**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Purpose**

It is the policy of Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) to treat job applicants and Staff in the same way, and avoid discrimination.

**Scope**

This non contractual policy, procedure and practices will be kept under review. This policy shall be implemented in accordance with the appropriate requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Although the overall responsibility for achieving, promoting and providing equality of opportunity rests with the employer and GMCC Staff at every level have a responsibility to own and promote the policy.

**Equal Opportunities Statement**

GMCC wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

 This policy is intended to assist the Chamber to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The Chamber will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

**Policy**

The Chief Executive of GMCC has particular responsibility for implementing the Equal Opportunities Employment Policy as part of this process, all policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equtality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination within the Chamber.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

GMCC will develop and implement processes which will provide data on the composition of the workforce. This data will be analysed by the Senior Managers on an annual basis.

**Procedure**

GMCC 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 Staff Member 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 the line manager in the first instance as should requests for special training. Further clarification should be sought from your Line manager.

GMCC will not discriminate on grounds of age, sex, ethnic origin, race, nationality, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, religion

The policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment to them, training, conditions of work, pay, discipline and capability, resignations, redundancies and dismissals.

**Types of unlawful discrimination**

**Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Indirect discrimination** is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

**Harassment** is where there is unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

**Associated discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (although it does not cover harassment because of marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

**Perceptive discrimination** is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity).

**Victimisation** occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he or she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he or she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint. There is no longer a need for a complainant to compare his or her treatment with someone who has not made or supported a complaint under the Equality Act 2010. For example, if a blind employee raises a grievance that the employer is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings, such behaviour could amount to victimization.

**Failure to make reasonable adjustments** is where a feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

**Complaints**A Staff Member who feels they are subject to any discriminatory behaviour or action whether it is direct or indirect, will have immediate access to the Grievance Procedure.

**Recruitment**

Direct discrimination will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

A statement to the effect that GMCC operates an Equal Opportunities Policy will be included in all job advertisements.

External advertising of vacancies will be on a sufficiently wide basis to attract as wide a range of suitably qualified applicants as possible. All advertisements will be given an appropriate circulation.

The selection process will be carried out according to objective, job related criteria.

**Staff Training and Appraisals**All employees required to select staff should undergo appropriate training in the charity policy and the law.

Training opportunities will be made available to all Staff throughout GMCC regardless of their age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Line managers will be responsible for ensuring that selection criteria for training and development are objective and they do not directly or indirectly discriminate in their application.

Standards of performance appraisal will be regularly reviewed by the designated senior manager to ensure consistent equal standards across GMCC are applied. Managers will be kept informed of all outcomes.

**Terms and Conditions**

No Staff Member will receive less favourable terms or conditions because age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.

Specific religious needs, where practicable, will be accommodated and flexible working arrangements may be made available by prior arrangement with senior management.

Where operational needs permit, requests for part-time working or job sharing will be considered positively.

**Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by the Chamber**

The Chamber will not discriminate unlawfully against customers using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by the Chamber.

Employees should report any bullying or harassment by customers, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the Company to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Company for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

**Grievance Procedure**

Any Staff Member may use the grievance procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to sexual or racial harassment or harassment on the basis of disability then the grievance may be raised directly with line manager. GMCC is concerned to ensure that Staff feel able to raise such grievances and no individual will be penalised for raising such a grievance unless it is untrue and made in bad faith.

**Monitoring**

All Staff will be requested to complete a form denoting sex, race, ethnic origin and any disabilities. GMCC guarantees that this form will be used for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy only. Completion of any equal opportunities form is voluntary.

**Reviewing This Policy**

No policy document is static and must be subject to change. It's GMCC’s intention to keep this policy and its existing codes of practice under review, to ensure that GMCC’s commitment to equality of opportunity as set out in its policy statement is adopted and implemented.