

# **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY STATEMENT**

## **THE AIM**

Century Office Equipment, in carrying out its functions, shall not discriminate against persons on grounds including race or sex. The Company shall also carry out its work in a spirit of tolerance and freedom of opinion, mutual concern and community service.

The objective of this policy is to ensure that all employees and job applicants enjoy real equality of employment opportunity (subject only to legal restrictions), irrespective of their sex, age, marital status, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin. Our aim is to have a balanced workforce that is representative of the communities we serve and to eliminate prejudice and bias in all employment matters.

## **COMMITMENT TO THE POLICY**

Century Office Equipment confirms its commitment to the Policy.

## **RESPONSIBILITY OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND SECTIONS**

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored centrally by the Personnel Office. Heads of Departments and Sections are directly responsible for the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy at operational level.

## **ALL STAFF**

Every member of staff is responsible for ensuring that they act within the spirit of the policy. Any actions contrary to the policy will be liable to disciplinary action.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Company is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is effective.

Appropriate employees will be given training or guidance in the equal opportunities policy and those provisions, relevant to their responsibilities, of the legislation and the codes of practice of the Commission for Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Commission.

The company will formulate and make known to employees clear guidelines of implementing the equal opportunities policy.

The company will state on relevant material that it is striving to be an equal opportunities employer. Where appropriate, the Company will take advantage of those sections of the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act which allow for positive action.

Each employee will be issued with a copy of this document. The nominated Officer is responsible for day-to-day management of this policy, including advising Senior Management, other appropriate employees in matters of equal opportunities in employment and producing an annual report in which progress will be assessed.

# **EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

### **Job Description and Personnel Specification**

Job descriptions and personnel specifications are essential aids to recruiting the appropriate staff and in managing work. The job description should clearly and accurately define the duties of the job. The personnel specification should outline the essential and desirable qualities needed to perform the job satisfactorily.

Educational qualifications, skills, experience and other personal attributes should be those necessary for satisfactory job performance. These should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain valid.

### **Publicising Vacancies**

Vacancies for jobs of three months or longer will be publicised, although exceptionally there will be circumstances which warrant the filling of a post without advertisement.

Publication of vacancies will be by internal and external advertisement as appropriate.

Where appropriate the positive action clauses of the legislation will be considered e.g. to maximise the response from targeted areas of the community.

### **Application Procedures**

Application procedures will be kept under review to ensure that only information essential for the job (as determined by the job description, personnel specification and work permit requirement).

### **Selection**

Those responsible for shortlisting, interviewing and selecting candidates will receive training or guidance on good selection practice with particular reference to equal opportunities considerations.

### **Shortlisting**

Shortlisting will be the responsibility of more than one person.

### **Selection Panels**

Interviewing will be the responsibility of more than one person. Careful consideration will be given to the member of panels to take into account the principles of equal opportunities.

Fair treatment will be ensured by asking all candidates comparable questions and by asking questions which relate only to all requirements of the job, in line with the personnel specification.

### **Selection Tests**

Any selection tests will be designed and monitored to ensure that they measure only what is relevant to the ability to do, or train to do, the job for which they are intended

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

The terms and conditions of employment will contain a reference to the equal opportunities policy, emphasise the employers and employee's obligation to it and inform employees that breaches of the policy could lead to disciplinary action.

The company will ensure that appropriate formal procedures are established which can be invoked by any employee who alleges that she or he has been the subject of discrimination, harassment or victimisation by the company or one of its employees.

### **WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration will be given to flexible working arrangements e.g. career break schemes, part-time working, flexitime, home working and job sharing.

Subject to operational requirements, the company will give sympathetic consideration to employees whose personal circumstances change or to applicants with special needs, and will strive to accommodate those through retraining, redeployment, variation of leave arrangements, or alternative working arrangements.

### **WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

The company is committed to developing and maintaining a working environment which encourages all employees to contribute fully to the life and work of the company, which is supportive of the dignity and self-esteem of individuals and which ensures that they are free from harassment.

The needs of people with disabilities will be given positive consideration.

### **PROMOTION AND REGRADING**

In assessing training and development needs the company will have regard to the requirements of women and ethnic minorities.

All training courses and associated publicity material will meet legal requirements and comply with the equal opportunities policy. Where practicable, training arrangements will take into account the needs of those with domestic responsibilities.

## **EMPLOYEE NUMBERS**

As at July 2002, the Company employs a total staff of 16, four of which are directors of the company.