

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Scope

To cover all business aspects of The MCL Group that may be affected by our adherence or failure to adhere to legal and other requirements governing Equality & Diversity under the Equality act 2010.

Purpose

To provide a documented statement regarding The MCL Group approach to Equality and Diversity within the work place. Ensuring that each individual employee understands their individual rights within The MCL Group and to their contribution to the company values of:

- People
- Performance
- Service
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Partnership

1. Introduction

The MCL Group believes that our success is a direct result of the experience and quality of our employees. We are therefore committed to focusing our employment procedures and practices on maximising the potential of each unique individual and to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination. We believe this is best achieved by developing our employees' talents, whilst recognising their differences and promoting equality and diversity across all our business operations.

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2. Principles

The company follows the principles to follow, under the headings also listed.

2.1. General Belief

The MCL Group believes that our success is a direct result of the experience and quality of our employees. We are therefore committed to focusing our employment procedures and practices on maximising the potential of each unique individual and to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination. We believe this is best achieved by developing our employees' talents, whilst recognising their differences and promoting equality and diversity across all our business operations.

2.2. Accepting

By treating people fairly and equally and by accepting and embracing their diversity, we can also improve our market competitiveness, with innovation and enhance our corporate social responsibility and create an inclusive and positive working environment for all employees.

2.3. No Discrimination

It is the policy of the Company that no person acting on our behalf shall discriminate in any situation against another individual or group, directly or indirectly, because of age, sex, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

2.4. No Victimisation

Unlawful discrimination, victimization or harassment of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Company will take all necessary action, including disciplinary proceedings, dismissal and if necessary legal action, to prevent its occurrence.

2.5. Community

The MCL Group also endorses the principle that the workforce at each location should reflect, as far as is reasonably possible, the community within which it operates.

2.6. Principle Application

These principles will be applied at all times, across all operational sites where ever the individual may be and to all activities with no exceptions.

3. Policy Application

This Policy covers all The MCL Group employees, regardless of position or status, and to contractors and subcontractors.

The Policy commits the Company to full compliance with all equality and diversity legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 and any subsequent amendments. We are committed as far as is possible to observing good practice guidelines in the scope and application of this Policy including the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Codes of Practice for employment, equal pay and services, public functions and associations.

The aims of the Policy are:

- To ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and community
- To offer fair treatment in every aspect of working life in The MCL Group from our written procedures through to every decision made.
- To promote a culture where each employee and colleague is treated with respect and dignity and recognises the value that a diverse workforce can bring.

To achieve these aims, The MCL Group commits to the following:-

- Ensuring that the principles of this Policy are embedded in HR strategy and that all policies and procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed and made available to all individuals or trade unions involved with a The MCL Group employee.
- Providing awareness training and guidance to all employees and managers are to ensure The MCL Group commitment to equality and diversity is known and understood.
- This will be achieved mainly through Diversity Awareness Training, e-Induction, Managers' Guide Training, our employee Handbook and The MCL Group Connections.
- Monitoring and measuring diversity at every stage of employment to remove any direct or indirect associative and perceptive discrimination.
- Challenge and investigate discriminatory behaviour and enforce the disciplinary procedure, when this is considered necessary
- Support designated Diversity Champions in promoting equality and diversity across The MCL Group
- Communicate and regularly review the positive initiatives that have been implemented and ensure ever-wider access to them.
- Support the communities in which we live and work to ensure that we are involved, accessible and socially responsible
- Work with external groups and advisory bodies to keep up to date with market practice and how issues are dealt with.

4. Recruitment

- 4.1. The MCL Group recruitment and selection procedure is based solely on the necessary and justifiable job requirements and the individual's suitability.
- 4.2. Job profiles and person specifications are drawn up for every 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.
- 4.3. Selection methods, including interviews, are conducted in accordance with documented and standardised procedures and checklists, designed to ensure that discrimination forms no part of the recruitment process. The objective is to make each appointment on the grounds of selecting the most suitable candidate for the post.

5. Training & Development

- 5.1. Through its performance management procedure, The MCL Group ensures that all staff are given an opportunity to take part in both job specific training and have an individual Performance Development Plan designed to promote their opportunities and career advancement within The MCL Group. The appraisal process is carried out in accordance with clearly documented criteria to ensure that its application is free from discrimination at every stage.
- 5.2. (Selection Processes for Promotion). Whenever undertaking processes to select between groups of staff, for instance for promotion or in redundancy situations, The MCL Group undertakes to ensure that a fair and consistent procedure is applied and that the selection criteria applied are free of discrimination and based on objective assessments of competence. Promotion opportunities are available to all of our employees on an equal basis.

6. Flexible Working

- 6.1. The MCL Group recognises the benefits of flexibility in working arrangements. Furthermore, we recognise the rights of all employees working under such arrangements to be treated fairly and consistently in comparison to full time, permanent employees and to be given the same opportunities for development.
- 6.2. The treatment of pay and benefits for employees on flexible working arrangements is consistent with full time entitlements. Wherever possible, these are provided on a pro rata basis.

