

# Equal Opportunities Policy

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## Statement

Virtua is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age (“Protected Characteristics”).

We aim to ensure that our staff achieves their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. We have adopted the following equal opportunities policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

## 1 FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination by or against an employee is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination can be direct or indirect and may occur even when unintentional.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the **Protected Characteristics like**

- age
- gender
- sexual orientation
- ethnicity/ nationality
- religion
- disability
- medical history

For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race because they would not ‘fit in’ would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where **someone is** disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same **Protected Characteristic like:**

- age
- gender
- sexual orientation
- ethnicity/ nationality
- religion
- disability
- medical history

at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

Harassment is another form of discrimination and occurs when someone is subjected to unwanted conduct, relating to a Protected Characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation is also prohibited and can occur when someone who has complained about discrimination or harassment is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint or have supported someone else's complaint.

We are committed to ensuring that all our staff and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.

## **2 IMPLEMENTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria. Our selection procedures are reviewed from time to time to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving our objectives and for avoiding unlawful discrimination.

The requirements of job applicants and existing members of staff who have or have had a disability will be reviewed to ensure that wherever possible, reasonable adjustments are made to enable them to enter into or remain in employment with us. Promotion opportunities, benefits and facilities of employment will not be unreasonably limited and every reasonable effort will be made to ensure that disabled staff participates fully in the workplace.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Appropriate training will be provided to enable staff to implement and uphold our commitment to equality of opportunity.

Working patterns will be reviewed so as to enable us to offer flexible working to staff with childcare responsibilities where possible. Where necessary; special provision will be made for training of staff returning to work following a break for domestic reasons.

We will also review working patterns in relation to staff with religious commitments, and the Company will offer flexible working patterns where possible.

All staff have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Breach of the equal opportunity policy is potentially a serious disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds is entitled to raise the matter through the grievance procedure.

Signed: 

Date: 09<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Andy Richards (Chief Executive Officer)