

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

1. Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make the best use of their skills and in which all decisions are based on merit.
- 1.2. All employees have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not to treat job applicants, temporary or agency workers, contractors or any other employee less favourably than others because of their:
 - 1.2.1. Age;
 - 1.2.2. An actual, suspected or perceived disability;
 - 1.2.3. Gender reassignment,
 - 1.2.4. Marital or civil partner status
 - 1.2.5. Pregnancy or maternity
 - 1.2.6. Race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin);
 - 1.2.7. Religion or similar belief
 - 1.2.8. Sex; or
 - 1.2.9. Sexual orientation
- 1.3. These characteristics of an individual are referred to collectively as “protected characteristics” and (with a few minor exceptions) decisions about an individual that are influenced in any way by any of these protected characteristics will be regarded as unlawful discrimination and may result in disciplinary action.
- 1.4. It is also an act of unlawful discrimination to make decisions about an individual based on your perception of them as having one of more of these protected characteristics or because you believe they may or do associate with other people with one of more of these protected characteristics.
- 1.5. This policy also applies to decisions about third parties with whom we may have dealings including clients, customers, suppliers and anyone else with whom you come into contact during the course of your employment. Decisions affecting them based on actual or perceived protected characteristics may also amount to unlawful discrimination.

2. Equality in the workplace

2.1. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity apply to all aspects of employment including job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

2.2. Recruitment and selection

2.2.1. We aim to ensure that no job applicant is treated less favourably than another because of any of the protected characteristics referred to above, and that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

2.2.2. Applicants are assessed on the basis of the requirements of the role they are applying for and, in appropriate circumstances, we may consider adjusting the role to suit good candidates. Interviews will focus on the skills and experience required for the role and selection will be based on merit.

2.3. Job offers

2.3.1. Job offers will be conditional on candidates being eligible to work in the UK. We will not make any assumptions about a person's eligibility and every potential employee will be required to provide appropriate evidence of this.

2.3.2. Job offers may be conditional on a candidate being physically and/or mentally capable of performing the key requirements of the role and we may require the candidate to undergo a health assessment in appropriate circumstances. A candidate will not be rejected for health reasons without further consultation and consideration of any adjustments that could be made to enable the candidate to perform the role.

2.3.3. A candidate's personal circumstances, age or beliefs will not normally have any bearing on our decision whether or not to offer him/her the role.

2.4. Training and promotion

2.4.1. Training requirements are identified through regular appraisals and the provision of training and opportunities for promotion will be based on merit.

2.5. Terms of employment

2.5.1. Pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment are related to the specific role and not to the individual in the role.

2.5.2. Exceptions may be made to accommodate an individual's specific requirements, for example in relation to flexible working, in order to enable an employee with a physical or mental impairment to perform a role, or to accommodate an older or younger worker in a role.

2.5.3. Some employees may be entitled to enhanced benefits because of their particular circumstances, for example maternity or adoption leave.

2.5.4. If employees are transferred to us from another business (TUPE) we will normally have to honour their existing terms and conditions and this may result in discrepancies in terms of employment that cannot be avoided.

2.6. Management decisions

2.6.1. Managers are required to manage employees in a fair and consistent manner and to be objective when making decisions that affect them.

2.6.2. Your protected characteristics will not play a part in management decisions unless they are relevant and it is appropriate to take them into account in the particular circumstances.

2.6.3. You will have the right to appeal against a decision or raise a grievance if you believe that a manager has not applied our principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity to you.

3. Confidentiality

3.1. Where possible information about or relating to your protected characteristics will be kept confidential and disclosed on a "need to know" basis or with your prior consent. Information of a personal and/or sensitive nature is processed strictly in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

4. Co-operation

4.1. All employees have a duty to co-operate with us in ensuring that our principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity are upheld. If you have concerns that they have been/are being compromised in any way (either in relation to you personally or in respect of someone else) you are encouraged to raise your concerns in confidence with your manager, or a more senior manager.

5. Responsibility for implementing this policy

5.1. All employees are responsible for ensuring and maintaining our principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity and this policy applies at all levels within the Company regardless seniority or status.

5.2. Managers are responsible for ensuring that these principles are upheld and for ensuring that employees and others (contractors' agency workers, temps etc) for whom they are responsible have read this policy, are aware of its requirements and aware that breach of the provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

5.3. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Signed



Dr Lawrence Mockett BSc PhD PGDip FGS
Joint Managing Director
Southern Testing Laboratories
January 2020