7. Disability & Special Needs

When a disabled person or anyone with special needs applies for a job in The MCL Group, we always consider applications based on relevant skills, experience and knowledge. If you are disabled or have special needs, The MCL Group will do its best to adapt the job and the workplace to meet the needs of individuals.

8. Pay Awards

- 8.1. The MCL Group arrangement for determining employees' salaries are based on the principle of rewarding individual merit and of providing equality of pay and reward for all employees.
- 6.2. We operate a variety of pay review mechanisms, many of which incorporate involvement and/or participation of all employees, and these arrangements are designed to ensure that 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.

9. Grievance & Harassment

- 9.1. While it is hoped and intended that most problems relating to employment in The MCL Group can be resolved on an informal basis, the Grievance Procedure exists so that causes of genuine concern can be dealt with equitably.
- 9.2. Any employee who believes he/she has been discriminated against should raise the matter under the Grievance Procedure, or where appropriate, the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, or by using the Open Door Policy (where any employee can discuss any matter with her/his manager or another manager or any Director, in complete confidence).
- 9.3. By having clear and well-publicised grievance and harassment procedures in place, The MCL Group ensures that every opportunity is given to address any area or situation where discrimination is perceived to have arisen.

10. Disciplinary Procedure

- 10.1. The MCL Group 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 the Company's disciplinary procedure.
- 10.2. All staff have a shared responsibility to ensure that the Equality and Diversity Policy is adhered to and to promote dignity and equality of opportunity and outcome at work.

11. Responsibilities

- 11.1. Whilst we all have a collective responsibility to ensure this Policy is successfully adopted, there are specific responsibilities within this:
 - The Managing Director holds ultimate responsibility for the Policy and compliance across the Company to its contents and any associated procedures.

- Human Resources Manager: This Policy is owned by The MCL Group HR Manager, who is responsible for its effective implementation and regular review. The HR team will continuously review all related policies, monitor employment practices and provide relevant advice and support to managers in championing equality and diversity across the Company.
- The Business Improvement Team fully endorse this Policy and recognises its role in being responsible and accountable for the development of diversity awareness in The MCL Group and, as such, will lead by example.

12. Managers

All managers are responsible for implementing and enforcing this Policy and ensuring that their teams and employees are aware of their responsibilities.

Managers should promote, respect and encourage each employee to reach their full potential and to deal appropriately with any breach of this Policy. Managers will ensure all employees are trained and made aware of their responsibilities under this Policy, through Diversity Awareness Training, e- induction, Managers' Guide Training, our Employee Handbook and The The MCL Group Connections.

13. Employees

All employees of The MCL Group, at every level, have an individual responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity and adherence to this Policy and any associated procedures.

All employees will respect the right of all staff to work in an environment free from prejudice and discrimination, exhibit the correct behaviours to promote and support equality and diversity and challenge colleagues who fall short of these expectations or breach this Policy.

14. Policy Distribution & Implementation

- 14.1.** Copies of the Policy will be given to all job applicants and employees of the Company via job application packs and induction packs. Additionally, copies of the Policy and associated procedures will be included in Staff Handbooks and displayed on the company website and notice boards.
- 14.1.** Training and development of all staff will include sessions on the Policy and associated procedures and all staff involved in recruitment, selection and supervision of staff will undertake additional training to ensure that they fully understand and are able to deliver their responsibilities for equality and diversity. Additional training will be identified and solutions sourced by our HR team in response to identified need.

15. Policy Monitoring & Review

- 15.1.** We will continuously review this Policy, together with all of our related employment policies, procedures and practices to maintain our focus on equality of opportunity and diversity within our business.
- 15.2.** To ensure that this Policy and associated procedures are operating effectively, the HR Manager will monitor and measure the records of our employees, benchmark our performance as a Company and ensure that any patterns or trends are identified and issues arising addressed.
- 15.2.** The HR Manager will ensure that regular formal monitoring and review of the Policy, implementation and impact takes place. This will be in the form monthly, quarterly and annual reviews, with reports to the managing Director and Senior Team, including:
- Collection and analysis of equality and diversity monitoring data (including information on age, gender, disability and ethnic background of job applicants and all employees). Where necessary, targets and performance management objectives will be set for specific areas in need of improvement, along with the necessary support and training.
 - HR monitoring of our central employee database, to ensure the application and effectiveness of this Policy. Raising any issues or trends regarding diversity with Divisional and Operational Managers.

16. Conclusion

This policy runs through every function of our business. We understand the importance of equality and diversity and will ensure that this policy is being implemented by all concerned.

17. Legislation

This policy takes into account the following existing legislation:-

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1988
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010

18. Information

Various information is held by the company in our Southport office and is available to all members of staff who may have concerns regarding compliance with the equality Act 2010 or seeking advice on best practice or concerns regarding the health or welfare of themselves or others around them. Please do not hesitate to ask for any assistance.