

Nationwide Services Group Limited - Equality & Diversity		
Approved:  Managing Director	Page: 1 of 8	31 st January 2017

1. Policy Statement

Nationwide Services Group Ltd (“the Company”) is committed to achieving a working environment which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. This Policy aims to remove unfair and discriminatory practices within the Company and to encourage full contribution from its diverse community. The Company is committed to actively opposing all forms of discrimination.

The Company also aims to provide a service that does not discriminate against its clients and customers in the means by which they can access the services and goods supplied by the Company. The Company believes that all employees and clients are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

2. Objectives of this Policy

- To prevent, reduce and stop all forms of unlawful discrimination in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure that recruitment, promotion, training, development, assessment, benefits, pay, terms and conditions of employment, redundancy and dismissals are determined on the basis of capability, qualifications, experience, skills and productivity.

3. Designated Officer

Name: Jane Phang

Position: H.R. Manager

4. Definition of Discrimination

Discrimination is unequal or differential treatment which leads to one person being treated more or less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same or similar circumstances on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Discrimination may be direct or indirect.

5. Types of Discrimination

5.1 Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

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5.2 Indirect Discrimination

This is the application of a policy, criterion or practice which the employer applies to all employees but which is such that:

- It is detrimental to a considerably larger proportion of people from the group that the person the employer is applying it to represents;
- The employer cannot justify the need for the application of the policy on a neutral basis; and
- The person to whom the employer is applying it suffers detriment from the application of the policy.

Example: A requirement that all employees must be 6ft tall if that requirement is not justified by the position would indirectly discriminate against employees with an oriental ethnic origin, as they are less likely to be able to fulfil this requirement.

5.3 Harassment

This occurs when a person is subjected to unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

5.4 Victimisation

This occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have brought or intend to bring proceedings or they have given or intend to give evidence.

6. Unlawful Reasons for Discrimination

6.1 Sex

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, marital status, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment or transgender status. This applies to men, women and those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment. Sexual harassment of men and women can be found to constitute sex discrimination.

Example: Asking a woman during an interview if she is planning to have any (more) children constitutes discrimination on the ground of gender.

6.2 Age

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their age. This applies to people of all ages. This does not currently apply to the calculation of redundancy payments.

6.3 Disability

It is not permissible to treat a disabled person less favourably than a non-disabled person. Reasonable adjustments must be made to give the disabled person as much access to any services and ability to be employed, trained, or promoted as a non-disabled person.

6.4 Race

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their race, the colour of their skin, their nationality or their ethnic origin.

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6.5 Sexual Orientation

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their sexual orientation. For example, an employer cannot refuse to employ a person because (s)he is homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

It is not permissible to treat a person less favourably because of their religious beliefs or their religion or their lack of any religion or belief.

7. Positive Action in Recruitment

Under the Equality Act 2010, positive action in recruitment and promotion applies as of 6 April 2011. 'Positive action' means the steps that the Company can take to encourage people from groups with different needs or with a past record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for positions within the Company.

If the Company chooses to utilise positive action in recruitment, this will not be used to treat people with a protected characteristic more favourably, it will be used only in tie-break situations, when there are two candidates of equal merit applying for the same position.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

The Company has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. These may include:

- Making adjustments to premises;
- Re-allocating some or all of a disabled employee's duties;
- Transferring a disabled employee to a role better suited to their disability;
- Relocating a disabled employee to a more suitable office;
- Giving a disabled employee time off work for medical treatment or rehabilitation;
- Providing training or mentoring for a disabled employee;
- Supplying or modifying equipment, instruction and training manuals for disabled employees;
- or
- Any other adjustments that the Company considers reasonable and necessary provided such adjustments are within the financial means of the Company.
- If an employee has a disability and feels that any such adjustments could be made by the Company, they should contact the Designated Officer.

9. Responsibility for the Implementation of this Policy

All employees, subcontractors and agents of the Company are required to act in a way that does not subject any other employees or clients to direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of their race, sex, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation.

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The co-operation of all employees is essential for the success of this Policy. Senior employees are expected to follow this Policy and to try to ensure that all employees, subcontractors and agents do the same.

Employees may be held independently and individually liable for their discriminatory acts by the Company and in some circumstances an Employment Tribunal may order them to pay compensation to the person who has suffered as a result of discriminatory acts.

The Company takes responsibility for achieving the objectives of this Policy, and endeavours to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation and Codes of Practice.

10. Dedicated Grievance Procedure

10.1 Informal Procedure

- If an employee feels that they have suffered direct or indirect discrimination they are encouraged to attempt to raise and solve the issue informally before commencing the formal procedures detailed below.
- Informal steps that may be taken by the employee include talking to their manager about the issue, or talking directly to any individual who the employee feels is responsible for the discrimination. This can be done verbally or by letter, and can be with the accompaniment of a colleague or trade union representative.
- Where the informal procedure is used, both parties should keep a written record of the meeting including what was discussed and any proposed action.
- If the employee feels unable to deal with the issue informally, or if informal steps have failed to solve the problem, the employee should raise the matter according to the formal procedure detailed below.

