

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Equal Opportunities Policy

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Purpose of this document

Aspired Futures (AF) is committed to providing and promoting opportunities for staff and job applicants. We are committed to creating a working environment which enables everyone to work to the best of their skills and abilities and without the threat of discrimination or harassment arising.

Details of Policy

AF pride ourselves on treating all members of staff equally, irrespective of their or their “Associated Persons” gender, sex, pregnancy or maternity status, marital status, race, colour, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment (“Protected Characteristics”). An Associated Person may be a member of staff’s family, friends or other dependants.

All employees are required to comply with their obligations to promote a working environment free from discrimination. You should treat your colleagues, customers and members of the public as you would expect to be treated yourself and respect the Protected Characteristics of others.

Discrimination

Discrimination can take a number of different forms:-

- Treating someone less favourably because of one or more protected Characteristic i.e. rejecting a job applicant because they are a different race or are pregnant. This is known as direct discrimination.
- Applying an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which, although applied equally across all employees or job applicants, places some individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic, at a disadvantage i.e. requiring job applicants to have 10 years’ driving experience would prevent individuals under the age of 27 from applying for the role. Unless this requirement for 10 years’ driving experience can be justified this will be an act of indirect discrimination.
- Bullying or harassment
- Treating someone less favourably because they have raised a complaint of discrimination or given information about discrimination or supported a colleague's complaint. This is known as victimisation.
- There are additional acts of discrimination which extend to staff who suffer from a disability (whether mental or physical).
- The law governing equality within the workplace extends protection to members of staff who have an association with a person with a Protected Characteristic. For example, an act of discrimination may arise where a staff member is harassed or feels harassed because they have a child who is disabled.

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- You should also be aware that protection is extended to those who are “perceived” to have a Protected Characteristic but in fact don’t. For example, subjecting a member of staff to homophobic banter because it is perceived, albeit incorrectly, that the member of staff is not heterosexual.
- Although discrimination may appear to be complicated, members of staff are unlikely to breach our policy and the law as long as they treat all colleagues with respect and dignity regardless of a person’s Protected Characteristics.
- No one will be denied access to training or promotion on grounds of any Protected Characteristics.
- No member of staff will have their employment or engagement terminated because of a Protected Characteristic.
- Access to services, benefits and facilities will be made available to all staff equally having regard to their grade or position.

Equal Opportunities and Recruitment

- We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers from discrimination of any form during the recruitment process. Our application and interview process are reviewed regularly to ensure that they do not put any particular group at a disadvantage.
- We will not ask unnecessary questions about an applicant’s personal affairs during the recruitment process. Questions about a prospective employee’s health will usually be left until the offer stage unless the questions are raised to identify any particular needs for the recruitment process, for a genuine occupation need or because we wish to establish at the outset the ability of a candidate to perform an intrinsic feature of the job i.e. heavy lifting.
- As part of the recruitment process we will require all prospective employees to produce appropriate ID (originals must be produced) to demonstrate that individual’s legal right to work in the UK before employment is allowed to commence.
- We may, as part of any equal opportunities monitoring programme, request job applicants to complete an Equal Opportunities Form which will be detachable from the main application and used solely for the purpose of monitoring equal opportunities.

Equal Opportunities and Disability

- If an applicant is unable to attend an interview or other recruitment stage for any reason, we will consider any reasonable adjustments that may assist the applicant in participating fully in the recruitment process and being given an equal opportunity to be considered for any vacancy.
- Similarly as an employee of AF, we encourage you to discuss any condition you may have with us so that we can help you overcome or minimise any difficulty you may be experiencing in the workplace (whether a physical feature or compliance with a policy or procedure) or in the performance of your duties. This will allow AF to explore any reasonable adjustments that could be made to keep you in employment or, where absent from work, to facilitate a return to work.

Equal Opportunities and Training

- As part of the induction process, you will be provided with suitable training concerning equal opportunities.
- We will monitor staff training needs and where a training gap is identified, all staff will be given access to suitable training to ensure they are fully aware of their obligations.
- If any member of staff feels they require additional support and training in this area, they should contact their line manager accordingly.