



EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY (Incorporating the Equality Act 2010)

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees rightly expect to be treated fairly and consistently and this expectation is supported by the law.

Fair treatment is a moral and legal duty and it is also a business imperative. The Company is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment. This means that all candidates, job applicants and employees will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and ex-offender.

The Company is also committed to monitoring equal pay and positive action.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Company is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and ex-offender (where context allows). This policy aims to address and remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the Company and to encourage full contribution from its external stakeholders and the wider community. The Company is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination.

The Company will, therefore, promote equal opportunity through the application of employment policies which will ensure that individuals receive treatment which is fair, equitable and consistent with their relevant aptitudes, potential, skills and abilities. All Directors will seek to ensure that all employees comply with these principles. The Company also recognises that it is the duty of all employees to accept their personal responsibility for fostering a fully integrated community at work by adhering to the principles of equal opportunity.

The Directors are constantly striving to gain certain statuses to assist us in people development and high staff retention, to win and secure new business, help us to evidence our quality credentials and to carry on our business reputation improvement.

The Company also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its clients and customers in the means by which they can access the services and goods supplied by the Company. The Company believes that all employees and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- To reduce, stop and prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination.
- To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, redundancy and service provision are determined only on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.
- To be proactive in promoting equality and diversity by working consistently and in an ongoing manner via the equality and diversity action plan and in the staff handbook where most of the policies and the recruitment procedures are documented.

4. DESIGNATED MANAGER

	Liz Bass
Position:	Human Resources Manager
Telephone	020 7407 1122

5. TYPES & DEFINITIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. There are many types of discrimination:

5.1 Direct Discrimination

This occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perception discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see discrimination by association below).

Example: A senior manager turns down an employee's application for promotion to a supervisory position. The employee is gay and learns that the manager did this because they believe the team to be managed are homophobic. The manager thought that the employee's sexual orientation would prevent the employee gaining the team's respect and the ability to manage them effectively. This is direct sexual discrimination against the employee.

5.2 Discrimination by Association

This discrimination applies to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Example: An employee works as a project manager and is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after the employee tells the boss that their parent, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination against the employee because of their **association** with a disabled person.

5.3 Perception Discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and sex. This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Example: An employee looks much younger and many people assume they are in their mid 20s, when in fact they are 45 years of age. A manager decides the employee is not allowed to represent the company at an international meeting because they think the employee is too young. The employee has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

5.4 Indirect Discrimination

Applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment.

Indirect discrimination occurs when someone has a condition, when there is a rule, policy or even a practice in the Company that applies to everyone, but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown that the Company acted reasonably in managing the business, i.e. that it is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A legitimate aim might be any lawful decision made in running the business, but if there is a discriminatory effect, the sole aim of reducing costs is likely to be unlawful.

Being proportionate really means being fair and reasonable, including showing that the Company has looked at 'less discriminatory' alternatives to any decision it has made.

Example: A small company needs its staff to work late on a Friday afternoon to undertake a task which involves collating information from different time zones. The information for the task arrives late on a Friday and during the winter some staff would like to be released early on Friday afternoons in order to be home before sunset – a requirement of their religion. The employees propose to make up the time later during the remainder of the week.

The company is not able to agree to this request because the information is a necessity for the business and needs to be worked on immediately and the company is too small to have anyone else able to do the work.

The requirement to work on Friday afternoon is not unlawful indirect discrimination as it meets a legitimate business aim and there is no alternative means available.

5.5 Harassment

Harassment is "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual".

Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. Employees will now be able to complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, and the complainant need not possess the relevant characteristics themselves. Employees are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Example: An employee is continually being called gay and other related names by a group of employees at work. Homophobic comments have been posted on the staff notice board about the employee by people from the group. The employee was recently physically pushed to the floor by one member of the group. The employee is too scared to take action. The employee is not gay, but heterosexual; furthermore the group know the employee is not gay. This is harassment because of sexual orientation.

5.6 Third Party Harassment

Applies to sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The Company may potentially be liable for the harassment of their employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the Company, such as customers and clients. The Company will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two occasions, and if the Company were aware that it had taken place and had chosen not to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Example: An employee is gay and mentions to his manager that he is feeling unhappy after a client made a homophobic remark within his earshot. The manager is concerned and monitors the situation. Within a few days the client makes further offensive remarks. The manager reacts by speaking to the client, pointing out that this behaviour is unacceptable. The manager considers following it up with a letter pointing out that the business will no longer work with the client if it happens again. The manager keeps the employee in the picture with regards to the actions undertaken and believes the company has taken reasonable steps to protect the employee from third party harassment.

