

Equal Opportunities Affirmation of Principles

At its simplest we believe in the golden rule:

Do as you would be done by

Secondly in all our dealings we believe everyone owes it, not least to themselves, to:

First consider the possibility that you might be wrong.

These are principles to adhere to, not rules to circumvent or worse policies subject to pragmatic interpretation.

Individuals have rights in law not to be discriminated against. We hold that they also have social responsibilities and these include:

- Accepting that mere thought is not an offence, but words and actions matter
- Not straining to find an interpretation of words or actions to seek offence
- Accepting that offence may be taken even when it was not intended
- Accepting that the best remedy is often a simple change of behaviour
- Not officiously seeking offence on behalf of another.

We are uncomfortable with the word "policy" in this context because in normal usage a policy is "a plan of action adopted by an individual or social group" or "a line of argument rationalizing the course of action of a government".

Doubtless you can see the flaw in setting policies rather than affirming principles. Plans rarely survive contact with circumstances and rationalisations are usually pure sophistry: finding arguments to finance decisions which have already been taken.

In researching this affirmation of principles we have found equal opportunities which seek to justify themselves using utterly specious pseudo-economic reasoning such as "maximising the efficiency of utilisation of the talents and resources of the workforce".

We find such justifications repellent.

Firstly, the people involved in this business are just that: people.

Secondly, we believe that profit is merely a side effect of doing things right.

However, public sector procurement rules require us to have an Equal Opportunities "Policy" so for their purposes that is what this document is.

Discourse

Now principles are all fine and dandy, but a few examples never go amiss.

We will treat everyone fairly irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Who do our principles apply to

Our principles apply to all those who work for, have worked for or apply to work for the organisation. They also apply in our interactions with customers and suppliers.

Equality commitments

We are committed to:

- Encouraging equality of opportunity for all persons
- Encouraging a good and harmonious working environment in which everyone gets treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities principles
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities principles as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Implementation

In many equal opportunities policies it falls to some high ranking person in the organisation to be responsible for implementation of their policy.

Of course the Directors are ultimately responsible but this does not diminish the responsibility of each and every individual to behave in a civilised manner by adhering to civilised principles.

We will therefore:

- Communicate this statement of principles to employees, job applicants and others to whom it applies.
- Require that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion act in a non-discriminatory manner
- Post this statement of principles on our web site
- Seek commitments from others that they will adhere to the same principles in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of this document.

Monitoring and review

Replica is a relatively small company with low staff turnover. We believe that there are serious concerns relating to personal privacy by implementing a formal monitoring system in an organisation this size.

This approach will be kept under review.

Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the grievance procedures set out in their contract of employment.

Others should write in the first instance to the Company Secretary. If their complaint is against the Company Secretary they should write to the Managing Director.

All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

In addition to our internal procedures, employees and others have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination under anti-discrimination legislation. The local Citizen's Advice Bureau will be able to advise.

Employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Andrew Senior
Replica Ltd, June 2009