

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Definition

At Thames Reinforcements we operate and make every effort to ensure that a working environment exists where all employees are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect irrespective of gender, race, colour or sexual orientation. All efforts are geared to eliminating all bias and unlawful discrimination in relation to job applicants, employees, our business partners and members of the public.

This goes hand in hand with Thames Reinforcements values.

Scope

This policy is integral with our values, especially the three below:

Openness

- Listening to each other and sharing idea, issues, problems and opportunities
- Building trust with our customers, suppliers and all our stakeholders, working with integrity and transparency
- Use common sense to share what we know, both good and bad

Collaboration

- Working together to deliver the best possible solution for all concerned. This involves using, sharing and respecting the different skills, knowledge and experience of everyone involved
- Working together to deliver the best solution

Mutual Dependency

- Understanding each other's objectives, looking after each other's health and safety and striving to achieve the best for all by working with customers and suppliers so that risks and rewards are shared
- We stand or fall together

It is a subject and way of working that goes beyond immediate colleagues encompassing:

- All existing employees
- All potential employees
- Sub-contractors
- Workers (as defined by employment legislation, and to include agency temps)
- Partners
- Self-employed people

Everyone has a role to play and the responsibility for challenging questionable behaviour and practises, which are not in line with our values and culture.

Objectives

- To have a workforce that represents and responds to the diversity of our customers and today's society
- Improved safety and quality provided by a balanced and productive workforce
- Lower staff turnover, absenteeism and sickness levels leading to cost savings
- Provide a fair working environment in which discrimination will not be tolerated

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- Creating a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying
- To work towards finding ways for underrepresented groups to fully realise their potential within Thames Reinforcements and to take reasonable steps to help such groups
- Ensure that all employees are aware of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and provide any necessary ongoing training to enable them to meet their responsibilities under it
- Thames Reinforcements also recognise the merit of developing a workforce that incorporates the many diverse skills and backgrounds available from within the total population and accordingly will strive to become an organisation that will recognise value and understand diversity and to provide its employees with genuine opportunities to improve and reach their full potential
- Ensure that all applicants are treated fairly during recruitment processes and in accordance with legislation and The Codes of Practice covering all grounds for discrimination
- Regularly review procedures and selection criteria for promotion to ensure that individuals are selected and treated according to their relevant individual abilities and merits

Principles

By implementing this policy we will improve individual and organisational performance.

It is unacceptable for any applicant, employee, worker, supplier or member of the public to be discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, on such grounds as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, disability, part time or fixed term status, responsibility for children or dependants, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership and irrelevant criminal convictions (future references will be referred to as 'all grounds for discrimination').

All breaches of this policy will be taken seriously by the company and could lead to formal disciplinary action being taken, which in some cases could lead to dismissal.

By addressing these issues Thames Reinforcements adhere and comply with a number of legislative laws.

Guidelines

Recruitment and Selection

To ensure all the decisions within recruitment and selection adhere to the specific legislation, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Advertise so that the widest possible pool of applicants is reached
- Ensure procedures and decisions are backed up with documentation based on job requirements
- Design role profiles/job descriptions, person specifications that are job specific
- Ensure that interviews and other selection methods are conducted fairly and consistently and outcomes recorded
- Monitor all applications and employees for sex, ethnic origin, nationality, age and disability

Job Advertisements & Job Design

Ensure managers do the following:

- Take all reasonable steps to employ employees based on their abilities and qualifications without regard to all 'grounds for discrimination'
- Ensure all decisions are based on job requirements and are backed up with full documentation

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- All records should be kept on file
- Follow guidelines in respect to all aspects of the employment cycle
- Be aware of cultural differences, for example it is important to realise that for some ethnic minority groupings, eye contact may not be usual behaviour

Job Applications & Interviews

- All interviews should be properly conducted
- Interviewers will be trained and be equipped with the skills to collect objective evidence
- Use standard or specific criteria which are consistent for the role
- The aim is to undertake a process that is consistent and fair to also as not to unlawfully discriminate against particular applicants
- Ensure that you have full information on the candidate
- The People Success and Leadership factors are the tools against which we measure competence
- Adequate and full interview notes have been made to support any decisions

Selection

When assessing the suitability of any employee for a particular post, no decision should be taken which cannot be objectively justified