5.7 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

There is no longer a need to compare treatment of a complaint with that of a person who has not made or supported a complaint under the Act.

Example: An employee makes a formal complaint against their manager because they feel they have been discriminated against. Although the complaint is resolved through the company's grievance procedures, the employee is subsequently ostracised by their colleagues, including the manager. The employee could claim victimisation.

6. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

6.1 Age

People of all ages are protected. However, different treatment, because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

There is now no default retirement age of 65.

This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.

6.2 Disability

It is now easier for a person to show they are disabled and protected from disability discrimination. A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.

The duty is on an employer to make reasonable adjustments for their employees to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from an impairment, e.g. by providing assistive technologies to help visually impaired staff use computers effectively.

The Company has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- Making adjustments to premises;
- Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties;
- Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability;
- Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office;
- Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
- Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee;
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees;

or

- Any other adjustments that the Company considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the Company.

If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by the Company, they should contact the Designated Manager (Sam Blake, Director).

It is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability, e.g. a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia. This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Additionally, indirect discrimination now covers disabled people. This means that a job applicant or employee can claim that a particular rule or requirement an employer has in place disadvantages people with the same disability. Unless it could be justified it would be unlawful.

The new Equality Act includes a provision which make it unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a candidate's health before offering them work.

6.3 Gender Reassignment

A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed the process to change his or her gender. It is no longer a requirement for a person to be undertaking medical procedures, i.e. a woman who decides to live as a man, but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered.

It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourable for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

6.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Employees who are married or in a civil partnership are protected against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

6.5 Pregnancy and Maternity

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination.

Example: An employee is pregnant and the manager knows this but still disciplines the employee for taking too many toilet breaks as they would another member of staff. This is discrimination because of pregnancy and maternity as this characteristic does not require the normal comparison of treatment with other employees.

An employer must not take into account an employee's period of absence due to pregnancy-related illness when making a decision about employment.

6.6 Race

'Race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race.

6.7 Religion or Belief

Religion includes any religion. It also includes no religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.

Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.

6.8 Sex

Both men and women are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sex.

6.9 Sexual Orientation

Bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people are protected.

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation.

7. KEY CHANGES

7.1 Positive Action

The new Act allows an employer to take a protected characteristic into consideration when deciding who to recruit or promote. However, this is only applicable if the candidates are “as qualified as” each other for a particular vacancy. This does not mean they have to have exactly the same qualifications as each other, it means that the selection assessment on a range of criteria rates them as equally capable of doing the job

There would also need to be some evidence to show that people with that characteristic, face particular difficulties in the workplace or are disproportionately under-represented in the workforce or in a particular job for which there is a vacancy. In these circumstances, an employer can choose to use the fact that a candidate has a protected characteristic as a ‘tie-breaker’ when determining which one to appoint.

The policy does not automatically treat job applicants who share a protected characteristic more favourably in recruitment and promotion. This means consideration must always be given to the abilities, merits and qualifications of all of the candidates in each recruitment or promotion exercise. Otherwise, any actions could be unlawful and discriminatory.

7.2 Pre-employment Health Related Checks

The new Act limits the circumstances when an employer can ask health-related questions before an individual is offered a job. Up to this point, an employer can only ask health-related questions to help them to:

- Decide whether there is a need to make any reasonable adjustments for the person as part of the selection process;
- Decide whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential (‘intrinsic’) to the job;
- Monitor diversity among people making applications for the jobs;
- Take positive action to assist disabled people;

A jobseeker cannot take an employer to an Employment Tribunal if they think they are acting unlawfully by asking questions that are prohibited, though they can complain to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. However, if the employer does ask prohibited questions and the candidate is not employed they may bring a claim of discrimination against the employer and the burden of proof would be on the employer to demonstrate they had not discriminated.

Once a person has passed the interview and offered the job (whether this is an unconditional or conditional job offer) the employer is permitted to ask appropriate health-related questions.

