



# Our Place Group

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

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Approved by	Name	Date
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## Equal Opportunities and Diversity

### 1. What this Policy covers

The Company recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination and that all of our adopted policies and procedures are inclusive and non-discriminatory.

The Company will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public as well as the young people in our care and their families and external care givers.

All employees and those who act on the Company's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing the Company.

### 2. Your entitlement and responsibilities

#### Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Company will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

Specifically, the Company aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant or prospective employee is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste or ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, pregnancy or maternity, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interviews and selection processes and procedures
- training and development
- promotion and career-development opportunities
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Company will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.



## Forms of Discrimination

The following are examples of discrimination which are covered by this policy:

- Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic, namely sex, race, (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins), disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or on the grounds of part-time or fixed-term status.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a neutral rule puts or would put a protected group at a particular disadvantage, or puts or would put an individual at that disadvantage in circumstances where this cannot be objectively justified. For example, a requirement that all applicants for a job must be over 6 feet tall would put women at a particular disadvantage as a substantially fewer proportion of women are over 6 feet tall. The employer would then have to show that the requirement was justified by the nature of the work i.e. there is a genuine occupational reason.
- Victimisation occurs when a person is subjected to a detrimental treatment because they have taken action (or indicated they intend to do so) under discrimination legislation.
- Harassment is unwanted conduct that can reasonably be considered either to violate your dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive working environment. The motive behind the conduct is not relevant. Please refer to the Company's policy regarding harassment and bullying for more information.

## Recruitment of ex-offenders

The Company actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records where appropriate.

The Company requires you to provide details of any relevant criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Specific rules about what convictions and spent convictions that should be disclosed and those you need not disclose, which is determined by the role being applied for, - known as 'protected convictions' – are contained in legislation.

Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). The Company will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures in accordance with the Company's Disclosures Policy, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The Company's policy in relation to the handling of criminal records data is contained in the Disclosure (DBS) Policy.

### Career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit. All employees will have equal access to training and other career development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, the Company will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.

## **3. Procedure**

### Complaints of discrimination

The Company will treat all complaints of discrimination made by employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties seriously and will take action where appropriate. If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee or member of the HR team using the Company's Grievance Procedure, please see the Grievance Policy for full details. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, the Company is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. If an allegation is upheld, such incidents will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.

### Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination

If you are accused of unlawful discrimination, the Company will investigate the matter fully. During the course of the investigation, you will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions. If the investigation concludes that the claim is false or malicious, the complaint may be subject to disciplinary action. If the investigation concludes that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

### Equal Opportunities Monitoring

The Company may carry out monitoring for the purposes of measuring the effectiveness of its equal opportunities and diversity policy.

For the avoidance of doubt, please note that this policy is not contractual and can be amended by the Company from time to time without notice. For the purposes of these rules and procedures, reference to the Company mean Our Place Group and any subsidiary of that organisation.