- Full documentation is needed to support any decision
- The selection of new staff will be based on the job requirements and the individual's suitability and ability to do, or train for, the job in question. All applicants will be treated equally
- Disabled applicants may be treated differently in order to enable them to compete at the same level
- Don't make assumptions about an individual's ability to perform tasks without evidence
- Treat everyone as you would wish to be treated

Training and Development

Everyone must have access to learning and development opportunities

- Learning and development opportunities will be provided based on individual and organisational need and wherever possible linked to the PDT process
- Ensure all documentation is complete in regards to participation in learning activities
- If you have responsibility for selecting employees for training, whether induction or promotion training or for transfer to other jobs, you have a duty not to discriminate on the grounds referred to above
- Employees will be given opportunities for promotion and career progression within the business depending on their job related competencies (as laid down in the agreed role profile) qualifications, abilities, skills training and experience and in accordance with the future needs of the business
- Training on equal opportunities and diversity is available

Reward and Appraisal

- Ensure that all employees have regular appraisals
- Document all appraisals fully
- Ensure that no one is treated unfairly due to gender, race, disability or age
- Reward in line with performance and relative benchmarking policy

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Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Business Group MD/ Professional Head	-Via the HR Manager for ensuring that all staff are aware of changes in legislation and the Company observes the Codes of Practice issued by the Commission of Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission. -Failure to comply may result in the company and an individual have legal proceedings taken against them
Managers and Supervisors	-Ensure that no unacceptable behaviour takes place in the specific areas of the business for which they are responsible -Ensure that the people for whom they are responsible know that such behaviour is unacceptable and what to do if it occurs - Ensure that they do not ignore, trivialise, or treat lightly grievances or complaints from members of a particular group or any complaint of discrimination on the assumption that the individual is over-sensitive about discrimination. All complaints must be treated seriously -Failure to carry out their duties in respect of equal opportunities may result in disciplinary action being taken against the Manager or Supervisor concerned -Failure to comply may result in the company and an individual having legal proceedings taken against them
All Employees	-The duty to co-operate with the Company to ensure that the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is effective and to ensure that they and their colleagues are treated with respect and dignity -Have a positive duty to report any incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination of which they become aware -Support colleagues who suffer harassment, discrimination or who are being bullied and making a complaint. -Make it clear to their colleagues that they such behaviour unacceptable
	MONITORING
Recruitment Agency / Job Applicant	-Equal opportunities data to be obtained as per policy -If candidates through a recruitment agency, explicit consent obtained by agencies from the candidates to submit their Equal Opportunities data as per SLA Agreement
Recruiting Manager	-Raw data to be retained on file for period of one year -Summary of data by vacancy to be produced and provided to HR upon request
Line Manager	-Line Manager to hold exit interviews or ensure completion of reason for leaving form
Academy	-Record and monitor people attending training courses as per policy
HR	-Provide Equal Opportunities data to managers, business units and to TRL as requested
Employee Relations Group	-Review Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy annually

Business Case for Diversity

- Improved recruitment and retention. A key TRL goal
- A better understanding of the global markets we operate in enabling us to compete competitively with greater knowledge and cultural awareness
- The ability to utilise employee's talents to the full
- Improve and build on relationship with central government, local government, local community by being seen as diverse and aware of the role we play in employing a workforce that reflects today's society
- Building on a positive image of Thames Reinforcements to potential and existing investors and stakeholders
- A multi-cultural workforce translates into a richer variety of approaches to work related problems and processes, potentially raising performance
- Regulatory compliance and avoid costs of discrimination

The Consequences of Not Addressing Diversity

Below are some simple examples where the courts have awarded damages to people for being subjected to unwanted remarks. The levels of compensation are constantly increased:

- Occasionally 'mild racial abuse'
- Widespread racial abuse
- Referral as 'you lot'
- Referral 'play the white man'
- Customer joined in racist names to employee in an organisation following example made by manager. Employers found vicariously liable for customers comments

Direct Discrimination

- Making decisions about whether someone should be offered, or not offered, a job because of sex, race, etc
- Treating colleague or customers differently because of their sex, race, etc

