

KNIGHT GROUP

J. L. KNIGHT ROADWORKS LTD

PART 1.8 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The purpose of this policy statement is to proclaim and emphasise the commitment of the Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) to afford equal opportunity for all employees. It affirms that both management and staff will rigorously observe the principles and actively pursue the objective set out in this statement.

It is the policy of Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) that advancement, employment and training within the organisation will be based on merit subject to the candidates possessing, where required, relevant experience and qualifications. Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) will afford equality of treatment regardless of age, colour, and disability, ethnic or national origins, political opinion, race, religious belief, marital status, sex or sexual orientation.

There is a legal framework to protect individuals from unfair discrimination. Discrimination should be taken to be acting in a way, which places an individual, or company of individuals at a disadvantage or treats them unfairly on the basis of the factors exemplified at 1.2 above. Such factors are irrelevant in assessment process. The existence of law cannot of itself ensure workplace equality policies will work effectively. This will only be achieved if staff, at all levels, examine critically their attitudes to people and ensure discriminatory factors do not influence the judgements they make. Staff should be aware of the forms which discrimination can take, guard against them and avoid any action, which might encourage others to treat people unfairly.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs where a conscious decision is taken to apply a condition, which excludes people, based on age, colour, disability, religious belief etc. Indirect discrimination occurs where a condition or requirement is applied equally but is of such a nature that it would limit the participation of a particular company of people, i.e., the company would constitute a considerably smaller proportion of those who could comply with that condition or requirement.

Care should always be taken to guard against the more subtle and unconscious varieties of discrimination, which may not easily be perceived. These may result from general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of particular company (for example the disabled) which are allowed to influence the treatment of individuals or company. They may also take the form of applying conditions or requirements, without considering whether they operate disproportionately to the disadvantage of particular companies. Unconscious discrimination may show itself in several ways:

- Staff may be directed to particular types of work on the basis of these general assumptions without sufficient regard to the specific experience, knowledge or qualifications of the individual.
- Preconceptions about the ability of any companies of staff to supervise may be allowed to affect recruitment or promotion to supervisory positions.
- The allocation of work, and the recruitment or promotion of individuals into particular posts, may be affected by assumptions about the reactions of other staff and/or members of the public: and
- There is a risk that "double standards" may be used in making judgements of merit, and that different standards may be used for different companies of staff.

These and similar kinds of behaviour may occur without conscious intention to discriminate and without giving rise to complaints by those affected. Line managers should take particular care to be seen to be impartial in their dealings with all staff. When interviewing any individual - whether in job appraisal reviews or in course of day to day business - they should ensure that their own conduct accords with the policy in this statement and take appropriate action to deal with any difficulties which appear to arise from lack of impartiality by any member of staff.

This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The intention is to comply as much with the spirit as with the letter of the legislation and to establish and pursue an effective policy of promoting equal opportunity.

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The Knight Group (J.L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) policy should be clearly communicated to all levels of management and staff and it should also be made known to potential applicants. To this end, all existing members of staff and all recruits will receive a copy of this statement and its contents will be reflected as appropriate in training courses, circulars and guidance to recruitment and promotion panels. It will also be made clear to potential applicants through career literature and job advertisements that Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) is an Equal Opportunity Employer. For example, advertisements seeking applicants may include a statement that an imbalance in a particular company such as males/females or Protestants/Roman Catholics exists and applications from that company would be particularly welcome.

Implementation

The Board of Directors will ensure that all staff for whom he/she has responsibility is aware of the Knight Group (J.L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) policy on equal opportunity, and that there is no discrimination of any kind. Line managers are responsible to The Board of Directors for ensuring that all staff for whom they have responsibility is aware of the Knight Group (J.L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) policy on equal opportunity and that there is no discrimination of any kind. For the policy to be effective, it must be adopted at all levels throughout the organisation. Employees who act contrary to this policy and who commit acts of illegal discrimination or harassment will be liable to disciplinary action.

Information systems

A comprehensive system will be established to monitor the composition of the workforce and the application of this policy in areas such as recruitment, promotion etc. Accurate and up-to-date information will be provided to NIPSA and the statutory body (Equality Commission) in such a way as to protect the anonymity of individuals.

Recruitment, Promotion and Training

As an Equal Opportunity Employer, it is the aim of Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) to tap the entire labour market. Advertisements, whether internal or external, must not indicate, or appear to indicate, an intention to unfairly discriminate in selection for recruitment, promotion, training or transfer. Care must be taken to ensure that nothing is said about KNIGHT Companies policies or activities, which might be interpreted as reflecting any form of discrimination.

Selection - interviewing criteria and any tests will be formulated to ensure that they are related to the requirements, roles and responsibilities of each position being filled and that they are not discriminatory. These criteria should be included in the information sent to prospective candidates about any scheme of recruitment.

Selection and promotion panel decisions and reasons for such decisions should be recorded at each stage of the selection and promotion process. Each panel member will be required to sign and date his or her documentation. All documentation will be retained for a period consistent with advice contained in the Equal Opportunity and Fair Employment Codes of Practice and may be placed in the public domain under judicial proceedings.

Training and information can play a major part in the promotion of equal opportunity. Staff are encouraged to take advantage of relevant training in so far as any budgetary or other limitations will permit. The Board of Directors will ensure that all those with managerial and supervisory responsibilities perform their duties with full knowledge of the implications of the equal opportunities legislation.

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Career Development

When reporting on staff, line managers should base their assessments solely on an objective assessment of the individual's capabilities, performance and inherent potential. Reports should not reflect any assumptions or prejudices of the line manager about the individuals being reported on, for example, about whether or not they are likely to leave or the fact that they are part-time workers. Such influences would result in discrimination and will not be tolerated by management.

It is in the interest of the COMPANY that they retain trained competent staff. Consistent with justifiable needs of the work and of staff generally, the company will consider what steps can be taken to enable staff to reconcile Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) work with domestic responsibilities and to make them fully aware of the provisions of such matters as maternity leave, paternity leave, part-time work etc.

Complaints of Discrimination

All staff should be made aware of the relevant grievance procedures, which are available to them, including the right to request a formal written explanation of treatment they believe to be discriminatory.

Employees who think they have been discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status and who consider they have failed to secure adequate redress may seek help and advice from the Equality Commission and in the last resort have a legal right to take their case to an Industrial Tribunal. Employees who think they may have been discriminated against on grounds of religious belief may take a complaint to the Commission. It is the policy of Knight Group (J. L. Knight Roadworks Ltd) that staff who make a complaint in good faith in respect of alleged discrimination should be protected against victimisation.

Agreement

The policy and action outlined in this statement will be regularly reviewed so that progress towards the objective of equality of opportunity can be assessed and effective steps taken to remedy any deficiencies in the programme for equality of opportunity which may be identified by this assessment.



Dean Braybrook
Managing Director
For: Knight Group
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