7.3 Extension of Employment Tribunal Powers

The new Act extends the power of an Employment Tribunal to make recommendations to an organization to eliminate or reduce the effect of discrimination on other employees, not only on the claimant, .e.g. a tribunal might specify that an employer needs to train all staff about the organisation's bullying and harassment policy. This power does not apply to equal pay cases.

7.4 Equal Pay – Direct Discrimination

The new Act allows a claim of direct pay discrimination to be made, even if no real person comparator can be found. This means that a claimant who can show evidence they would have received better remuneration from their employer if they were of a different sex may have a claim, even if there is no-one of the opposite sex doing equal work in the organization. This would be a claim under sex discrimination.

7.5 Pay Secrecy

The new Act makes it unlawful for the Company to prevent or restrict employees from having a discussion to establish if differences in pay exist that are related to restricted characteristics. It also makes terms of the contract of employment that require pay secrecy unenforceable because of these discussions. However, an employer can require their employees to keep pay rates confidential from some people outside the workplace, e.g. a competitor organization.

8. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

It is the individual responsibility of all employees to co-operate fully and is essential for the success of this Policy. However, the ultimate responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and for ensuring compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice, lies with the Company. If an individual contravenes this policy both they and the Company will be liable. All employees are expected to follow this Policy and ensure that all employees, subcontractors and agents do the same.

All employees, subcontractors and agents of the Company are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees or clients to direct, associative, perception, indirect discrimination, harassment, third party harassment or victimisation on the above stated grounds or protected characteristics.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by an Employment Tribunal and ordered to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.

9. ACTING ON DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

In the event that an employee is the subject or perpetrator of, or witness to, discriminatory behaviour, please refer to the Grievance Procedure. If anyone makes a discriminatory request to an employee they must refuse to accept such an instruction and explain to the person making the discriminatory request that it is in fact illegal. Such a request must not be accepted on any grounds as it would break the law.

10. ADVICE AND SUPPORT ON DISCRIMINATION

Employees may contact a Director or the HR Manager or a trade union representative if access to such an individual is possible.

11. THE EXTENT OF THE POLICY

The Company seeks to apply this Policy in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development, promotion and redundancy of all employees. The Company seeks to ensure that all sub-contractors and agents act in accordance with this Policy. The Company accepts no liability for the actions of sub-contractors and agents. The Company offers goods and services in a fashion that complies with the spirit of this Policy.

This Policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any employee and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with the Company.

The Company reserves the right to amend and update this policy at any time. The Company will review the policy annually.

12. RECRUITMENT

12.1 Selection Criteria

All job applications will be processed in the same way, regardless of level. The selection criteria for all vacancies will be defined and reflected in the relevant job description and person specification, which all potential candidates will have access to. The Company continues to be committed to maintaining its high standard in recruitment and individuals will always be selected on the basis of aptitude, ability and suitability for the specific position.

12.2 Advertising

Job advertisements will be used to encourage applications from all suitably qualified candidates and will endeavour to ensure that advertisements are worded appropriately to ensure that nobody is excluded. All job advertisements placed on behalf of the Company will convey the Company's commitment to equality of opportunity.

When a large number of vacancies need to be filled or if the vacancies are particularly urgent, we will advertise on your behalf using the most appropriate channels.

Our online recruitment campaigns use high-profile sites with large pools of diverse candidates, for example:

www.linkedin.com

www.staffnurse.com

www.cvlibrary.co.uk

www.reed.co.uk

www.totaljobs.com

www.nurses.co.uk

In addition to this, we maintain regular contact with the Universities and Colleges that offer relevant courses and use job fairs to meet newly qualified candidates at the very beginning of their careers.

We use our relationships with community agencies and organisations such as OpenDoor and JobCentre Plus to target diverse candidates on behalf of our clients and for our internal

recruitment. These are some of the groups and sites we use to proactively target diverse groups:

- JobCentre Plus
- OpenDoor Limited

12.3 Selection Methods

The Company will ensure that individuals are recruited and selected on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills and abilities. In particular, no applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination.

The individuals responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selecting candidates will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and of the need for their consistent application.

12.4 Interviews

Wherever possible, all applicants will be interviewed by at least two representatives from the Company.

