



Melhuish & Saunders Equal Opportunities Policy

Equal Opportunities

Melhuish & Saunders Ltd is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.

It is our policy to treat all job applicants and employees fairly and equally, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. Furthermore, we will monitor the composition of the workforce and introduce positive action if it appears that this policy is not fully effective.

Through this policy and procedure and the training and development of managers and staff, we will do all we can to promote good practice in this area in order to reduce the likelihood of discrimination or harassment occurring.

Procedure

1. Melhuish & Saunders Ltd is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about good employment practices and efficient use of our most valuable asset, our employees. Every manager and employee has *personal* responsibility for the implementation of the policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of the policy, or other questions, should be addressed to **Darryl Mitchard**, as should any requests for special training.
2. In line with the Equalities Act (2010), we will not discriminate against protected characteristics i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
3. The policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and to every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment.
4. Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees on the basis of length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience.
5. The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees whether full time, part time, casual, temporary, seasonal or under contract. The policy also applies equally to the treatment of the organisation's customers/clients and suppliers.
6. Employees should note that the imposition of any provision, criterion or practice which has a disproportionate adverse impact on someone on grounds of his or her age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity will be unlawful unless it can be

justified on grounds of business need (by way of example a requirement to speak or write English to a standard of fluency would discriminate indirectly against many people of overseas nationality). In the event of any query or doubt, **Darryl Mitchard** should be consulted.

7. When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, we will consider carefully whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job based reason why they are necessary.
8. We will comply with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and associated Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations 2011, which includes operating an open retirement age for all employees and not a default retirement age of 65.
9. We will, whenever it is operationally possible to do so, agree to any request from an employee who is planning to retire to reduce his or her hours of work with a view to a phased retirement. The precise reduction to the number of days or hours worked will be discussed individually in each case.
10. Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with the employee what “reasonable adjustments” to their job or working conditions or environment might assist them in the performance of their duties. The employee will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that they believe would be helpful to them. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisation to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee.
11. Any member of staff may use the complaints procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to sexual or racial harassment or harassment on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, or pregnancy and maternity, then the complaint may be raised directly with **Darryl Mitchard**. We are committed to ensuring that staff feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.
12. Where an employee is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct, then he or she may implement Melhuish & Saunders Ltd grievance procedure. In this instance, the person who made the false accusation will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.
13. All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their age, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and any disability they may have. The

organisation guarantees that the information provided on this form will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy.

14. The composition of the workforce and of job applicants will be monitored on a regular basis. Should inequalities become apparent, positive action may, if appropriate, be taken to redress the imbalance, including such measures as:
 - a) Advertising jobs in ethnic or female interest publications, as appropriate
 - b) Introducing assertiveness training
 - c) Introducing English language training
 - d) Encouraging under-represented or disadvantaged groups to apply for employment or training
 - e) Making contact with disabled people via the local Job Centre.

15. This policy will be monitored on a regular basis by the senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely with a view to identifying measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.