10.2 Formal Procedure

Written Statement

- Formal Grievances should be detailed in writing, and submitted to the Designated Officer without unreasonable delay. The Grievance should contain the actions or policy that the employee believes is discriminatory and all relevant facts surrounding the action or policy, including any relevant dates, names and witnesses. The employee should indicate what they feel the Company should do and any other suggestions or information that they believe will assist in resolving the issue.
- Where the Grievance concerns the Designated Officer it should be submitted instead to the employee's direct line manager or such other person of equal or greater seniority.

Grievance Meeting

- The employee will then be invited to a formal meeting to discuss the Grievance. The formal meeting will be held without unreasonable delay, and, usually no longer than 5 working days after submission of the Grievance in writing.

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- The meeting must not take place if the appropriate manager has not had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to the information.
- The employer should establish the facts by collecting documents, identifying any relevant people to interview and taking statements before memories start to fade. Any requests for anonymity and confidentiality should be taken seriously.
- The employee may, following a reasonable request, be accompanied by a colleague, a suitably certified trade union representative or an official employed by a trade union. The companion may not, however, answer questions on behalf of the employee.
- The employee's chosen companion will be able to address the meeting to put or sum up the employee's case as well as confer with the employee during the meeting. They may not, however, answer questions on the employee's behalf, address the meeting if the employee does not wish them to do so or prevent the Company from explaining their case.
- The appropriate manager, employee and their companion shall make every effort to attend the meeting.
- If possible the employee should explain how they think the Grievance could be resolved.
- If a full investigation of the matter is required then the meeting should be adjourned to a later date before a decision is taken about how to deal with the employee's Grievance.

Outcome of the meeting

- Following the meeting, and investigation, and without unreasonable delay the appropriate manager shall set out in writing the action they intend to be taken in order to resolve the Grievance (if appropriate).
- The Company shall also inform the employee in writing of their right to appeal if they are not satisfied with the action taken.
- Any action taken shall be monitored and reviewed, as appropriate, to ensure it effectively deals with the issue.

Appeal

- If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision they have the right to raise an appeal by submitting a written request to the Designated Officer, which should include the grounds for appeal. The appeal request must be submitted within 5 working days of the employee receiving the confirmation as to the outcome of the Grievance meeting.
- The Company will invite the appellant employee to another meeting to discuss their appeal, to be held within a reasonable time of receiving the request for an appeal, at a time and place which shall be notified to the employee in advance. The appeal will be dealt with impartially and, wherever possible, will be chaired by a manager who has not previously been involved in the case and is of increased seniority to the one who dealt with the original Grievance.
- The employee has the statutory right to be accompanied at the appeal meeting. The outcome of the appeal meeting shall be communicated to the employee in writing within 5 working days. Decisions made at this point are final and the Grievance procedure is concluded.

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Records and Confidentiality

- The Company shall be responsible for taking notes of the proceedings of each meeting during the Grievance procedure. Copies of meeting notes will be provided to the employee.
- All Grievances will be handled with as high a degree of confidentiality as is practicable, with special consideration for the often sensitive nature of grievances falling under this Policy.
- Confidential records of the Grievance will be kept in the employee’s personnel file in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

11. Employees engaging in Discriminatory Conduct

- Behaviour or actions found to be contrary to this Policy and the general spirit of the laws on which it is based will be considered to be serious disciplinary matters. In the most severe of cases, the employee responsible may face dismissal. Any such employees will have the right to appeal against such a summary dismissal by following the Companies grievance procedure.
- Discrimination leads to an unpleasant and non-productive work environment. No employee has the right to discriminate against another. If an employee is executing Company policy that may be indirectly discriminatory, the Company will not normally hold the employee responsible for any negative effects of that policy. Employees should inform the Designated Officer if they become aware of any discriminatory effects that a policy may have.
- If a grievance is received by the Company that cites the actions of an employee have been discriminatory against another member of staff, the Company will deal with the breach of policy through the Disciplinary procedure.

12. Advice and Support on Discrimination

Employees may contact their employee or trade union representative if access to such an individual is possible.

Other contacts include:

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Manchester
 Arndale House
 The Arndale Centre
 Manchester
 M4 3AQ

London
 3 More London
 Riverside Tooley Street
 London
 SE1 2RG

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Managing Director

Cardiff

3rd Floor, 3 Callaghan Square
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CF10 5BT

Glasgow

The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DU

Helpline Telephone Numbers:

England: 0845 604 6610

Wales: 0845 604 8810

Scotland: 0845 604 5510

Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com**Citizens Advice Bureau**

Myddleton House
115-123 Pentonville Road
London
N1 9LZ

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk**Community Legal Services Direct**

Telephone: 0845 345 4 345

Website: www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk**13. The Extent of the Policy**

- The Company seeks to apply this Policy in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, development and promotion of all employees. The Company offers goods and services in a fashion that complies with the spirit of this Policy.
- This Policy does not form a part of any employment contract with any employee and its contents are not to be regarded by any person as implied, collateral or express terms to any contract made with the Company.
- The Company reserves the right to amend and update this Policy at any time.

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I have read and understood the Equality & Diversity Policy (with Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____