

# **SKELTON** ELECTRICAL

## **QC019 - Equal opportunity and diversity policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy applies to all Skelton Electrical Ltd and all of its employees whether full time, part time or temporary employees and also to prospective employees.

All staff in a managerial or supervisory position from the director down are required to adhere to this policy in the discharge of their duties. Suppliers, sub contractors, consultants and agencies as part of our supply chain have responsibilities under the section titled 'Procurement and supply diversity'.

The policy covers 7 areas that we consider to be good practice, namely:

- Service delivery;
- Access to information and advice;
- Customer care satisfaction;
- Complaints;
- Procurement and supply diversity;
- Employee relations;
- Dealing with discrimination and harassment.

### **Policy statement**

Skelton Electrical is an equal opportunities employer and service provider and believes that diversity improves performance and service delivery in the community and the region where we work. The policy applies equally to the treatment of our employees, the organisation's customers, clients, suppliers, contractors and consultants to which we endeavour to ensure that our services are accessible to everyone.

The company believes its success is as a result of the dedication, experience and quality of our employees; we are committed to achieving equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.

Through this policy, we are committed to providing a supportive working environment, one which is based on mutual trust and which will ensure employees achieve their full potential.

The company strives to be an employer of choice and understands that, in order to achieve this, it must act responsibly, provide equality of opportunity and value diversity. We therefore aim to promote an inclusive culture where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, ensuring that opportunities we provide are open to all employees.

The company is committed to creating an inclusive environment, one where no employee or prospective employee, or service user receives less favourable treatment on any grounds. All recruitment advertisements will declare our equal opportunities statement.

The company aims to ensure that no employee, job applicant, service user or potential user will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin);
- Religion and belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment;
- Age;

- Marital and civil partnership status ;
- Disability;
- Pregnancy and maternity.

As a fully inclusive organisation, we also ensure less favourable treatment will not occur in areas such as:

- Political beliefs;
- Trade union membership;
- HIV status;
- Part time or fixed time work;

### **Monitoring equal opportunity**

The company will monitor and review service provision, employment selection decisions, personnel and pay practices, procedures and facilities in order to assess whether equal opportunity and diversity are being achieved and that there is no unlawful discrimination.

This policy will ensure that equality and diversity is embedded into the fabric of the company. As well as complying with legislation, Skelton Electrical receives advice and guidance given by specialist bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

### **Service delivery**

Skelton Electrical will ensure that all services are delivered to an equal standard to all customers and clients. The services will provide equality of opportunity and will be free from prejudice. In the provision of services we will endeavour at all times to act in a non-discriminatory, inclusive manner.

Skelton Electrical will:

- Deliver services that are flexible and responsive;
- Look for opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations, including voluntary and community groups, local authorities and housing associations to improve outcomes for specific communities or groups;
- Carry out regular accessibility audits to ensure that our premises comply with the requirements of the Equality Act.

### **Customer care satisfaction**

Skelton Electrical aims to ensure that all our customers are receiving the same high quality of services and that there is minimum disparity in satisfaction levels between different groups of customers and the majority.

The company is committed to seek the views of its Clients and Customers in order to identify areas upon which we can improve. To achieve this we will:

- Carry out regular analysis of satisfaction levels between different groups of customers for key service areas including overall satisfaction;
- Analyse/identify reasons for any disparity in satisfaction levels between specific groups and the majority, and address any identified problems/differentials.

### **Complaints**

Through the implementation of the customer complaints procedure we seek to handle complaints from customers fairly and with respect and professionalism, regardless of the personal characteristics of the person making the complaint.

Where required, assistance will be given to people who wish to make a complaint but have difficulty doing so because of their circumstances e.g. disability or English comprehension difficulties. This may be the provision of translation/interpretation services, printing of documents in large print or home visits to housebound/vulnerable people.

### **Procurement and supply diversity**

Skelton Electrical uses sub contractors, consultants and agencies to ensure its services are delivered efficiently, to high quality and representing best value. The company requires that contractors and suppliers of services comply with equal opportunities requirements. A copy of this policy will be provided to all sub contractors, consultants and suppliers appointed to work for or on behalf of Skelton Electrical.

All such organisations are required to ensure that in the delivery of services to the company they do not conflict with this policy.

The company will promote equality of opportunity by the following and ensure:

- Contractors/suppliers with more than twenty direct employees must have a written equal opportunities policy which complies with the relevant codes of practice;
- Contractors/suppliers with less than 20 direct employees and who do not have an equal opportunities policy will sign an undertaking to comply with the relevant codes of practice on equal opportunities;
- We will provide guidance, advice and training to contractors/suppliers on equality and diversity issues as appropriate;
- Contractors/suppliers will also be expected to take prompt and appropriate action against any member of their own workforce found in breach of this policy.

### **Employee relations**

Skelton Electrical recognises that it is important to treat everyone with equal dignity and respect. This includes respect for religion or other beliefs. We will endeavour to achieve equality of opportunity in the following ways:

- Regularly review our recruitment and selection processes to ensure that they are fair and transparent;
- The workforce will be representative of the diverse communities we serve;
- Use positive action to address workforce under-representation;
- All posts will be equally open to all members of under-represented sections of the community;
- Have policies and practices which are inclusive and respectful of the needs and wishes of different groups;
- Introduce relevant training for recruitment and selection;
- Seek ways to develop cultural awareness within our organisation;
- Monitor diversity of both applicants for employment and the workforce as well as staff promotion, take up of career developments, staff use of complaints and grievance procedures;
- Provide training for all Management and Supervisors on equality and diversity;
- Wherever reasonably practicable, undertake reasonable adjustments in relation to building access, equipment, working methods and arrangements with regards to staff, or new employees with disabilities;
- Flexible working arrangements will be offered to employees and workers to assist with individual personal circumstances, provided this does not conflict with service delivery commitments.

