

# Equal Opportunities Policy



## Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1. General

- 1.1 Hallwood Associates is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all employees, and shall adhere to such a policy at all times and will review on an on-going basis on all aspects of the company to avoid unlawful or undesirable discrimination. Hallwood Associates will treat everyone equally irrespective of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, political beliefs or membership or non-membership of a Trade Union and places an obligation upon all staff to respect and act in accordance with the policy. Hallwood Associates is committed to providing training for its entire staff in equal opportunities practice.
- 1.2 Hallwood Associates shall not discriminate unlawfully when deciding to appoint a new member of staff. Hallwood Associates will ensure that each candidate is assessed only in

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accordance with the candidate's merits, qualification and ability to perform the relevant duties required by the particular vacancy.

- 1.3 Hallwood Associates will not accept instructions from clients that indicate an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

### 2. Sex and Race Discrimination

Unlawful sex or race discrimination occurs in the following circumstances:

#### 2.1. Direct Discrimination

Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 direct discrimination occurs where one individual treats another individual less favourably on grounds of their sex or race than he treats or would treat other persons. It is unlawful for Hallwood Associates to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their sex, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, marital status and gender re-assignment: -

- in the terms on which the company offers to provide any of its services;
- by refusing or omitting to provide any of its services;
- in the way it provides any of its services.

Direct discrimination would also occur if a company accepted and acted upon an instruction from a client which states that certain persons are unacceptable because of their sex, colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins, marital status and gender re-assignment unless one of the exceptions applies.

#### 2.2. Indirect Discrimination

A claim of indirect discrimination arises when an employer applies a requirement or condition generally, but which is such a proportion of persons from one racial group who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that racial group who can comply with it.

Indirect discrimination would also occur if a company accepted and acted upon an indirectly discriminatory instruction from a client.

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## 3. Disability Discrimination

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, disability discrimination occurs if for a reason which relates to the disabled person's disability an individual:

- treats him less favourably than he treats, or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply, and,
- the employer cannot show that the treatment in question is justified.

Hallwood Associates will not discriminate against a disabled job applicant or employee on the grounds of disability -

- in the arrangements i.e. application form, interview and arrangements for selection for determining to whom a job should be offered; or
- in the terms on which employment is offered; or
- by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering the disabled person a job for reasons connected with their disability; or
- in the opportunities afforded to the person for receiving any benefit, or by refusing to afford, or deliberately not affording him or her any such opportunity; or
- by subjecting him or her to any other detriment (detriment will include refusal of training, transfer, demotion, reduction of wage; or harassment).

Hallwood Associates will accordingly make career opportunities available to all people with disabilities and every practical effort will be made to provide for the needs of staff, candidates and clients. Wherever possible Hallwood Associates will make reasonable adjustments to hallways, passages and doors in order to provide and improve means of access for disabled employees and workers. However, this may not always be feasible.

## 4. Age Discrimination

Hallwood Associates will encourage clients not to include any age criteria or other subjective criteria in job specifications and every attempt will be made to persuade clients to recruit on the basis of competence and skill and not age. Hallwood Associates is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are appropriate to the requirements of the various positions regardless of age. As far as is reasonably possible and in the most exceptional circumstances no age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements on behalf of the company.

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## 5. Complaints and Monitoring Procedures

Hallwood Associates has in place procedures for dealing with complaints of discrimination. These are available from HR and will be made available immediately upon request.

## 6. Part-Time Workers

This Equal Opportunities Policy also covers the treatment of those employees and workers who work on a part-time basis. Hallwood Associates recognises that it is an essential part of this policy that part time employees are treated on the same terms as full time employees (albeit on a pro rata basis) in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, maternity/ paternity leave, parental and domestic incident leave and access to Hallwood Associates pension scheme. Hallwood Associates also recognises that part time employees must be treated the same as full time employees in relation to training and redundancy situations.

## 7. Harassment Policy

7.1 Hallwood Associates is permitted to providing a work environment free from unlawful harassment. Harassment because of race, colour, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, age or religion or any other basis protected by legislation is unlawful and will not be tolerated by Hallwood Associates.

7.2 This policy prohibits unlawful harassment by any employee or worker of Hallwood Associates.

7.3 Examples of prohibited harassment are:-

7.3.1 Verbal or written conduct containing derogatory jokes or comments,

7.3.2 Slurs or unwanted sexual advances,

7.3.3 Visual conduct such as derogatory or sexually orientated posters,

7.3.4 Photographs, cartoons, drawings or gestures,

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7.3.5 Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, or any interference because of sex, race or any other protected basis,

7.3.6 Threats and demands submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favours

7.3.7 Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

7.5 If you believe that you have been unlawfully harassed, you should make an immediate report to HR followed by a written complaint as soon as possible after the incident. Your complaint should include:

- Details of the incident
- The name or names of the individual or individuals involved
- The name or names of any witness or witnesses

7.6 Hallwood Associates will undertake a thorough investigation of the allegations. If it is concluded that unlawful harassment has occurred, remedial action will be taken.

7.7 Any employee who Hallwood Associates finds to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to the disciplinary procedure and any sanction may include termination. [A person who discriminates or harasses may be liable for payment of damages to the person offended, in addition to any damages payable by Hallwood Associates should it have been found to have failed to ensure the practice ceased forthwith. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1994, harassment became a criminal offence, punishable by a fine of up to £5,000 and/or a prison term of up to 6 months. Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the penalties for aggravated harassment are an unlimited fine and/or 5 years imprisonment.]

## 8. Gender Reassignment Policy

8.1 Hallwood Associates recognises that any employee or worker may wish to change their gender during the course of their employment with the Company.

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8.2 Hallwood Associates will support any employee or worker through the reassignment provided that full medical counselling has been undertaken and Hallwood Associates has access to any relevant medical reports.

8.3 Hallwood Associates will make every effort to try and protect the employee or worker undergoing reassignment within the work place.

8.4 All employees and workers will be expected to comply with Hallwood Associates policy on harassment in the workplace. Any breach of such a policy will lead to the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

8.5 Where an employee is engaged in work where the gender change imposes genuine problems Hallwood Associates will make every effort to reassign the employee or worker to an alternative role in the Company.

8.6 Any employee or worker suffering discrimination as the result of their gender reassignment should make recourse to the Company's grievance procedure.

8.7 Any discrimination complaint will be investigated fully.

