

INTRODUCTION

1. Uniac is committed to supporting the principle of equal opportunities, and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, race, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion or belief or sexual orientation. We recognise that by meeting the needs of disabled employees we are likely to improve the quality of the services our employees provide and enable them to take up active roles within Uniac.
2. Our aim is to recruit, train and promote the best person for the job, to make full use of the talents and resources of all our employees and to create a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect.
3. All employees will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and will be obliged to co-operate to ensure that the policy is carried out effectively.
4. Any form of discrimination may be unlawful. Actions or omissions which amount to either a breach of this policy or to unlawful discrimination will be treated as a disciplinary offence resulting, if appropriate, in disciplinary action.

1. Definitions

- 1.1 “Discrimination” means less favourable and detrimental treatment on grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- 1.2 The law recognises three forms of discrimination:
 - 1.2.1 Direct discrimination. This occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another in relation to employment on grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
 - 1.2.2 Indirect discrimination. This occurs when a job requirement is applied equally to all but it has a disproportionate and detrimental effect on one section of the workforce, because fewer of that group can comply with it, *and* the requirement cannot be justified in relation to the job.
 - 1.2.3 Failure to make adjustments. In a case of disability if Uniac’s premises or equipment, materials or working arrangements put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage, then it is unlawful discrimination not to make any reasonable adjustment which remove or minimise that effect.
- 1.3 Harassment is a form of direct discrimination. It can be defined as unwanted and unwelcome behaviour which causes discomfort or upset to an individual and which has an adverse effect on working relationships. It creates an intimidating, hostile or humiliating work environment for the individual.
- 1.4 Victimisation is where a person is treated less favourably than another when they have made allegations, brought proceedings, given evidence or complained about the behaviour of someone who has been harassing or discriminating against them or others.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

- 2.1 This policy applies to recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, training, career development, promotion, grievance and disciplinary procedures and all other aspects of employment and of the working environment.
- 2.2 You are required to comply with this policy when dealing with other employees of Uniac and its members (including temporary or agency staff and consultants), job applicants, suppliers, customers and contacts of Uniac, and anyone else with whom you come into contact during the course of your employment.

3. RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 We will ensure that information about job opportunities is advertised as widely as possible in the circumstances to ensure that it reaches as much of the community as is reasonably possible.
- 3.2 All applications will be welcomed and will be considered on the relative merits of the applicant against the job and/or person specification for the position regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion or sexual orientation.
- 3.3 Job and person specifications will only include criteria which are objectively required for the duties and responsibilities of the vacancy.
- 3.4 If there is a genuine and lawful reason for limiting the vacancy to a particular group, this will be clearly stated, together with the grounds for it, on any advertisements. We retain the discretion to invite applications from individuals whose jobs might be at risk of redundancy, or who is being re-deployed for health or disability reasons, before advertising any post more widely.

4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

- 4.1 We will ensure that terms and conditions of employment are free from all forms of unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and apply equally regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- 4.2 We recognise that flexibility with regard to working patterns will assist the broadest range of people to work for Uniac. We will not reject any request for non-standard working patterns unless there is objective justification after careful consideration.
- 4.3 Grievance and disciplinary procedures will be operated without discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.

5. TRAINING, CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

- 5.1 All employees will be provided with the appropriate training (according to business need) to enable them to improve their performance and to achieve the performance standards and targets set regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- 5.2 We will also ensure that opportunities for training, career development are made equally available to all employees.
- 5.3 Promotion is based on personal merit and the reasonable requirements of the job regardless of colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, part-time or fixed term status, parental responsibilities, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation.