### **Dealing with discrimination and harassment**

Skelton Electrical is dedicated to achieving equality of opportunity and believes that discrimination, harassment and bullying are unacceptable on any grounds. Harassment can be a source of great stress to an individual. Behaviour constituting harassment is considered by the company to be a serious offence and is treated as such. The company will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of employees, customers or stakeholders by other employees, sub contractors, managers, directors, customers, contractors or members of the public in any circumstances.

Every employee, consultant, contractor and the like is expected to adhere to this policy. All claims of discrimination and harassment will be quickly and actively investigated in a sensitive manner.

## **Governance and responsibilities**

The company director will provide leadership and direction in relation to equality and diversity, and promote improvement. The director is aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them.

It is important that this policy is implemented and as such all employees have a collective responsibility and obligation to ensure that this policy is adopted and implemented successfully to comply with the legislation relating to discrimination.

It is the responsibility of the director to ensure that:

- All employees are aware of this policy;
- All supply chain members are aware of this policy;
- Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.

The director is also responsible for:

- The policy, its regular review and the achievement of its aims;
- Providing guidance and training;
- Ensuring that thorough investigation of complaints is carried out if necessary by an impartial or third party and that any findings are appropriately acted upon;

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they adhere to this policy;
- Ensuring that they do not behave in a way that treats others unfairly or that they unfairly discriminate against any other employee;
- Ensuring that they advise and alert management of any unfair discrimination if the matter cannot be resolved between themselves and another employee and that they do wish to make a formal complaint.

## **Implementation**

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the director. All managerial and supervisory staff have a particular responsibility for promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within their own areas.

Individual employees at all levels have responsibility for ensuring that equality of opportunity is continually provided and diversity is valued in all of the company's activities. All staff can be personally held liable in law for acts of discrimination that they commit, authorise, contribute to or condone in relation to other staff.

The company will not support any employee who has carried out acts or omissions of wilful, persistent or serious discrimination, domestic violence, victimisation or harassment.

All employees will be notified of the details of this policy and will be aware of its implications through the induction process.

## **Definitions**

**Direct discrimination** - Direct discrimination takes place when someone treats someone else less favourably than they would treat others in the same circumstances. For example: Refusing to offer a job to a person who has the required skills because they belong to a particular ethnic group.

**Indirect discrimination** - Indirect discrimination takes place when someone applies a condition or requirement to something which, although applied equally to all, some groups would have more difficulty meeting than others. For example: A specific height requirement for an employment position, which is not necessary to do the job. As men tend to be taller than women, the number of women who might be able to satisfy this requirement is likely to be less than the number of men.

**Discrimination by association** – Discrimination by association is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example: An employee is looking forward to a promised promotion. However, after they tell their boss that their mother, who lives at home, has had a stroke, the promotion is withdrawn. This may be discrimination because of association with a disabled person.

**Perceptual discrimination** - Perceptual discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. For example: An employee is 45 but looks much younger. Many people assume that he is in his mid 20s. He is not allowed to represent his company at a meeting because the director thinks that he is too young. The employee has been discriminated against on the perception of a protected characteristic.

**Institutional discrimination** - Institutional discrimination is a term used to describe the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service or employment condition to people because of their race, sex or disability.

**Racism** - A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

**Institutional racism** - Institutional racism is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

**Disability** - This is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Transgender** - Is a term to describe anyone that lives, or wishes to live, as a member of the opposite gender to his or her birth gender.

**Victimisation** - Is where a person or group is treated less favourably because they have pursued or it is suspected they might pursue their rights under the equal opportunities policy or the law via the internal complaint procedure, an external agency or legal proceedings.

**Harassment** - Unwanted conduct affecting dignity. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexuality, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

**Bullying** - Inappropriate and unwelcome behaviour that causes distress, alarm, apprehension or fear. It involves remarks, gestures, acts or omissions that can reasonably be described or perceived as intimidating.

**Prejudice** - Involves making a pre-judgement about something before experiencing or fully understanding the true concept of the situation. It can lead to the development of discriminatory attitudes about certain kinds of people, produce negative views about different lifestyles, different value systems, standards of behaviour and the value we place on other people's right to choose to be different.

**Stereotyping** - The pre-judgement of people based on assumptions. Assumptions made about individuals or groups are often based on false or misleading information and, without direct experience or proper judgement, have no validity.

**Positive discrimination** - Positive discrimination is the unlawful practice or policy of favouring individuals belonging to groups which suffer discrimination.

Positive action - Positive action involves taking proportionate steps to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage, to meet their needs or to participate, when the organisation reasonably thinks that people who share the protected characteristic suffer the disadvantage, or have needs that are different, or a disproportionately low number of such people participate in an activity. Examples would include setting equality targets (but not quotas which are unlawful); encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for employees from under-represented groups who show potential.

### **Legislation**

Skelton Electrical complies with the following list of statutory legislation and guidance within this policy:

- Equality Act 2010

### **Monitor and review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose. The director will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by receiving regular reports on its implementation. Changes in statute or case law and advice will also prompt a review of this policy.

The company will undertake a review of this policy whenever there are any relevant changes in statute, case law or good practice that will impact on this policy. The director will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.