If it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job, this will be discussed objectively, without detailed questions based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, carer status, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

12.5 Selection

It is critical for our business that every appointment is based on objective merit rather than subjective perception. Our candidates and clients are entitled to enjoy good working relationships with us in an open, transparent and fair environment.

We create this environment through hard work, respect, energy, integrity and commitment. We are working very hard to continually improve our standards of service and the way we do this is by employing the best and recruiting the best on behalf of our clients. If we miss great talent because of subjective criteria or other factors unrelated to a candidates' ability to carry out a job then this will affect our bottom line.

This document sets out our methods clearly so that both our clients and the candidates we place can be confident that we do our best to ensure the highest standards are maintained. This is not a policy statement without any backing action and this manual sets out our action and expectations of all interviewers in detail.

As well as outlining our internal procedures, it is intended to provide advice and guidance on the recruitment process. Its aims are simply to:

- ✚ Ensure the most suitable person is appointed to the post.
- ✚ Ensure all policies, procedures and legislative requirements are met. This includes action in accordance with an Equality & Diversity Policy.
- ✚ Promote good practice.
- ✚ Ensure a consistent approach across service areas.

12.6 Legal Framework

Consultants receive continual training to ensure they are familiar with the relevant legislation concerning recruitment and selection. You can find the dates that training was provided, to whom and a programme of future training on each employees' personal training record.

The Company acts in accordance with the following:

- ✚ Equality Act 2010
- ✚ Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- ✚ Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and (Exceptions) Order 1975
- ✚ Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009
- ✚ Criminal Justice Act 2003
- ✚ The Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment 1983

Our policies and procedures have been established to meet these legislative requirements as well as the requirements of "Best Practice".

On the basis of this legislation, the only fair, lawful and efficient procedure is to assess each candidate as an individual. Interviewers and consultants will not make generalised assumptions about physiological or psychological differences, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, carer status, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or any other irrelevant factor - as these things tell us nothing about the capabilities of an individual.

The Equality & Diversity Policy is adhered to by all staff as a contractual obligation. All staff have read and signed the policy and all staff have understood the equality and inclusion action plan. Staff understand their own obligations and actions in respect of the equality and inclusion plan.

The first step in the recruitment process is to confirm a job description and person specification for each post. At the outset, we ask our clients to provide two short documents along the following lines:

12.7 Job Description

A job description defines the tasks which will be expected of the post holder. The accuracy of this document is critical as it is used to complete both person specifications and job advertisements.

The finished job description will include the following information:

- ✚ An accurate job title
- ✚ Location of work - if candidates need to be flexible this should be clearly stated
- ✚ Who the post holder is responsible to
- ✚ Whom the post holder is responsible for
- ✚ A short statement describing the purpose of the job
- ✚ The principal responsibilities of the job - this should be a concise description of the key areas
- ✚ The main duties of the job - the tasks and activities that the post holder will need to carry out to achieve the purpose of the job
- ✚ A statement along the lines of 'to undertake any other duties which are relevant to the post and may be required from time to time.'

- ✚ The following equalities statement 'The post holder must carry out his or her duties with full regard to the Equality & Diversity Policies of the Company and their clients.'

12.8 Skills and Competency Specification

The skills and competency specification is a list of the skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications that are required in order to do the job. The specification should only include criteria that are strictly relevant to the job.

They should be split into essential (i.e. what attributes the applicant must have) and desirable (i.e. what attributes it might be useful for them to have) requirements. These requirements must be measurable and as easy as possible to assess. A skills and competency specification must be prepared before the post is advertised.

We recommend that the person specification be drawn up by the people who will interview the applicants, including the line manager/supervisor. This helps to ensure a common understanding of the criteria and how they will be measured.

The person specification serves as a basis for writing the advertisement, short listing the candidates, structuring the interviews and designing the questions, identifying any appropriate tests or exercises, and making the final decision about whom to appoint. The document will be used throughout the selection process and it is important that it is accurate and clear.

If a person specification already exists for the post it should be reviewed to ensure it is accurate and up to date.

Once the person specification is completed those on the interview panel should agree how the different criteria can be assessed e.g. from the application form, through tests or exercises, or during the interview. The 'selectors' should check carefully that the criteria listed are accurate, free from any discriminatory effects and strictly relevant to the needs of the post. These criteria will then be used to recruit to the post, i.e. if criteria are listed as essential the shortlisted applicant must have them to be considered.

