



STANDARD PROCEDURE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND CODES OF PRACTICE STATEMENT

The Martin Group (hereafter known as 'the Company') is committed to equality of opportunity and to a pro-active and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture and values diversity.

Subject to statutory provisions no applicant for admission as an employee or for a staff appointment will be treated less favourably than another on the grounds of sex (including gender reassignment), marital or parental status, race, ethnic or national origin, colour, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age.

For prospective employees, entry into employment with the Company and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and by the application of criteria which are related to the duties and conditions of each particular post and the needs of the Company concerned.

If any person appointed as an employee considers that he or she is suffering from unequal treatment on any of the above grounds, he or she may make a complaint, which will be dealt with through the agreed procedures for complaints or grievances or the procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment, as appropriate.

The Company will take active steps to promote good practice. In particular it will:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between people of different racial groups, between women and men and between disabled and non-disabled people
- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination on grounds of race, sex, disability, and all other grounds set out in the statement on equal opportunities
- Subject its policies to continuous assessment in order to examine how they affect all under-represented groups, especially ethnic minorities, women and disabled, and to identify whether its policies help to achieve equality of opportunity for all these groups, or whether they have an adverse impact.
- Monitor the recruitment and progress of all employees, paying particular attention to the recruitment and progress of ethnic minorities, women, and the disabled
- Promote an inclusive culture and good management practice, through the development of codes of best practice, policies, and training.
- Take positive action wherever possible to support this policy and its aims
- Publish this policy widely amongst staff, together with policy assessments and results of monitoring

The Company will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. The Company policy is guided by:

- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Equality Act (2010)

Communication of this policy will involve local briefings of all employees through Induction and regular updates given to managers involved in any recruitment and selection decision making to take account of any policy changes or legislative requirements.

Failure to comply with the Company Equal Opportunities Policy could result in disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

The policy will be amended as appropriate to meet the demands of future legislation. Implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of the Board of Directors and will be reviewed every 12 months.

Policy Aims:

- Ensure that the Company has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees for its needs.
- Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the Company and themselves.
- Achieve an ability based workforce, which is in line with the working population mix in the relevant labour market areas.

Recruitment and Selection

- Open Recruitment methods such as job centres, careers offices, Company website and press advertisements shall be used.
- Selection criteria will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.
- Wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process, and all will have received training on this policy.
- The Company will promote itself as an employer people are proud to work for and seek to achieve a balanced workforce which reflects the local labour market.
- Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies to be recorded.

Training and Reward

- Under represented groups will be encouraged to apply for training and employment opportunities with the Company. However, actual recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit.
- Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or under represented groups.
- Reward will be based on objective data, benchmarked internally and externally to ensure fair pay for all employees.

Implementation of this Policy will be the responsibility of the Directors and will be reviewed every 12 months.

Gender Equality

The Company is opposed to all forms of sex based discrimination and will respect the right to dignity of all women and men.

It will continue to strive to achieve equality of opportunity, while attempting to recognise and address historical and gender specific discrimination.

The Company will:

- Recognise family and caring responsibilities through the continued development of family friendly and carer support policies and provisions.
- Recognise that career patterns are often disrupted because of caring responsibilities and provide appropriate training and career development opportunities.
- Challenge sexist attitudes and practices.
- Give full and fair consideration to applications for employment from women, based solely on their ability to do the job and give equal opportunity for training, career development and promotion for employees.
- Develop specific initiatives, where required, to address gender imbalances in the workforce in an attempt to bring about a representative workforce.
- Ensure that information, publicity and advertising over which the Company has control or influence is non-sexist and uses positive images and language.

Race Equality

The Company recognises that people from ethnic minority groups face discrimination. The Company is committed to challenging all forms of racism and to employment provision to comply with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The Company will continue to work towards the elimination of discrimination on grounds of colour, national origin, race and religion.

Racial harassment can take many forms, from relatively minor abuse to actual physical violence. Examples of harassment include:

1. Insensitive jokes related to race, colour or nationality
2. Remarks or banter that have a racial content or are racist in nature
3. Pranks perpetrated on racial grounds
4. Deliberate exclusion from conversations on racial grounds

The Company will:

- Give full and fair consideration to applicants from ethnic minority groups, based solely on their ability to do the job and give equal opportunity for training, career development and promotion for employees.
- Strive to make services flexible and responsive to the needs of service users.
- Monitor the effectiveness of its services and policies by appropriate means.

