



SKIPTON INTERNATIONAL

Equal opportunities policy

1. Introduction

This document sets out Skipton International's (Skipton's) policy on Equal Opportunities at work. We recognise that people are our greatest asset and expect everyone within Skipton to adhere to the policy and ensure its consistent application at all times.

2. Statement of policy

2.1 Skipton is committed to a policy of treating all colleagues and job applicants equally at all times. No colleague, or potential colleague, shall be treated less favourably on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin, disability, reduced hours or fixed term status, trade union membership, nor be disadvantaged by the imposition of qualifications or requirements which cannot reasonably be justified as necessary on operational or business grounds.

2.2 There should be no discrimination against disabled persons on the grounds of their disability where they are able to carry out a job within the medically advised limits of that disability, or where reasonable adjustments can be made to enable them to fulfil the position applied for.

2.3 The principle of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity applies equally to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers and suppliers by members of our workforce and also, in some circumstances, ex-colleagues.

2.4 Skipton will recruit, train, develop and promote on the basis of merit, ability and job requirements.

3. To whom does this apply?

3.1 This policy applies to Skipton's colleagues, whether permanent, temporary, casual, reduced hours or on fixed-term contracts.

3.2 All of the above have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, and therefore to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other colleagues, whether junior or senior to them. In some situations, Skipton may be at risk of being held responsible for the acts of individual colleagues and will not therefore tolerate any discriminatory practices or behaviour.

3.3 The policy statement above applies equally to the treatment of ex colleagues, job applicants and individuals such as agency staff and consultants and volunteers who are not our colleagues, but who work at Skipton.

4. Scope

4.1 Skipton will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy, trade union membership, or reduced hours or fixed-term status.

4.2 This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy.

4.3 Skipton will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of workers' religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities.

5. Forms of discrimination

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is put at a disadvantage for a reason related to one or more of the grounds set out in paragraph 4.1. For example, rejecting an applicant of one race because it is considered they would not "fit in" on the grounds of their race could be direct discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs where an individual is subject to an unjustified provision, criterion or practice which puts them at a particular disadvantage because of, for example, their sex or race. For example, a height requirement would be likely to eliminate proportionately more women than men. If this criteria cannot be objectively justified for a reason unconnected with sex, it would be indirectly discriminatory on the grounds of sex. Discrimination also includes victimisation (less favourable treatment because of action taken to assert legal rights against discrimination or to assist a colleague in that regard) and harassment (see Skipton's Dignity At Work Policy).

6. Recruitment

6.1 All recruitment advertisements, both internal and external, shall require only those qualities which are essential to the performance of the role and shall describe vacancies in such a way that no suitably qualified person is deterred from applying with no preference implied for any particular groups of applicants.

6.2 The selection process shall be carried out in a consistent manner at all levels, irrespective of the applicant's race, colour, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, marital status or age and be based on agreed criteria.

6.3 Where selection tests are used these should be relevant to the position and administered and scored in a consistent and non-discriminatory way.

6.4 All colleagues involved in interviewing should only ask questions which are job related and non-discriminatory and interpret answers in a similar way.

7. Training and career development

7.1 Training is provided for all colleagues to enhance the level of skills and knowledge and to allow more effective performance in the job.

7.2 Skipton is committed that all colleagues should receive an equal opportunity to develop their potential and achieve career progression through a consistent approach based on objective appraisal and assessment.

7.3 Specific training will be provided to those colleagues involved in the management, control and implementation of Equal Opportunities to allow them to satisfy the requirements of the policy.

8. Terms and conditions

Skipton does not discriminate with regard to pay or other conditions of employment, nor in the provision of benefits, facilities and services.

9. Breaches of the policy

A Grievance Procedure is available to any individual colleagues who may wish to raise a complaint regarding Equal Opportunities. This will be conducted in the strictest confidence and will not prejudice either current employment or future career prospects.

If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds listed in this policy, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Dignity At Work Policy.

If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on one of the grounds listed or otherwise act in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. Skipton will always take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

As this policy applies equally to Skipton's workers' relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier, you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

10. Dignity at work

This area is fully covered in a dignity at work policy.

11. Implementation and control

11.1 The Equal Opportunities policy will be clearly communicated to everyone internally and also to any external agencies who may be affected.

11.2 All Human Resources policies, procedures and practices will be closely monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are both non-discriminatory and represent best practice in the area of Equal Opportunities.

11.3 Responsibility for implementation and control of Skipton's Equal Opportunities Policy lies with the Managing Director.

11.4 Colleagues at all levels within Skipton have responsibility for ensuring that the policy is adhered to consistently.

11.5 Human Resources will provide support and advice on any Equal Opportunities issues which may arise.