Our consultants have development and experience in preparing person specifications and can provide guidance on what to include. In particular, they will be able to recognise and amend any requirements which may discriminate unfairly.

Such requirements are frequently included with the best intentions. For example, specifying a 'bubbly, enthusiastic' person is likely to cause men to assume the post is for a young woman. Think carefully about who might apply and who may not. Such terms or phrases must be avoided because they can cause applicants to ignore a job or even be offended. They can also compromise clients' legal standing.

12.9 Database of Existing Candidates

Once a job description and person specification have been prepared, we will search our database for suitable candidates. In many cases we will be able to find the staff needed rapidly by calling candidates we already know to discuss the post and confirm their availability.

Our database is called RDB which is a dedicated recruitment management system that enables consultants to search both candidates and clients data.

12.10 RDB Database

RDB has an excellent search engine. However, those candidates whose data *have* been gained, but not populated on to the system will not be located in searches.

The data may include:

- ✚ Locations that your candidate may consider;
- ✚ A particular team they have worked in;
- ✚ A team they may want to work in.

The tab for this area is titled CV/Skills.

A detailed description of the types of searches available can be found within the ‘top – help tab’ on RDB.

If we have a correct email address we can do a mail shot to a particular skill set.

It is always a good idea to confirm candidates’ email addresses.

The same can be done with SMS text messages. However, candidates who have not been skilled up will not appear within the search.

12.11 Notes on History/Activities

In the sector in which we work, detailed notes are absolutely essential; having an ongoing, well-documented dialogue with your candidates will greatly benefit relationship building.

12.12 Scheduled Calls Procedure

An essential part of your job is to build a bank/library of candidates to place.

By scheduling calls and contacting your candidates on a regular basis you are ensuring ongoing relationships.

To ensure you do keep in contact with your candidates we have in place a ‘Seven Day Rule’.

This simply means that you must contact each of your candidates at least once within a seven-day period. As long as you maintain this contact you will secure the ‘rights’ to this candidate.

However! If a position has been live for more than thirty minutes and you have not contacted your candidate a colleague can contact them regarding that particular position. You will still retain the ownership of that candidate, but not for that position.

12.13 Comments Box, Front Page of RDB

Notes that may be pertinent to the background of each candidate should be put within the comments box: Interests, paediatrics etc.

Please put the date and your initials when inserting notes within the comments box.

Once you have input information in the document below Copy and Paste it in to the Comments Box on RDB.

12.14 Referrals

Currently, 10% of our candidates are referred to us by friends or colleagues who have been happy with our service. We monitor such referrals to make sure that this does not impact negatively on our ability to supply a diverse range of candidates.

12.15 Monitoring and Registration

At the request of a client, we can include an equality monitoring form in the registration process for their vacancies so that we know who has applied and from which diverse background. It is important that we are able to evidence that we can attract diverse candidates and clients and consultants know we are monitoring success rates to ensure fairness.

We would also be able to (at a client's request) monitor who is rejected by clients and on what basis since many clients are required to produce such evidence themselves. Many clients have told us that it is important to them that we are ethical, transparent and open with them and with candidates. By doing this we are able to support our clients' internal monitoring to ensure fair processes are embedded and that we can track trends and report them back to clients who are concerned about equality and inclusion.

12.16 Initial Interviews by Phone

We conduct an initial interview by telephone to establish:

- ✚ Qualifications including any equivalents from other countries or in roughly equivalent competencies/work experience;
- ✚ In some instances we look at non-formal qualifications and/or experience. Skills and competencies picked up in the home or in voluntary work for example;
- ✚ Experience, including which company or groups they have experience of;
- ✚ Availability, including notice periods;
- ✚ Where they want to work and how far they are willing to travel for what kinds of work and remuneration;
- ✚ Contact details;
- ✚ Check that they have completed the required diversity monitoring form – whether they are successful in the initial interview or not.

12.17 Compliance

We obtain the following documents for every candidate placed without exception:

- Full Curriculum Vitae
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK, i.e. original passport, birth certificate, driving licence, visas etc.