Age Equality

Ageism is discrimination based on preconceived ideas of an individual's capabilities at certain stages in their lives and is often targeted at younger or older people. The Company is opposed to discrimination on the grounds of age.

The Company will:

- Ensure that age is not a barrier to recruitment, selection, promotion, reward, training or personal development.
- Ensure that age will not be considered adversely where redundancy and retirement may apply.
- Seek to eliminate age discrimination through training.

Sexuality

The Company is opposed to all forms of discrimination against lesbian women, gay men, transsexual, bisexual or heterosexual men and women. It recognises that decisions and practices relating to employment and service delivery should not be based on the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual.

The Company's Policy is to protect the rights of individuals, regardless of their sexuality and will work for the eradication of all forms of discrimination on these grounds through training, awareness raising and implementation of anti harassment procedures.

The Company will:

- Respect an individual's right to define their sexual identity.
- Protect the dignity of women and men at work.
- Work towards enabling employees to feel safe in being open about their sexual identity.
- Ensure that appropriate awareness training is provided in existing training courses and where necessary, make additional provision for such training.

Disability

The Company will:

- Promote disabled people in a positive light and take a lead in countering negative stereotypes.
- Ensure that any disabled person applying for a vacancy will be judged solely on their ability to do the job.
- Modify equipment and/or provide aids/or support where necessary to enable a disabled person to do a job.
- Adapt premises where possible.
- Use all possible means to retain newly disabled employees and employees with progressive impairments.

- Seek to eliminate discrimination through training.

Harassment

The Company recognises that harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying of any nature is unacceptable. A culture is promoted where employees can bring a complaint without fear of ridicule or reprisal.

Direct Discrimination is when people are treated less favourably because of the group to which they belong. "I never employ women; they always leave to have babies" is an example of direct discrimination.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when conditions are set which make it more difficult for some groups to comply than others. This is the more common form of discrimination; examples include a requirement about clothing which disproportionately disadvantages a racial group or setting a qualification level which a disabled person might not be able to meet if these requirements cannot be justified on other grounds.

Specific procedures are in place to enable an individual to pursue a complaint and for appropriate action to be taken. The aim is to prevent harassment occurring and to enable individuals to confront unacceptable action or behaviour.

Employees have an obligation to promote an atmosphere free from harassment and to challenge instances of harassment.

The Company will:

- Ensure that employees are aware of harassment procedures.
- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in a sensitive manner.
- Monitor complaints.

Examples of Harassment

Sexual harassment may take many forms, from relatively mild sexual banter to actual physical violence. Employees may not always realise that their behaviour constitutes sexual harassment but they must recognise that what is acceptable to one person may not be acceptable to another. Sexual harassment is unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature by one employee towards another. Examples of sexual harassment include:

1. Insensitive jokes and pranks that contain a sexual element
2. Remarks or banter that have a sexual content
3. Lewd comments about appearance
4. Unnecessary body contact
5. Displays of sexually offensive material, eg pin ups, emails with offensive attachments
6. Requests for sexual favours
7. Speculation about a person's private life and sexual activities
8. Threatened or actual sexual violence

9. Threat of dismissal, loss of promotion, etc for refusal of sexual favours
10. Emails of a sexual nature

Harassment relating to religion or belief could take many forms including:

1. Insensitive jokes or pranks linked to religion or belief or to absence of religion or belief
2. Remarks or banter about religious beliefs or practices
3. Abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour on the grounds of religion or belief or absence of religion or belief.
4. Displaying writing or pictures that are abusive towards a particular religion.
5. Emails making unnecessary reference to a person's religion or belief.

Behaviour

Each individual is responsible for creating and maintaining a workplace free from unfair discrimination. The Company will foster a culture where behaviour is positive, judging people on their own merits rather than acting on the basis of assumptions. The Company always will support employees to work together to develop the different skills and abilities and values diversity.



Harold Martin - Chairman