

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. GM Floor Screeds Ltd (the Employer) is committed to equal opportunities for all staff and applicants.

2. It is our policy that all employment decisions are based on merit and the legitimate business needs of the organisation. The Employer does not discriminate on the basis of race, colour or nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, disability, religion or belief, age or any other ground on which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England and Wales (referred to as Protected Characteristics).

3. Our intention is to enable all our staff to work in an environment which allows them to fulfill their potential without fear of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. The Employer's commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of the working relationship including:

- Recruitment and selection procedures
- Terms of employment, including pay, conditions and benefits
- Training, appraisals, career development and promotion
- Work practices, conduct issues, allocation of tasks, discipline and grievances
- Work related social events
- Termination of employment, matter following including references

4. This policy is intended to help the Employer achieve its diversity and anti-discrimination aims by clarifying the responsibilities and duties of all staff in respect of equal opportunities and discrimination. The Employer will promote effective communication and consultation between the Employer and staff concerning equal opportunities by means it considers appropriate.

5. The principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.

6. This is a statement of policy only and does not form part of your contract of employment. This policy may be amended at any time by the Employer, in its absolute discretion.

7. Achieving an equal opportunities workplace is a collective task shared between the Employer and all its staff. This policy and the rules contained in it therefore apply to all staff of the Employer irrespective of seniority, tenure and working hours, including all employees, directors and officers, consultants and contractors, casual or agency staff, trainees, homeworkers and fixed-term staff and any volunteers or interns (referred to as Staff).

8. The board of directors of the Employer has overall responsibility for this policy and for equal opportunities and discrimination law compliance in the workplace and the HR Manager has been appointed as the person with day-to-day operational responsibility for these matters.

9. All Staff have personal responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times and not to discriminate against or harass other members of Staff, visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members. In addition, Staff who take part in management, recruitment, selection, promotion, training and other aspects of career development (referred to as Managers) have special responsibility for leading by example and ensuring compliance.

10. Managers will receive appropriate training in equal opportunities and must take all necessary steps to:

- Promote the objective of equal opportunities and the values set out in the policy
- Ensure that their own behaviour and those of all staff they manage complies in full with this policy

11. Discrimination occurs in different ways, some more obvious than others. Discrimination on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited by law, even if unintentional, unless a particular exception applies.

12. Direct Discrimination is less favourable treatment because of one of the Protected Characteristics. Examples would include refusing a woman a job as a chauffeur because you believe that women are not good drivers or restricting recruitment to persons under 40 because you want to have a young and dynamic workforce. Direct discrimination can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess the Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it or associates with other people who do. For example, when a person is less favourably treated because they are (wrongly) believed to be homosexual or because they have a spouse who is Muslim.

13. Indirect discrimination arises when an employer applies an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice which in fact puts individuals with a particular Protected Characteristic at a disadvantage, statistically and this is unjustified. To show discrimination the individual complaining also has to be personally disadvantaged. An example would be a requirement for job candidates to have ten years' experience in a particular role, since this will be harder for young people to satisfy. This kind of discrimination is unlawful unless it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

14. Victimisation means treating a person less favourably because they have made a complaint of discrimination or have provided information in connection with a complaint or because they might do one of these things.

15. Harassment is unwanted conduct which is related to a Protected Characteristic and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them: or unwanted conduct which is of a sexual nature and which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them (Sexual Harassment); or less favourable treatment because of the rejection of or the submission to Sexual Harassment. Harassment can arise in some cases even though the person complaining does not actually possess a Protected Characteristic but is perceived to have it (for example, when a person is harassed because they are (wrongly) believed to be homosexual) or associates with other people who possess a Protected Characteristic (for example, because they have a spouse who is Muslim).

Harassment may include:

- Use of insults or slurs based on a Protected Characteristic or of a sexual nature or other verbal abuse or derogatory, offensive or stereotyping jokes or remarks;
- Physical or verbal abuse, threatening or intimidating behaviour because of a Protected Characteristic or behaviour of a sexual nature;
- Unwelcome physical contact including touching, hugging, kissing, pinching or patting, brushing past, invading personal space, pushing grabbing or other assaults;
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability, appearance, accent or other personal characteristics;
- Unwelcome requests for sexual acts or favours; verbal sexual advances, vulgar, sexual, suggestive or explicit comments or behaviour;
- Repeated requests, either explicitly or implicitly, for dates;
- Repeated requests for social contact or after it has been made clear that requests are unwelcome;
- Comments about body parts or sexual preference;

- Displaying or distributing offensive or explicit pictures, items or materials relating to a Protected Characteristic or of a sexual nature; shunning or ostracising someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from conversations or activities;
- 'Outing' or threatening to 'out' someone's sexual orientation (ie to make it known);
- Explicit or implicit suggestions that employment status or progression is related to toleration of/or acquiescence to sexual advances, or other behaviour amounting to harassment.

16. If you make a complaint, it may be necessary to ask you to stay at home on paid leave while investigations are being conducted and the matter is being dealt with through the appropriate procedure. This may particularly be necessary in cases of alleged harassment.

17. Any breach of equal opportunities rules or failure to comply with this policy will be taken very seriously and is likely to result in disciplinary action against the offender, up to and including immediate dismissal.

18. Staff should also note that in some cases, they may be personally liable for their acts of discrimination and that legal action may be taken against them directly by the victim of any discrimination; and it may be a criminal offence intentionally to harass another employee.

The board of directors of the Employer will keep this policy under review. The Employer encourages Staff to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved or ask any questions if they are unsure about any part of this policy or how it is applied by contacting the HR Manager.

GM Floor Screeds LTD
Reviewed and amended on 26/10/23
Due for renewal on 25/10/24

Equal Opportunities Policy