At the request of a client we can obtain further documentation, such as:

- Proof of Address
- Credit Checks
- Disclosures
- Details of all previous employers in the last 3 years for references

- Original registration certificate for industry body
- Original examination certificates for all relevant qualifications

Once a candidate is offered a role, we would request the following documentation:

- Evidence of limited company registration and VAT registration
- Contract for services

12.18 References

The purpose of a reference is ONLY to obtain factual information about a candidate to validate their employment record. Depending on clients' requirements, references are either obtained prior to an interview for all candidates or after an interview for the successful candidate depending on client request and individual circumstances of the candidate. Candidates' privacy is respected at all times. References are not usually considered a part of recruitment process as there are too many potential pitfalls both from a legal and an equality perspective.

Whichever option is chosen, we will make sure that references are cleared in line with an offer as soon as possible.

Previous employers are not asked to provide opinions. To counter any possible claims, some employers provide only "open" references (i.e. they are shown to the candidates) and restrict all their references to limited factual information.

References for the last 3 years will be collected wherever possible.

Consultants need to complete a Standard Reference Form or email template.

International candidates will be asked to provide references in English.

12.19 Detailed Second Interview

The information we gain from the interview is added to the candidate's profile on our database.

Training is provided on interview feedback to elaborate on why we ask these questions for all consultants.

For certain clients wishing to monitor diversity, monitoring forms are sent out and required back upon CV submission.

12.20 Specific Support Needs/Disability

If an applicant has indicated on the monitoring form that s/he has a disability or any other factor they wish to mention that affects them in employment or that they have special requirements for interview it is important that the short listing panel are aware of this. Firstly, this enables any interview requirements to be met. Secondly, it allows the selection panel to identify any 'reasonable adjustments' or changes in working arrangements that need to be made (e.g. accessibility, altering working hours and so on in order to meet current disability legislation, etc.)

12.21 Equality and Inclusion

Recruitment consultants must take account of non work-based experience and learning in support of equal opportunities, particularly for candidates who have been disadvantaged or discriminated against in their earlier careers.

The candidates should be judged by careful examination of the information on the application form in the light of the criteria in the person specification and job description match. Where candidates are not shortlisted, the reasons for not short listing must be recorded.

If psychometric tests are used we recommend they are checked for cultural, gender or other bias and if not we recommend they are not used.

At the short listing stage, as with the rest of the procedure, it is against the law to reject people because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, carer status, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

When drawing up a shortlist, the selection panel must guard against making assumptions about the abilities of candidates based on irrelevant but commonly held assumptions. Some examples of the assumptions to avoid are:

- ✚ We need someone with a caring disposition, so we can't employ a man.
- ✚ It is a physical or dirty job, unsuitable for a woman or an admin role isn't suitable for a man.
- ✚ Someone with a disability will have a higher sickness record – the opposite is true.

12.22 Informing Candidates of Interviews

We will ask clients to give us a list of possible interview dates so that we can make arrangements with the candidates once short listing is completed.

We aim to give notice to candidates before interview. We telephone the successful candidates to confirm their availability and make an appointment for interview. This is followed up in writing or e-mailing and our letter includes the following information:

- ✚ The date, time and approximate length of interview;
- ✚ The names and job titles of the selection panel;
- ✚ The location of the interview - a map should be provided;
- ✚ The selection methods, e.g. interview, typing or other tests, presentation etc.

If they have any particular needs that require attention, they should inform the interview contact who will be named in the letter. For example:

- ✚ additional access details;
- ✚ someone to meet them at the entrance of the building;
- ✚ a friend or relative to accompany them if they have a health problem or learning difficulty;

This information should also have been recorded on the application form by the candidate.

12.23 Client Interviews

Interview procedures vary considerably between clients, and our consultants will work closely with your staff. If additional rounds of interviewing are needed, this can be arranged quickly and easily.

We can provide professional advice and consultancy on the best interview format and style for your organisation.

12.24 Selection Tests

The Company can source and administer selection tests to match each client's specifications.

Before a selection test is used, its relevance to the job being applied for must be established. If a test requires skills to be demonstrated those skills must be directly related to the job description and person specification.

Selection criteria and tests should be examined to ensure that they are related to job requirements and are free from any unjustifiable bias; gender, cultural, age or other bias in tests is not uncommon. We will only use tests that have been assessed as fair (and valid and reliable).

Where the job involves practical skills, it is possible for you to confirm or test these at the time of the interview - for example typing, word processing, spelling, arithmetic tests etc.

