



Equality & Diversity Policy

Introduction

We believe that the continued success of the Company is a direct result of the experience and quality of our people. We are therefore fully committed to focusing our employment procedures and practices on maximising the potential of each unique contribution and this is best achieved by recognising and embracing the talents, but also the differences, in our employees.

In conjunction with our employment practices, we also recognise the diversity within our customer base and clients, and are focussed on providing our products and services in an inclusive and equal manner.

Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Company's commitment to Equality and Diversity and to demonstrate our priorities for the future. This Policy covers all employees, regardless of position or status, and to contractors, sub-contractors, customers, clients and any other stakeholders.

Objectives

Easaway is committed to the following objectives:

- Bringing about equality of opportunity and outcome within our organisation.
 - Encouraging the principles of tolerance, understanding and respect for others.
 - Treating every person with dignity.
 - Recognising and encouraging each employee to reach their full potential.
 - Maximising the physical, practical and cultural accessibility of our employment opportunities.
 - Providing accessible services that meet the diverse needs of our customers.
 - Identifying and promoting good practice and challenging poor practice.
 - Removing the physical, attitudinal, cost and communication barriers to our service, so that we can do business with everyone, regardless of disability, faith, gender, sexuality, age and race.
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- Encouraging other organisations, with which we deal, to recognise the benefits of investing in achieving equality of opportunity, as part of their wider corporate social responsibility.

Equal Opportunities – Our commitment to equal opportunity in employment and customer service is a feature in all of our practices and procedures. We are not only committed to the letter of the law, but also to the promotion of equality of opportunity in all areas of our work.

It is the policy of Easaway that no person acting on our behalf shall discriminate in any situation against another individual or group, directly or indirectly, because of their gender (including sex, marital status and gender re-assignment), race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or hours of work.

We endorse the principle that the workforce should reflect, as far as reasonably possible, the composition of the local community. We also believe in building and developing relationships with community groups, wherever possible.

These principles apply to recruitment and selection, training, promotion, transfer, pay and benefits and performance appraisal procedures, in addition to all terms and conditions of employment.

Recruitment - Our recruitment policy is based solely on the necessary and justifiable job requirements and the individual's ability and fitness for the role. Job profiles and person specifications are drafted for each post to be filled. Where posts are advertised externally, consideration is given to the most appropriate outlets to ensure that a wide range of potentially suitable applicants have the opportunity to apply. We will always welcome applications from all sections of the community in our advertising.

Selection methods, including interviews, are conducted in accordance with documented and standardised procedures and checklists, and are designed to ensure that discrimination forms no part of the recruitment process. As a further safeguard, we also analyse the results of the selection process, monitoring gender, ethnic origin and disability in all applicants.

Training and Development - Through our performance management and appraisal process we ensure that all staff are given an opportunity to take part in both job specific training and have an individual performance plan designed to promote their opportunities and career advancement within the Company. All training and development opportunities within the company are based on merit and no other factors are taken into consideration.

Selection Processes - Whenever undertaking processes to select between members of staff, for instance in promotion or redundancy situations, the Company undertakes to ensure that a fair and consistent procedure is applied and that the selection criteria are free of discrimination and based on objective assessments of competence. Promotion opportunities are available to all of our employees on an equal basis.



Disabilities - As an employer, we are committed to ensuring that we assess people on the basis of their skill, aptitude and abilities which are relevant to the role, rather than on any disability they may have. Wherever possible, applicants and employees with disabilities will be considered, without reference to their disabilities, when applying for jobs, promotions and training. As far as possible, jobs and workplaces will be adapted and reasonable adjustments will be made to meet the needs of employees with disabilities.

Racial Equality - We actively monitor the application of this policy and undertake regular reviews of our existing procedures and amend and update where necessary to ensure equality of opportunity and excellent race relations.

Equal Pay - Our arrangements for determining employees' salaries are based on the principle of rewarding individual merit and therefore of providing equality of pay regardless of the gender, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or belief. All pay awards are based on objective criteria free from discrimination and have due regard to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Customer Service Delivery - We are committed to providing an efficient and inclusive service to all areas of the community and will instruct all of our staff, subcontractors and associates in the following, to:

- Demonstrate consideration, respect and understanding to all customers and individuals, recognising the value of people as individuals, and respond positively to their diversity.
 - Apply the principles of accessible communication to all, by ensuring regular contact with the public and customers using means such as: Telephone calls, letters, emails, marketing communications, and public meetings.
 - Consider the special needs of certain groups and communities within society, in particular, we will specifically consider:
 - Disability – We are committed to removing as many physical barriers to dealing with us that are possible, making any reasonable adjustments and providing information in the most accessible ways. This may include communicating information in alternative formats, such as large print, audio, Braille, Easy Read and information provided electronically as emails or on discs.
 - Age – We recognise that older people often have particular needs and concerns in dealing with us. We will provide reassurance that the people they are dealing with are reputable and safe, and will avoid making any changes in agreed arrival times or routine, that can be disturbing and reduce confidence in us.
 - Ethnicity – Language can be a barrier to customer satisfaction with black and minority ethnic communities. People with limited English may have more difficulty in dealing with our customer service team or our operatives, or understanding what is required of them. In order to avoid this we will try to produce information in clear visual form and where possible plain English.
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- Faith – We understand and recognise that our customers have a range of religious observances and we will seek to continuously develop and support a culture of growing religious awareness and tolerance by training and educating our staff to show respect for the beliefs of others.
- Gender – As the vast majority of our operatives are men, we recognise that women customers may have particular priorities, in terms of safety and security in their homes, and will ensure that all of our employees have clear identification and are trained in the correct contact and access procedures.
- Sexual orientation – In common with faith and disability groups, an individual's sexual orientation is not always immediately visible or easy to recognise and consequently inadvertent discrimination may occur. We will therefore raise awareness and respect amongst our employees.

