



# Equal Opportunities Policy & Statement

## General Statement

**It is the aim of BLAC to be an equal opportunities employer. We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, age, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, and religious belief.**

We also oppose sexual, racial and other forms of harassment. We believe that it is in the company's best interest and those who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills available, are considered when employment and development opportunities arise. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, training and career development opportunities are based solely on objective, job related criteria and the merit of individuals. Any behaviour resulting in such unfavourable treatment will be considered contrary to our policy on equal opportunity and a matter for disciplinary action.

### Policy

This policy is to be implemented by BLAC. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment. This document expands on the company's Equal Opportunities Statement. Its purpose is to give guidance on the legal framework of the Race Relations, Sex Discrimination and Disability Acts and to set out our policy in relation to recruitment, training, appraisal and promotion. All staff are reminded of their obligation to ensure that this guide is followed.

The law on race, sex and disability has three aims:

- To eliminate race, sex and disability discrimination.
- To enable employers to develop equal opportunities in their business.
- To provide a complaints mechanism for any individual who believes they have suffered discrimination.

It is unlawful to discriminate on grounds of colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, race, religion, nationality - including citizenship, ethnic or national origins, marital status, or disability. It is illegal for an employer to discriminate in recruitment (including the arrangements made for recruitment), promotion, training or transfer, terms and conditions of employment and dismissal. Employers may also be liable for unlawful discrimination acts carried out by members of their staff in the course of their employment, unless they can show they took such steps as were reasonably practicable to prevent such acts.

Unlawful discrimination can take the following forms:

- **Direct Discrimination:** This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others in a similar circumstance on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, membership or non-membership of a trade union, spent convictions of ex-offenders, class, or religion.
- **Indirect Discrimination:** This occurs when a requirement or condition is applied which, whether intentionally or not, adversely affects one particular group more than another and cannot be strictly justified in terms of requirements for performing the job.

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### **Brownfield Land Assembly Company Limited**

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- **Harassment:** This is defined as unwanted, unreciprocated or uninvited comments, looks, actions, suggestions that is found objectionable and offensive and that might threaten an individual's job security, or create an intimidating working environment. The company requires all employees to respect each other and to understand that behaviour they find acceptable may not be regarded as such by others.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

In its recruitment literature BLAC emphasises that it is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Therefore, it is important that the policy is promoted in practice throughout the whole recruitment process of advertising, through to interviews and selection. It is our view that all vacancies should be made known as widely as possible. As appropriate, in relation to vacancies:

- Recruitment advertisements must be notified to the Personnel Manager. They should be placed in publications that are seen by a wide cross-selection of the community.
- Word of mouth recommendation should not be used as a side method of recruitment as it could perpetuate discriminatory practices that may exist.
- Employment agencies used must be made aware that the company is an equal opportunities employer.

Key employees who will be involved in the recruitment process should know the main provisions of equal opportunities legislation, which includes unlawful discrimination. Staff short listing candidates for interview should not allow themselves to be influenced by general assumptions about sexes, disabilities or ethnic minorities. It is essential that the recruitment process be based on objective criteria related to the needs of the job and that such criteria are applied equally to all applicants when inviting for interview and at interview. The criteria to be used should only be those skills, experience and qualifications that are directly relevant for the particular job.

### **Appraisal, Development and Training**

As with recruitment, decisions relating to training and promotion of employees should be related to objective criteria. Opportunities for training and promotion should be made known as widely as possible. The success of this policy is dependent of the co-operation and the commitment of all employees. We will monitor recruitment, training and promotion with a view to ensuring the equal opportunity policy is effective. We will therefore ensure that line managers receive appropriate training so that they are aware of the objectives of its policy and their responsibility.

### **Appraisal and Development**

- Line managers are to ensure that appraisal forms completed are measuring job performance and training needs,
- Decisions about development needs and promotion should be made on objective criteria.
- All employees should have access to training opportunities. The training needs of part time staff should receive equal priority to the training needs of their full-time counterparts.

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### **Record Keeping**

In order to analyse the progress of the equal opportunities policy, we operate a monitoring process. This also enables us to identify where there is under representation of specific groups. Information regarding ethnic origin, sex, age, and disability recorded.

### **Grievances**

#### **Informal**

Any employee who feels that they are being subjected to discriminatory conduct or minor instances of harassment are advised to make it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable and it must stop immediately. The Company recognises that there may be circumstances in which an employee does not wish to use the formal grievance process. In such case, they can raise the matter informally and in confidence with the personnel manager. If desired, the employee may be accompanied by a friend.

#### **Formal**

Where the informal method falls, or serious discrimination or harassment occurs, then our Grievance policy should be invoked. Breach of the company Equal Opportunity policy is regarded as disciplinary offence and will be addressed in accordance with our Disciplinary Policy. Both policies are displayed in our offices. Alternatively a copy may be requested from the Personnel Manager.

Signed by

**R J Barwick** Director

On behalf of BLAC (Brownfield Land Assembly Company)

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