6. DISABILITY CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

We value the individual contribution of all employees and prospective employees from all sectors of the community. We are committed to facilitating the employment of disabled individuals wherever practicable, and to achieve that result it operates the following code of good practice:

Code of good practice on disability

- We will take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment, working practices and terms and conditions of employment do not prevent disabled people from taking up positions for which they are suitably qualified and the best person for the job.
- We will bear in mind the desirability of avoiding barriers to the employment of disabled people when acquiring and fitting out buildings with equipment and devising working practices.
- We will make reasonable adjustments to recruitment arrangements, to the working environment, to working practices and to terms and conditions of employment so as to ensure that no particular disabled person is placed at an unreasonable disadvantage.
- Any employee who becomes disabled whilst in employment will be given the full support of Uniac's directors to continue in their own job where practicable (and having put in place any reasonable adjustments), or to move to an alternative job appropriate to his/her experience and abilities, if available.
- We will encourage the participation of disabled employees to ensure that, wherever possible, employment practices recognise and meet their needs and we will consult disabled employees on action to make sure they develop and use their abilities at work.

If you know or believe you might be disabled, you are encouraged to discuss this a Uniac director to ensure you achieve your full potential and that we comply with our duties.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Failure to comply with this policy or to assist in preventing this policy to operate effectively is a disciplinary offence, which may lead to disciplinary action (including dismissal).

8. COMPLAINTS

- 8.1 If you believe that you have been unfairly discriminated against or subjected to harassment, contrary to this policy, you can make a complaint in accordance with Uniac's grievance policy. Alternatively, you can follow the procedure outlined below.
- 8.2 In the first instance you should talk to a Uniac director. However, if you feel unable to discuss the matter with one particular director you can speak to another director.
- 8.3 Following initial discussions with the appropriate Uniac director, you will be asked to choose one of the following options:
- 8.3.1 To decide that no further action is necessary (please note that in cases of serious discrimination or harassment, Uniac retains the discretion to pursue a formal investigation);
 - 8.3.2 To discuss the complaint with the individual who is alleged to have acted in a discriminatory way or caused offence (either directly or, in appropriate circumstances, with the assistance of a trained mediator);
 - 8.3.3 To ask the director to help resolve the matter through informal and/or discreet approaches; or
 - 8.3.4 To make a formal written complaint to a Uniac director.
- 8.4 Where a formal written complaint is made, a full investigation will be conducted and a full record of the progress and outcome of the investigation and any steps taken will be reported in writing to you at the earliest opportunity. Those conducting the investigation will not be parties directly involved in the allegation. In addition and where appropriate, you may ask that someone of the same sex is involved in the investigation.
- 8.5 The person investigating the complaint will firstly discuss the situation with you, and will then make arrangements to interview any individual(s) against you're your complaint has been made and any other people who can provide relevant evidence or other information, details of the complaint will be provided in writing, prior to any investigatory interview. It may be necessary to place anyone accused of harassment on suspension while the investigation is carried out, depending on the nature of the allegations.

- 8.6 Where a formal investigation has been conducted and it appears that some form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation has taken place, those responsible for such acts will be subject to disciplinary procedures, which will be conducted by the next level of line management. If the allegations surround a Uniac director then the next level of management will either be the lead director or a nomination from the Uniac board. Serious acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be regarded as gross misconduct and may lead to instant dismissal (i.e. Dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice).
- 8.7 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of a formal complaint you may ask for the matter to be reviewed by a different Uniac director.
- 8.8 We will do everything that is reasonably practicable to protect you from harassment, victimisation or discrimination where you make a complaint or assist in an investigation. Any acts of retaliation or intimidation against you will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- 8.9 If you maliciously makes an unfounded complaint you will be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Monitoring

We are committed to monitoring the effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy. We will undertake regular reviews into all aspects of our policies, procedures and practices in relation to recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, training, career development, promotion and grievance and discipline to identify any trends or patterns emerging and, if so, to analyse whether or not these are justified. We are committed to identifying and taking all steps necessary to eliminate any unjustified discrimination which is revealed by this monitoring process.

Note that the equal opportunities policy and complaints procedure set out above does not form part of your contract of employment and may be changed by Uniac in its absolute discretion from time to time.