Candidates who need to be able to express themselves clearly to others, or to work well in group situations can be asked to take part in a group discussion exercise, or to deliver a presentation to the panel on a pre arranged topic.

It must be emphasised that selection tests should only be carried out by testers who are fully trained and licensed in their use and interpretation. For any test used in the recruitment process, records must be kept for monitoring fairness purposes.

12.25 Appointment

When you have reached a decision, we will send a letter or e-mail to all of the applicants to inform them of the outcome and give feedback on their performance. Confirmation of success or failure may be given verbally in the first instance, but we will always follow this up in writing.

Offer Letter to the successful candidate – a letter includes:

- The job title
- Date of commencement
- The post's grade and salary details
- That the offer is subject to satisfactory police check etc. (where applicable), medical questionnaire for completion (where applicable and within current good practice and legal requirements)
- Probationary period (if applicable)
- How to confirm acceptance
- Whom and where to report to and when.

12.26 International Candidates

The Company can access a wide market to identify skilled candidates in other countries whose skills and experience are ideal for your vacancies.

Recruiting from overseas poses an obvious challenge and it is important to be aware of the additional legislative requirements. In outline, these are as follows:

- ✚ When employing candidates from overseas, a valid visa/work permit must be produced and verified before the commencement of employment. This must be substantiated by an independent source. In fact this applies equally to all candidates whether from the UK, foreign nationals or any other worker category.
- ✚ A place of work must be established before entry into the UK.
- ✚ All international candidates need to have the relevant work permits/visas in order to gain employment in the UK and consultants that are working with such candidates need to see the originals or these work permits/visas prior to submitting a candidate to a client.
- ✚ No job offer will be made until we have received the original valid work permits/visas required.

12.27 Initial Interviews

As well as discussing the topics mentioned above, international candidates will be given a longer initial interview covering the following:

- ✚ Their country of origin (to establish if EU/accession countries and so on)?
- ✚ What do they expect from the role in the UK?
- ✚ How long do they want to work in the UK?
- ✚ Will they come to the UK on their own or with family, or pets? Will they need support?
- ✚ Do they have the appropriate visa or work permit?
- ✚ Do they have a working holiday visa?
- ✚ Do they hold dual citizenship?
- ✚ What arrangements will they need to make for accommodation?
- ✚ How will they get to interviews, and when will they be available?

12.28 Assistance for International Candidates

We provide a number of services to support our International candidates and make their transition into the UK as easy as possible:

- Information on the UK's legislation for their professional area.
- Contact with experienced managers who have been appropriately trained have agreed to help our overseas candidates with any questions they may have. By arrangement, this can include regular meetings.
- Regular 'checkups' from consultants.
- Information on local accommodation and prices.
- Information on the local area and available services.
- Collection from the airport and help settling in.
- Assistance with completing applications for bank accounts.

These measures significantly improve retention rates by reducing stress and giving candidates people to turn to if they are anxious.

We recommend that International Candidates be interviewed at least 4-6 weeks before their employment is due to commence. This allows time for them to pack belongings and prepare the trip.

The UK Border Agency assists candidates with immigration advice and work permits.

12.29 Promotion

When considering individuals for promotion, the Company will ensure that decisions are made entirely on objective criteria having regard to the relevant aptitudes, potential, skills and abilities. In particular, no candidate will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute indirect unfair discrimination.

When considering individuals for promotion, the Company will take in to account the work carried out in relation to candidates and clients. The Company shall measure the individuals candidate management capabilities on past and present performance, the individuals client management capabilities on past and present performance, the Company shall also look at targets set and targets achieved in terms of revenue generation, placements made, clients won, team work within the company, showing initiative in all daily duties and how they promote themselves to their clients, candidates, peers and management within.

12.30 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

The Company will ensure that any individual or group of employees who believe that they have experienced direct or indirect unfair discrimination has their complaints properly heard. Any employee who feels that he/she has been treated unfairly in connection with his/her employment should raise his/her grievance through the appropriate Grievance Procedure when every effort will be made to secure a satisfactory resolution. In addition, the Company will ensure that any employee making a complaint of unfair discrimination will be protected from any victimisation in any form.

The Company will continue to treat unfair discriminatory conduct by any employee as a disciplinary offence.

13. FURTHER INFORMATION

Acas website

www.acas.org.uk

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Government Equalities Office

www.equalities.gov.uk