

Equalities Policy

1. Introduction and scope

This policy is based on the Equality Act 2010, which replaces previous discrimination legislation, and applies to all workers within NHBC including, all permanent employees, contractors, agency temps, casual workers, freelancers and job applicants during the recruitment process. This policy also applies to previous employees (where discrimination is connected to the previous employment relationship).

NHBC believes in maintaining high ethical standards and treats people fairly and consistently, adhering to the appropriate laws and regulations.

Underlying NHBC's overall commitment to equality is the fundamental belief in the right of all employees and customers to be treated with dignity and respect and be guaranteed freedom from discrimination. It is therefore important that the promotion of equality of opportunity and expectations of responsibilities and behavior are understood and supported by all employees.

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the NHBC Staff Association (Staff Association).

2. Policy aims

NHBC believes that a critical factor to its ongoing success is its ability to attract employees and customers from all sections of society and that all employees feel respected and able to give their best at work. It is committed to encouraging and valuing diversity amongst our workforce and to promoting an environment where discrimination will not be tolerated.

The overall aims of this policy are therefore:

- To achieve a balanced workforce that truly reflects the composition of the general population from where we recruit our employees.
- To realise competitive advantage from fully utilising and developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of a diverse workforce.
- To ensure all employees are treated with dignity and respect and guaranteed freedom from discrimination.
- To ensure selection for employment, training and development, promotion, and any other benefits are on the basis of aptitude and ability and where necessary by providing specialist aids or equipment, thereby providing genuine equality of opportunity for all employees.

4. Responsibilities (employer and employee)

Managers have a particular responsibility to ensure that a philosophy of equal opportunities underlies the relationship with employees and customers and that all business and employment

practices and processes are applied in an objective and systematic manner, eliminating discrimination.

Employees must observe this policy and co-operate with all measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and specifically not to discriminate against other employees or applicants.

All managers and employees of NHBC will be provided with adequate information, guidance and training on equal opportunities issues.

4.1 Employers Responsibilities

- Employers must not commit any act or form of discrimination or adopt any policies, rule or practices that could place people who have a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage.
- Employers must not victimise any employees who have made a complaint of any form of discrimination against any of the protected characteristics.
- Employers must not permit or condone harassment related to any protected characteristics
- Employers must not commit any type of discrimination against an employee after that employee has left NHBC.
- NHBC will communicate this policy to all employees so they are aware and up to date with current practices and legislation.

4.2 Employees Responsibilities

- Employees must not discriminate in any form against other employees because of any of the protected characteristics
- Employees must not victimise against any other employees because they have made a complaint of discrimination
- Employees must not harass other employees on the basis they have one of the protected characteristics
- Employees must not harass other employees on the grounds they associate with someone with a particular characteristic
- All employees must adhere to this policy, failure to do so resulting in any of the above could lead to disciplinary action under NHBC's Disciplinary policy.

5. Protected characteristics

The Equality Act was introduced to encompass various laws covering different areas of discrimination these have now been amalgamated into one law and the areas of discrimination are

now called protected characteristics. The protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act and this policy are;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

6. Discrimination

NHBC promotes a working environment where everyone should be able to work in an environment free from discrimination. NHBC does not permit discrimination in any of the forms noted above in Section 3.

NHBC takes any possible cases of direct discrimination seriously and will treat any employee who makes a complaint of direct discrimination fairly and sensitively ensuring any complaint is investigated thoroughly.

Through implementing this policy, NHBC will ensure that no policy, practice, rule or condition indirectly discriminates against a group of employees who share a particular characteristic and ensure that all employees have equality of opportunity. However if any employee feels that any policy, practice, rule or condition indirectly discriminates against them they should raise it with their line manager or the HR department using the procedure set out in section 10.

Employees and managers also need to be aware that there are two other forms of discrimination which can apply to employees – associative and perceptive. Complaints of discrimination for these types will be treated in the same way as direct and indirect discrimination and will be treated no less seriously because the employee making the complaint does not have the protected characteristic. The only protected characteristic that is not covered by associative and perceptive discrimination is marital and civil partnership status.

7. 3rd Party harassment

Should any employee feel they have been subject to harassment by a 3rd party due to their, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, whilst carrying out their role for NHBC they should raise it with their line manager immediately.

If any employees feel that their line manager has not dealt with the harassment or if the harassment continues they should raise it with the HR department for appropriate action.

8. Discrimination in recruitment

NHBC is committed to ensuring a fair recruitment process that is free from all discrimination and encourages a diverse workforce. NHBC will ensure throughout the recruitment process, from the job advert through to the offering of a role to the successful candidate, that recruitment decisions are based on objective criteria relevant to the role.

9. Victimisation

NHBC is committed to ensuring all complaints of discrimination are dealt with in a professional and timely manner therefore any employee that raises a complaint of discrimination should be able to do so without fear of being less favourably treated because of it.

If any employee feels they have been victimised because they have raised a complaint of discrimination or supported another employee in making a complaint of discrimination they should raise their complaint through NHBC's grievance policy.

10. Section on how to make a complaint

If any employee feels they have been discriminated against because of one of the protected characteristics, whether this is direct, indirect, associative or perceptive discrimination, harassed or bullied they should either raise this with their line manager in the first instance or put the complaint in writing to their line manager or HR department and follow NHBC's grievance procedure.

Any employee who makes an unjust or unfounded complaint may be subject to disciplinary action.

11. Distribution

The current version of this policy is available on the Hub (NHBC intranet). Alternatively, a copy is available on request from Human Resources.

12. Effective Date

This policy, which will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to amendment from time to time, is effective from October 2010. It supersedes any such earlier dated policy, procedure, agreement or arrangement.

Human Resources