



Rothwell Plumbing Services Ltd.

EQUALITY and DIVERSITY

1. Introduction

Rothwell Plumbing Services Limited and its group companies (hereafter RPS) is committed to a policy of equality and diversity, offering opportunities for all employees, workers and applicants without fear of unlawful or undesirable discrimination. RPS recognises that everyone is uniquely individual, and fundamental to this Policy is an aim to encourage diversity, and to eliminate discrimination and intolerance based on an individual's characteristics.

RPS is fully committed to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; and building and maintaining a culture which accepts and encourages people from all sections of the community.

In line with this commitment, RPS will not discriminate unlawfully when selecting candidates for employment or engagement. Furthermore, RPS will not accept instructions from clients that indicate or imply an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

In particular RPS recognises, and confirms its statutory obligations in relation to, those personal characteristics protected by law. These are known as 'protected characteristics,' and are:

- Age
- Disability
(If you suffer a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act, you may wish to inform us, in total confidence, so that we can review with you what reasonable adjustments can be made)
- Race (colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

2. Forms of Discrimination

In order to eliminate discrimination, and to encourage equality and diversity, it is important to understand and recognise the different forms of discrimination. Only through recognition of discrimination can equality and diversity flourish.

Direct Discrimination

Direct Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably as a result of that person possessing a protected characteristic (*see previous page*).

Associative Discrimination

Associative Discrimination is a form of Direct Discrimination which occurs when someone is treated less favourably because he or she associates with another person with a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by Perception

Discrimination by Perception is a form of Direct Discrimination which occurs when someone is treated less favourably because it is *thought* that he or she possesses a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect Discrimination can occur when you have a rule, practice or procedure within the workplace that applies to everybody; but places a person with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage. Indirect Discrimination does not apply to Pregnancy and Maternity.

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"*. This includes behaviour that an employee may find offensive, even if the behaviour is not directed at that particular employee.

Harassment by a Third Party

Harassment by a Third Party can occur when an employee is harassed at work, even if the harassment is by a person not employed by the employer.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs if someone is treated badly because they have either made or supported a complaint or grievance under the statutory legislation or this Policy.

3. Measures to prevent Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and/or bullying can take many forms, and can have a serious effect on health, confidence and morale. It can affect an individual's work performance, create a hostile work environment, and lead to problems both inside and outside work. We recognise the dangers of harassment and bullying, and ask all employees to accept their responsibilities in reporting instances at an early stage before matters escalate.

Harassment and/or bullying can be physical (e.g. unnecessary personal contact, assault); verbal (e.g. unwelcome advances, offensive remarks or comments, foul language); or non-verbal (offensive gestures, inappropriate e-mail usage, displaying offensive material). Harassment and/or bullying can be targeted at a person's sex, age, race, disabilities or abilities, religion, beliefs, background, sexual orientation, or even personal characteristics or appearance. It does not have to take place at work; it can be at work-related functions or outside working time. This extends to e-mail comments and correspondence; and unwanted, offensive or malicious comments or remarks on any social networking sites such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*. This is commonly known as 'cyber-bullying'.

Harassment and/or bullying can be defined as unwanted conduct that the person at which it is targeted finds unreasonable or offensive. Because everyone reacts differently, the harassment and/or bullying may not necessarily be intentional. For instance, sexual attention may become sexual harassment if it persists after the recipient has made it clear it is unwelcome. In another instance and with another person, a single occurrence may amount to sexual harassment.

Conduct amounting to aggressiveness, humiliation, degradation, or likely to cause mental or physical stress, can be considered as harassment and/or bullying. Teasing could undermine a person's dignity and therefore create a hostile working environment. Conduct that could adversely affect a person's future employment prospects, in retaliation against that person's refusal to accept harassment and/or bullying, will not be tolerated. Conduct that amounts to victimisation or retaliation against a person who has reported harassment and/or bullying (personally or to another) will not be tolerated.