Indirect Discrimination

- This is less obvious discriminatory practises
- Setting tasks or standards which colleagues may not be able to achieve because of their race, sex etc
- E.g. setting height restrictions which indirectly discriminate against women or certain ethnic groupings
- E.g. segregating colleagues of the sex, race, etc
- E.g. a Chief Executive applies a 'no headwear' policy to all his staff. The policy, although applied to all employees, disadvantages his Sikh staff who wear turbans for religious reasons. This policy is indirect discrimination

Link to Management Tools

Although some people may not find the following behaviour offensive or degrading, diversity is about embracing difference and understanding of tolerance

- Calendars of girls in the office/on site

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- Religious icons on the desk
- A male complimenting a female colleague on her appearance
- Body contact not 'intended' to be intrusive or offensive
- Jokes about cultures/religions
- Referring to different segments of society in a derogatory way

Applicants/Employees with a Criminal Record

- There are important social and business arguments for employers facing up to the challenge of employing people with criminal records in a responsible and balanced way that maintains a duty of care to employees and customers, protect business interests and gives access to the widest pool of talent
- In making employment decisions, line managers should make objective assessments, adopt an open mind and focus on merit and ability to do the job
- Consideration should be given to extenuating circumstances, the nature and relevance of the offence, the potential risks involved in employing the offender, if and how these could be sensibly and effectively managed
- When making decisions we must also consider our duty to provide a safe working environment for all our employees

When Leaving the Company

It is essential that all leavers are given an exit interview when leaving the company

When things go wrong

Managers, Supervisors and employees need to be aware of the correct procedure for handling complaints associated with discrimination or harassment. In addition, Managers and Supervisors need to be trained how to handle matters of this nature, which are frequently very sensitive, confidential and sometimes difficult to substantiate. It is also important that all concerned appreciate the need to act quickly to deal with allegations of discrimination, harassment or bullying. It is vitally important to ensure such issues are acted upon very quickly

The Role of the Manager

- Any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying is subject to disciplinary action
- No colleagues will be penalised for bringing a complaint of either unfair treatment or harassment
- If a complaint against an individual is proven, that person will be subject to disciplinary action
- Remember that it has taken a lot for the individual to raise the concern
- Create an environment where trust occurs and employees feel they can come to you for any assistance or support

What happens if you believe you are a victim and make a complaint?

- Be assured that your complaint will be taken seriously
- Whilst your complaint will be treated in confidence, it may be necessary to involve others, if that is the case, you will, of course be told
- Speak to your Line Manager, make a note of when you first raise your concerns
- Take a colleague with you for support if necessary

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- Ask the Line Manager what steps they are going to take and when you can expect to hear from them
- If you prefer, contact your HR Business Partner directly
- If you do not believe that you have been taken seriously then escalate the complaint to the next level
- Avoid discussing your complaint with others apart from the trusted colleague
- Be assured that you will not be ignored or suffer victimisation because of your complaint
- All cases of harassment will be monitored

Action Steps

- In the spirit of our value of openness, in the first instance, all employees are encouraged to resolve any situation of perceived discrimination, harassment or bullying, by talking directly, politely and unambiguously to the person concerned, which may be unaware that their behaviour is unacceptable
- However, if this informal approach is not possible, or does not have the desired effect and the conduct continues, or it is not appropriate to resolve this problem informally, then employees should follow the formal complaints procedure and please refer to the Company Grievance Policy
- Unfounded complaints, which are not upheld but made in good faith, will not be subject to disciplinary action
- All parties concerned are obliged not to discuss the matters under investigation either with each other or any other person not directly related to the investigation

Victimisation or Retaliation

Victimisation is:

“Treating a person less favourably than others in circumstances where the person has, in good faith, made a complaint or initiated proceeds connected with a complaint of discrimination. Victimisation is also in itself a form of unlawful discrimination”

Thames Reinforcements Ltd will take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees are protected against victimisation or retaliation for bringing a complaint on any aspect covered by this policy. It is unlawful and a disciplinary offence to victimise or retaliate against an employee for bringing a complaint in accordance with this policy

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all the circumstances and the perception of the victim.

Thames Reinforcements Ltd will take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees are protected against. It is unlawful and a disciplinary offence to harass an employee.

Signed.....*Des Conaty*.....Des Conaty (Operations Director)

Dated.....12/12/2023.....