

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Compass Community is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, part-time status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. This policy aims to remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the company and to encourage full contribution from its diverse community. We are committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination and value the differences that a diverse workforce brings. This is a key employment value to which all employees are expected to give their support.

We are committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes and expect employees to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

We also aim to provide an environment that does not discriminate against its users in the means by which they can access the services and goods supplied by Compass.

Furthermore we uphold the rights of all employees and service users to be treated with dignity and respect. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- Recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- Training
- Assessment
- 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 ensuring this is determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. Compass Community will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity. This commitment applies to all employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically connected with equal opportunities and diversity.

Harassment

Harassment is physical, verbal or nonverbal behaviour that is unwanted and personally offensive to the recipient, and which causes the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated, intimidated, patronised, denigrated, bullied, distressed or harassed. See separate Bullying & Harassment Policy.

Victimisation

Victimisation on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, disability by association, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin or age may occur when a person is treated less favourably because they have made, or is suspected of making, a complaint, given evidence or has been thought to have given evidence, or supported someone with a complaint under any of the anti-discrimination legislation. See separate Victimisation Policy.

Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination Sex

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment.

Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination e.g. asking a woman during an interview if she is planning to have any or more, children constitutes discrimination on the ground of gender.

Age

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.

Disability

It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.

Race

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

Sexual Orientation

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. E.g. an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because they are homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

Religion or Belief

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.

Reasonable Adjustments

The company has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- Making adjustments to premises
- Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties
- Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability;
- Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office
- Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation
- Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees
- Any other adjustments that the company considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the company.

If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made they should contact their manager.

Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

All employees, subcontractors and agents of the Company are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees or service users to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

The co-operation of all employees is essential for the success of this policy. All management are expected to follow this policy and ensure that all employees, subcontractors and agents do the same.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts. The company takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

The way in which complaints of unlawful Discrimination and Harassment will be handled

Discrimination and harassment are often complex matters, and there is no single way of dealing with every suspected or alleged instance. In some cases employees may be able to deal satisfactorily with an issue by raising it with their immediate manager.

Should an employee feel that they have been harassed by a third party they should initially speak to their line manager, providing full details of their complaint, to see if the matter can be resolved informally. If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint they should use the Grievance Procedure which is set out in the Employee Handbook.

We will treat seriously all allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment and this will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. Serious Discrimination will constitute Gross Misconduct.

If an employee is accused of Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment, the matter will be investigated fully. In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of their actions.

If it is concluded that no unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred, this will be the end of the matter.

If it is concluded that the claim is false or malicious the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action. If on the other hand it is concluded that the employee's actions amount to unlawful discrimination or harassment they may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Monitoring

The company will not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind in the working environment and will take positive action to prevent its occurrence.

In this connection we will monitor its policies and will implement changes in order to improve them as social attitudes and legislation change. This commitment applies to all the employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically concerned with equal opportunities and diversity.

Employment and Training

As an employer, the company will treat all employees and job candidates equally and fairly and not discriminate unjustifiably against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, work allocation and any other employment-related activities. Employees involved in management, recruitment and interviewing will be given appropriate training.

Recruitment and Selection

The company recognises the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- It endeavours to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates possible
- Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit
- Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are underrepresented in the workforce
- Selection criteria and processes do not discriminate unjustifiably on the grounds of gender, race, including colour, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, age, religion or belief, other than in those instances where it is exercising lawfully permitted positive action;
- Wherever appropriate and necessary, lawful exemptions, for example Genuine Occupational Requirements, will be used to recruit suitable employees to meet the special needs of particular groups
- All recruitment agencies acting for the company are aware of its requirement not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

Recruitment of Ex-offenders

As a company using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, Compass Community complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. See Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

The company is committed to the fair treatment of its current employees, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical or mental disability or offending background.

We have a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the outset of the recruitment process.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

- A DBS check is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a DBS check is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a DBS check will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Where a DBS check is to form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of their criminal record at an early stage in the application process.

We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within the Human Resource department and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

- Unless the nature of the position allows the company to ask questions about your entire criminal record, we only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- We ensure that all those in the company that are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- We make every subject of a DBS check aware of the existence of the DBS Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a DBS check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position, together with the circumstances and background of your offences.

Conditions of Service

The company will treat all employees equally and create a working environment which is free from discrimination and harassment and which respects, where appropriate, the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees.

Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with U.K. equal opportunities legislation. The provision of benefits such as working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code and any other conditions of employment will not discriminate unlawfully against any employee on the grounds of their gender, race including colour, nationality or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, age, religion or belief.

Where appropriate and necessary, we will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their gender, ethnic or cultural background, nationality, responsibilities as parents or carers, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, age, religion or belief.

Promotion and Career Development

Promotion opportunities will be made without reference to any of the forbidden grounds and will be based solely on merit.

The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no unjustifiably discriminatory impact on any particular group.

Whilst positive action measures may be taken in accordance with the relevant equal opportunities legislation to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for promotion, 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 the equal opportunities legislation to provide special training and support for groups which are underrepresented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career development opportunities.

Promoting Equality and Diversity

This company is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the company as well as in those areas in which it has influence.

Diversity

Diversity is defined as “valuing everyone as an individual – valuing people as employees, carers and children”.

People have similarities and differences. Diversity consists of visible and nonvisible factors, which include personal characteristics such as sex, race, age, background, culture, disability, personality and work-style. Harnessing these differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued, their talents are fully utilised and company goals are met. There is no single way of treating employees, as each one will have their own personal needs, values and beliefs.

Compass Community is committed to building a company that makes full use of the talents, skills and experience from different cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic society.

Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination is the unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect.

Employees will be provided with equality and diversity training if appropriate to their needs and responsibilities.

We will make every effort to reflect its commitment to equality and diversity in its marketing and communication activities.

Implementing the Policy Responsibility

Ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy rests with the management and it is their responsibility to actively promote equality of opportunity. They have a personal duty not to discriminate against other employees and should also make it clear to all employees that the company will not tolerate discrimination and that should any discrimination occur it will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees are aware of this policy and that it is adhered to at all times. Failure to meet the responsibilities under this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary offence. The Human Resource department are responsible for the operation of the policy.

All employees are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it when undertaking their tasks or representing the company. Acts of discrimination or harassment by employees or failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action.

Complaints of Discrimination

The company will treat seriously, and act where appropriate concerning, all complaints of discrimination or harassment on any of the forbidden grounds made by employees, service users, suppliers, contractors or other third parties.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the Grievance or Complaints procedure, as appropriate, and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.