Diversity - It is the intention of this policy to promote the values of diversity and inclusion within the Company and our aims for embedding this policy into our organisation include:

- Providing flexible employment practices that respond to the needs of all employees.
- Challenge behaviour and enforce the disciplinary procedure, when this is considered unacceptable.
- Work with external organisations and advisory bodies to keep up to date and aware of the necessary issues and best practice.
- Ensure that all HR procedures are regularly 'diversity-proofed' and that the principles of this policy are embedded into all areas of employment including: Recruitment and Selection, Induction and Probation, Performance Management, Promotion and Reward, Disciplinary, Harassment and Grievance, Retirement, Flexible Working, Training and Development, Absence Management and Redundancy.

Discrimination - Discrimination is not simply a matter of failing to comply with our Policies, it is also unlawful. This Policy takes into consideration the following legislation:

- The Equal Pay Act (1970) aims to counteract sex discrimination in employment pay and benefits.
 - Under the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) and Race Relations Act (1976) and Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) it is unlawful to discriminate against on grounds of the sex, marital status or racial origin. This legislation also incorporates discrimination for maternity related reasons.
 - The Human Rights Act (1988) incorporates 'Convention Rights' into UK law. These rights are proclaimed by the European Convention of Human Rights eg. The right to respect for private and family life and the right to freedom of expression. These rights may be used to extend protection to individuals, who otherwise are not protected by UK discrimination law.
 - The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Disability Discrimination Act (Amendment) Regulations (2003) ensure that organisations have a duty not to discriminate against individuals with disabilities. They are also required to make reasonable adjustments to both the work place and job content to accommodate a person's disabilities.
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- In addition, working hours offered must comply with the Working Time Regulations (1998), the full details of which are outlined in our Employee Handbook.
- The Part Time Workers Regulations (2000) ensure that we recognise the rights of all employees working in part time and temporary roles to be treated fairly and consistently in comparison to full time, permanent employees and to be given the same opportunities for development.
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief) Regulations (2003) protect individuals against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and religion or beliefs.
- From 6 April 2003, parents of children under 6, or of disabled children under 18, also have the right to apply to work flexibly. Employers have a statutory duty to consider their applications seriously.
- Under the Age Discrimination Legislation introduced in October 2006 it is also unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of age.

Grievance and Harassment Procedures - While it is hoped and intended that most problems relating to employment can be resolved on an informal basis, our grievance procedure exists so that causes of genuine concern can be dealt with equitably.

Any employee who believes he/she has been discriminated against should raise this matter under the Grievance Procedure, or where appropriate the Harassment Procedure.

By having clear grievance and harassment procedures in place, the Company ensures that every opportunity is given to address any area or situation where discrimination is perceived to have arisen.

Disciplinary Procedure - Easaway takes a serious view of any and all discrimination and breaches of this Policy are deemed as misconduct. Any such actions will be investigated as possible disciplinary offences and dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure.

Training and Communication - We ensure that managers and staff throughout our organisation are provided with sufficient training to understand the importance of equal opportunities and diversity and ensure that all training for managers who undertake recruitment and selection, performance and absence management training incorporates the terms of this policy.

A copy of this policy is provided to all staff, it is outlined in the Company Induction and appears on our Company Noticeboards.

Consultation - We recognise that consultation on equality and diversity issues should be undertaken and this is generally conducted at staff meetings. This also remains a regular agenda item for discussion within management meetings. We also promote an 'open door policy' in order that our employees can discuss workplace issues or concerns on any matter, directly with management, at any time.



Measurement/Monitoring - To ensure that this policy, and our related procedures, are operating effectively we will continue to monitor and measure the records of our employees, for equal opportunities and patterns or trends.

Where monitoring indicates under-representation of any group, we will review our procedures and policies and amend these regularly. Where necessary we will also set ourselves KPIs and action plans, particularly in the areas of Gender, Race and Disability to ensure that the aims of this Policy are met and review performance against these targets annually.

In addition, we will take advice from the CRE, racial equality councils or the Equality in Employment Advisory Service and we are committed to taking appropriate actions, as a result of that advice. This Policy has been implemented in line with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the CRE Code of Practice for Employment.

Review & Responsibility - Regular reviews of existing procedures and criteria are undertaken and changes made where necessary, to ensure that we maintain the highest standard and focus on equal opportunities.

Whilst we all have a collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is successfully implemented the Company believes that this responsibility particularly rests with our Directors and Managers to enforce.