The management of RPS will act immediately if they become aware of any allegations or suspicions of harassment and/or bullying, and will always be supportive of any employee who has complained or expressed concerns. If you feel that you are the target for harassment and/or bullying you should inform your line manager. Dependant on the complaint (and taking the complainant's wishes into consideration) the manager will attempt to resolve the issue informally. Your wishes will always be taken into account when dealing with the matter, and where possible dealt with in the strictest of confidence. However, all complaints will be investigated thoroughly and properly.

Harassment and bullying may also be considered as gross misconduct, and therefore proven cases can result in summary dismissal. It may be necessary to suspend an employee whilst an investigation takes place; in these circumstances the suspended employee would continue to receive normal pay, and the suspension period would not be considered as part of any disciplinary action, or presumption of guilt.

Customers, clients, visitors, or suppliers expressing any form of discriminatory behaviour will be asked to leave our premises where applicable. We will endeavour to communicate our zero tolerance on harassment and bullying to any person visiting our premises (by means of notices in communal areas). Any employee who feels they have been the subject of harassment by a third party (e.g. on a working site) must report it immediately so that the matter can be addressed.

4. Part-time Workers and Sub-Contractors

The RPS Equality and Diversity Policy also covers the treatment of those employees and workers who work on a part-time basis, and all sub-contractors engaged by RPS.

RPS already recognises that part-time employees are treated on the same (pro rata) terms as full time employees in matters such as rates of pay, holiday entitlement, training, and redundancy situations. RPS also recognises that it is essential that the RPS Equality and Diversity Policy also extends to all part-time employees and sub-contractors.

5. Implementation of the RPS Equality and Diversity Policy

We ask and expect all our colleagues, employees, business associates, clients, customers and visitors to reflect a consensus of fair and equal treatment across the whole spectrum of our community.

The overall aim of the RPS Equality and Diversity Policy is to promote a harmonious working environment for all members of staff and to ensure that RPS adheres to the principle of equality of treatment. It prohibits acts of discrimination whereby one individual is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of any protected characteristic.

The provision of this policy also aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of the protected characteristics.

No applicant or employee should be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which are unjustified or irrelevant to the job.

Selection criteria and personnel procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are interviewed, recruited, promoted and otherwise treated purely on the basis of merit and ability to do the job for which they have applied or to which they have been appointed.

The intention in respect of recruitment, selection and promotion is to appoint the most able candidate for each job, regardless of any protected characteristics. In order to ensure this intention is realised, the requirements of each job are identified; and all candidates assessed against the same criteria to ensure fairness and consistency.

All candidates for promotion possessing appropriate skills, knowledge and experience are given the same degree of consideration. Should any training leading to relevant qualifications be offered, this would be done regardless of any protected characteristic.

Training in matters relating to equality and diversity is an integral feature of the training programme for the management team. This ensures that RPS maintains an effective level of the awareness of the policy and that the policy is implemented and operates as intended. All conditions of employment, employee benefits and services apply irrespective of any protected characteristic.

It must also be understood that assumptions about individuals in relation to protected characteristics are unreasonable and will not be tolerated.

6. Dealing with Complaints and Grievances

RPS has in place procedures for dealing with complaints and grievances. Any member of staff with a grievance concerning the application of this policy should follow the grievance procedure, as detailed in the Staff Handbook.

If you feel that you have in any way been disadvantaged, we urge you to report the matter. Our first priority will be to investigate your concerns and seek to resolve the issue to your satisfaction.

7. Monitoring and Responsibilities

RPS will monitor and regularly review the operation of this Policy, and expects all employees to co-operate by providing relevant information, where necessary. All such information will be treated as strictly confidential and used solely for this purpose.

Overall responsibility for the application of the RPS Equality and Diversity Policy is held by Graham Rothwell who, together with other members of the management team, is also responsible for communicating the policy to all employees.

8. And in conclusion.....

Finally, RPS asks and expects all employees to conduct themselves in a manner in which the Company can take pride, and to accept their part in promoting equality, diversity, and non-discriminatory behaviour.



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