



The Interclass Group Diversity Policy

POLICY

What is Managing Diversity?

'Managing Diversity' is a more effective way of dealing with equal opportunities issues. It emphasises the business and personal benefits that accrue from valuing the differences between people, rather than just complying with the law.

Organisations that grasp the additional business opportunities generated by managing diversity effectively are far more likely to enjoy sustained competitive advantage than those who do not.

Why is it Important?

- It is essential that we attract and retain the most talented people to continue to compete successfully in the construction market. Skills and ability are not, for example, the preserve of one particular ethnic group or one gender, by recognising this we can widen our recruitment pool and maximise the potential of our existing staff.
- We are committed to providing service excellence to all our customers and we believe that this can be better achieved by a workforce that values and reflects the diversity of our society.
- The UK is an increasingly diverse society. In order to enhance business opportunities we should reflect and value that diversity in our advertising and marketing strategies.
- It has been established that employee motivation and commitment increase if people feel valued and perceive that they are being treated fairly. Evidence from a range of sources also indicates that diversity results in more creativity and higher productivity.
- Finally, but not least, there are a number of laws that set out how employers and individuals should act. The most important ones are: Equal Pay Act 1970; Sex Discrimination Act 1975; Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Avoiding Assumptions

Care should be taken to ensure that decisions and actions are not influenced by stereotypical views - examples of such assumptions are:

- Ethnic minorities lack qualifications.
- Women with young children are less committed to their work.
- Disabled employees are more likely to be sick than the average employee.
- Older workers lack ambition and enthusiasm.
- Part timers are less committed to their work than full timers.

Recruitment and Selection

Every effort should be made to attract applications from all sections of society and to ensure fair treatment throughout the recruitment process. This will include:

- Checking that job and candidate specifications are relevant and non-discriminatory
- Ensuring that the wording and images used in job adverts reflect and appeal to all sections of society
- Using advertising media that reach all sections of society
- Communicating our policy to recruitment and employment agencies
- Short listing only those people whose skills and qualifications most closely match the candidate specification
- Asking fair and consistent questions at interview
- Keeping records of the recruitment and selection process, including interviews
- Monitoring recruitment and selection to ensure equality of opportunity throughout the process and, if necessary, taking steps to eliminate any discriminatory practices



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Interview Technique

When interviewing job applicants, staff should ask fair and consistent questions which focus on job performance issues rather than the candidate's private life.

It is unlawful to ask candidates about their family commitments or medical history unless they are clearly relevant to the job and are asked of all candidates.

The following are examples of assumptions which should NOT be made and questions which should NOT be asked:

- Are you planning to get engaged or married?
- Do you have children? If so, how old are they?
- What is your husband's employment?
- What would your husband think about you working late?

Acceptable questions are:

- How many days have you had off sick in the last 12 months?
- If asked to work extra hours at short notice, would you be able to do so?
- This job involves some travelling away from home, would that pose any problems for you?

Candidates who feel that the questions they have been asked at interview are discriminatory in terms of race, gender, marital status or disability, have the right to make a complaint to an Employment Tribunal, which can award unlimited compensation.

Promotion and Career Development

When making decisions on promotions and career development, managers should focus on employees as individuals with particular talents and experiences, rather than make assumptions based on their race, gender, marital status or disability.

Where, for example, jobs have been undertaken mainly by one gender or race in the past, efforts should be made to encourage others to apply for these posts.

Flexible working, such as job-sharing, can also assist the Group to retain the skills of valued employees who wish to continue their careers but who may have, for example, caring responsibilities outside their work.

Training

The role of training is to improve performance in the job to develop skills and to prepare individuals for other roles and responsibilities.

As with promotion and career development, managers should focus on the development needs of individuals. For example, priority should not be given to training a man in preference to a woman and it should not be assumed that family commitments of either men or women will limit their career ambitions.

All training materials should be checked to ensure that the language and images used in them reflect the diversity of our staff and customers. Every effort will be made to accommodate the specific needs of disabled staff. A range of training options, such as open learning and computer based training will be offered to ensure that all staff has equal access to training irrespective of location or hours of work.



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Grievance and Discipline

If any employee believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against they should make a complaint using the Group's Grievance Procedure.

Likewise, if any employee is found to have breached the Group's Managing Diversity Policy they may be subject to disciplinary action under the Group Disciplinary Procedures, which in serious cases may result in dismissal.

Monitoring

Human Resources will maintain records of the age, race, gender, marital status and disability of job applicants and existing employees. However, it is the responsibility of managers to apply the Managing Diversity Policy at local level.

Any patterns of under-representation (for example, where one gender or race appears to have a consistently reduced chance of promotion) should be fully investigated in conjunction with HR and if possible, any discriminatory practices identified and eliminated.

Disabled Staff

The Group recognises its responsibility towards disabled staff and seeks to eliminate unjustified discrimination on the grounds of disability by:

- Recognising the wealth of talent and skill disabled people possess
- Interviewing all disabled job applicants who meet the minimum selection criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- Ensuring that all disabled employees are smoothly and effectively inducted into the Group
- Identifying and providing any 'reasonable adjustments' to working arrangements or the working environment necessary for the effective performance of their job
- Asking disabled employees at least once a year what the Group can do to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work
- Making every effort to retain employees who become disabled whilst in the employment of the Group
- Taking action to ensure that key staff develop an awareness of disability needs to make these commitments work
- Reviewing each year these commitments, what has been achieved and planning ways to improve on them and letting employees know about the progress

The Group also recognises its duties towards disabled customers and is committed to eliminating unjustified discrimination against customers on the grounds of disability. It will not therefore unreasonably:

- Refuse or deliberately omit to provide its services to disabled customers
- Provide its services on worse terms, in a worse manner, or to a lower standard on the grounds of disability

Fail to make one of the following 'reasonable adjustments' where this would assist disabled customers to better access our services:

- Make changes to our policies, procedures or practices
- Provide auxiliary aids or services
- Provide our services by an alternative method of service delivery where a physical barrier prevents, or makes it unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use our services



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Age

It is important that employees of all ages are encouraged to contribute to their full potential and that age is not seen as an unnecessary barrier to recruitment, promotion or training. This will involve:

- Basing employment decisions on objective, job related criteria
- Encouraging employees of all ages to develop their careers
- Ensuring that staff of all age groups participate in training and have the chance to improve their skills and experience
- Avoiding assumptions about the physical abilities and career intentions of older job applicants or employees

Dignity at Work

All employees have a right to be treated with dignity and respect whilst at work and have an equal responsibility to treat their colleagues similarly. Interclass Group of Companies regards bullying and harassment of any and every kind as wholly unacceptable. It is the Group's intention to create a climate free from bullying and harassment and in which all staff feel confident to raise concerns of this kind and have them dealt with quickly, sensitively and effectively.

Signed on behalf of **The Interclass Group**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C M Watkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

C M Watkins – MCIQB Chairman
The Interclass Group Wolverhampton

Review Date: **2nd January 2019**