation to employment on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or national origin.

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These regulations outlaw discrimination in employment and vocational training on grounds of sexual orientation and have been amended to take account of the introduction of civil partnership.

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

These regulations extend the Sex Discrimination Act insofar as it refers to employment and vocational training to include discrimination on gender reassignment and prevent discrimination against transsexual people.

There are two main bodies which enforce this legislation in the United Kingdom:-

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights
The Fair Employment Commission – Northern Ireland