



**Rotowash Ltd**  
**Equality & Diversity Policy**



## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

Rotowash Limited (the Company) is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. The Company aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, with ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

The Company is also committed to compliance with relevant equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance. This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice of promoting equality.

The Company aims to proactively tackle discrimination or disadvantage and aims to ensure that no individual or group is directly or indirectly discriminated against for any reason with regard to employment or the services it provides.

### **THE DEFINITION OF EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

Equality can be described as eliminating discrimination, breaking down barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for all groups both in employment and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions. This is beneficial not only for the individual but also for the Company.

Equality & Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued, embraced and taken account of.

Issues regarding harassment and bullying are covered in the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to direct employees of Rotowash Limited, agents, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency or bureau and supplied to the Company on a temporary basis), and all job applicants regarding recruitment.

Where the Company's services are provided by consultants, external contractors or third parties either for or on behalf of the Company, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to the Company's Equality and Diversity Policy whilst providing services on behalf of the Company.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Rotowash Limited is committed to ensuring:

- that existing members of staff, job applicants, or workers are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to nine of the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:
  - age
  - disability;
  - gender reassignment;
  - marriage and civil partnership;
  - pregnancy and maternity;
  - race (includes colour, nationality and ethnic origins);
  - religion and or belief;
  - sex;
  - sexual orientation;
- that existing members of staff, job applicants, or workers are treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination with regard to: caring responsibilities, part-time employment, membership or non-membership of a trade union or spent convictions;
- all employment-related policies, practices and procedures are applied impartially and objectively;
- equality of opportunity to all and to provide staff with the opportunity to develop and realise their full potential;
- that the Company works towards achieving a diverse workforce at all levels;
- that employees of the Company can work in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

The Equality & Diversity policy provides a clear framework for translating our commitment into action. It outlines the responsibilities of the Board, managers and individuals to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The Company will not tolerate any processes, attitudes and behaviour that amounts to direct discrimination, associative discrimination, discrimination by perception, indirect discrimination including harassment (harassment by a third party), victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping.

The Company opposes and avoids all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities.

The Company recognises the importance of monitoring, reviewing and reporting on its Equality & Diversity policy and practice to measure progress in meeting our policy statement.

## DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination may take seven main forms and is defined in law along with the protective characteristics associated with each provision as listed below:

- **Direct discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. For example, a manager does not select a pregnant woman for promotion even though they meet all of the competencies because they are pregnant. This is probably direct discrimination and cannot be justified.
- **Associative discrimination** occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. An example of this is when a manager does not give a job-applicant the role, even though they have met all of the competencies for the role, just because the applicant tells the employer they have a disabled partner. This is probably associative discrimination because of disability by association.
- **Discrimination by perception** occurs when someone discriminates against an individual because they think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. An example of this is when a manager selects a person for redundancy because they incorrectly think they have a progressive condition (i.e. that they are a disabled person). This is probably discrimination by perception because they believe the individual is disabled.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs when a seemingly neutral provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone places a group who share a characteristic e.g. type of disability at a particular disadvantage. Indirect discrimination may be justified if it can be shown that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. An example of this is when an employer decides to apply a “no hats or headgear” rule to staff. If this rule is applied in exactly the same way to every member of staff, then staff who may cover their heads as part of their religion or cultural background (such as Sikhs, Jews, Muslims and Rastafarians) will not be able to meet this requirement of the dress code and may face disciplinary action as a result. Unless the employer can objectively justify using the rule, this will be indirect discrimination. Relevant protected characteristic includes age, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition, the Act extends protection against unjustified indirect discrimination to gender reassignment and disability.
- **Dual Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of a combination of two relevant protected characteristics. This means that it will be possible for an applicant to claim that they have been treated less favourably not just because of their race but also because of their gender. For example, because the individual is an Asian woman. Relevant protected characteristic include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- **Detriment arising from a disability arises when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability.** This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person had a disability. This type of discrimination is only lawful if the action can be justified and the employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. An example of this is when an employer imposes a “no beards” rule as a part of a dress code and tells staff they will be disciplined if they do not comply. The employee is a disabled person who has a skin condition which makes shaving very painful. They have been treated unfavourably (threat of disciplinary action) because of something arising from their disability (their inability to shave). Unless the employer can objectively justify the requirement, this may be a detriment arising from a disability. It may also be a failure to make a reasonable adjustment.
- **Victimisation** occurs when an employee is treated unfavourably, disadvantaged or subjected to a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, this policy or the Bullying and Harassment policy or because they are suspected of doing so. (However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint). An example of this is when an employee requests to work flexibly and their manager refuses their request because they supported a colleague in a complaint of discrimination.
- **Third party harassment** occurs when an employee is harassed by someone who does not work for the employing organisation such as a customer, visitor, client, contractor or visitor from another organisation. The employer will become legally responsible if they know an employee has been harassed on two or more occasions by someone and it may also be different individuals each time and fails to take reasonable steps to protect the employee from further harassment.

## RESPONSIBILITY

All staff have a responsibility to guard against any form of discrimination and avoid any action that goes against the spirit of this policy. Thus, staff at all levels must ensure that there is no discrimination in any of their decisions or behaviour. This includes the provision that all staff must:

- report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity;
- not victimise anyone as a result of them having complained about, reported or provided evidence of discrimination;
- not harass, abuse or intimidate others.

However, whilst all staff have a collective responsibility to ensure this policy is successfully implemented, there are also specific requirements within this.

### The Board are responsible for:

- providing leadership on the equality and diversity strategy and policy, acting as overall champions to ensure the policy is implemented;
- review employment practices and procedures, whenever necessary, to ensure fairness and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law;
- communicating the strategy and policy both internally and externally.

### **Managers are responsible for:**

- implementing the policy as part of their day-to-day management of staff and in applying employment policies and practices in a fair and equitable way;
- ensuring equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance;
- ensuring all staff act in accordance with the Equality & Diversity policy, providing necessary support and direction;
- effectively manage and deal promptly with investigating issues relating to potential discrimination, including those matters concerning our customers' staff and members of the public who their teams may come into contact with;
- making decisions concerning staff based upon merit (apart from any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act 2010).

### **Each employee is responsible for:**

- implementing the policy in their day-to-day work and in their dealings with colleagues, customers, suppliers, consultants, third party workers and members of the public;
- ensuring their behaviour is appropriate to the policy and that they treat people with respect and dignity;
- not discriminating against other employees, customers, suppliers, consultants, third party workers or members of the public;
- notifying their line manager of any concerns with regard to the conduct of other employees, customers, suppliers, consultants, third party workers and members of the public.

## **TRAINING**

The Company is committed to ensuring that its managers and staff are trained in equality and diversity and aims to ensure that adequate training is provided. Equality and diversity training is provided through an on-line training module.

Diversity and equality forms an integral part of the Company's induction package. Managers are to ensure that all new entrants are made aware of our Equality & Diversity policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Company will assess the effectiveness and suitability of this policy and any supporting action plan at suitable intervals. Any amendments identified will be actioned as quickly as possible.

The Company will also monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief and disability in encouraging equality and diversity and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in this policy.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The details of this policy will be proactively communicated and promoted to all existing staff and any new starters.

## **NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY**

The Company will not tolerate any behaviour from staff which breaches this policy. Any such breaches will be regarded as misconduct, except for serious offences such as discrimination on protected grounds; serious offences including harassment, bullying or victimisation will be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal from employment without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic) any such assault is a criminal offence.

## **APPROVAL**

This policy has been formally approved by the Board of Directors and signed on their behalf.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julian Stone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julian Stone**  
**Managing Director**  
**Rotowash Limited**