

# **The Equal Opportunities Policy of Western Security Systems Ltd**

## **Why do we have an equal opportunities policy?**

An effectively implemented Equal Opportunities Policy will help us to: -

- ✓ Provide an environment conducive to the promotion of fair and equal opportunities to all staff.
- ✓ Ensure fair treatment for all job applicants and existing members of staff.
- ✓ Ensure fair treatment for all others with whom we have contact such as our customers.
- ✓ Make the best possible use of our existing and potential workforce.
- ✓ Improve employment practices and staff morale.
- ✓ Attract, develop and retain the good quality staff that is essential for achievement of our business objectives.
- ✓ Avoid unlawful or unfair discrimination.

Western Security Systems Ltd believes that it is in everyone's best interests to ensure that the experience, talents and skills available throughout this company are considered when employment or development opportunities arise.

## **What has it got to do with me?**

Equal opportunities impose rights and responsibilities for every member of staff. Everyone has a right to fair and dignified treatment. This means that no-one will be discriminated against nor harassed. Every member of staff has an obligation to ensure fair and dignified treatment. The contribution of everyone will be valued and everyone will be treated purely on their merits. Everyone must act fairly, within Western Security Systems' policy and the law. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

The Western Security Systems Equal Opportunities Policy is issued to all members of staff and job applicants.

## **Policy statement**

Western Security Systems Ltd is an equal opportunities employer. Our aim is to be fair to everybody and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives more or less favourable opportunities or treatment on the grounds of, for example: -

- Age
- Race
- Colour
- Ethnic or national origin
- Nationality (subject to nationality rules)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Disability
- Religion or religious affiliation
- Part-time working
- Trade union membership and duties

There may however be limited exceptions for positive action which is allowed by relevant legislation.

No-one will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be genuinely necessary for objective reasons. In addition, care should be taken when selection criteria such as sift conditions are set as some applicants may find these more difficult to meet due to their sex, race, marital status or disability etc.

Equal opportunities and equal treatment are the cornerstones of our recruitment and employment policy.

### **Personal development**

Western Security Systems is committed to encouraging all staff to make full use of their skills and talents and to helping staff progress through the company and reach their full potential. Everyone will have equal access to any course which is appropriate to an individual's current job or development within the company. We will encourage the development of the individual's skills and knowledge for use in their work.

Where necessary, training courses will be provided to assist any group of individuals who are under-represented in any area of work or range to move into the area of their choice. This is the only form of positive action allowed on the basis of sex or race under Section 47 and 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Section 37 of the Race Relations Act 1976. Statistical information may be used to monitor this policy. (Some forms of positive action are also allowed by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.)

### **Key concepts explained**

There follows a brief explanation of some key equal opportunities concepts.

#### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is unequal treatment of an individual because of their membership of a particular class or group, such as sex, race or trade union. It may be direct, for example, refusing to send someone on a training course because they are married or have children. It may be indirect, for example, declaring a post as being suitable only for a full-time member of staff without proper justification (that means establishing the need for a full-time member of staff rather than part-timers or job-sharing).

Discrimination may be subtle and unconscious. It may not be easy to identify. For example, discrimination sometimes results from general assumptions about the capabilities, characteristics and interests of particular groups or individuals, which are allowed to influence the treatment of staff or job applicants.

Without appropriate awareness and safeguards, discrimination may occur in any area of recruitment and employment including: -

- Inappropriate questioning at interview.
- Inappropriate appointment to post.
- Allocation of volumes and/or type of work.
- Transfer decisions.
- Promotion and progression opportunities.
- Annual leave allocation.
- Special leave requests.
- Application of disciplinary action.

**Sexual harassment.**

Sexual harassment may involve unwelcome sexual comments or innuendo, looks and gestures, displays of pin-ups or physical contact by one individual aimed at another, and which is only directed at that other person because of their sex.

Sexual harassment cannot be dismissed as a 'bit of harmless fun'. It can lead to an uncomfortable and alienating working environment.

**Racial harassment**

Racial harassment is offensive or hostile behaviour, which has the purpose or effect of creating discomfort, distress, exclusion or isolation and is based upon someone's race (colour, nationality or ethnic origins) or is directed at them because of their race. If the comment or behaviour is offensive to the individual, it will amount to racial harassment.

**Harassment/bullying**

As with sexual or racial harassment, any form of harassment or bullying will have the effect of causing undue stress on individuals and of de-motivating them. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated and serves to undermine the good team spirit which the company wishes to encourage.

**Disability harassment**

Offensive or hostile behaviour or comments aimed at an individual because he or she is disabled, will also be harassment.

**Resolving problems**

Everyone must be sensitive to the effects their words and actions have on their colleagues and need to ensure that their attitudes towards others carry no trace of discrimination which can affect working relationships, behaviour or judgement.

Staff who are experiencing or are concerned about discrimination or harassment should discuss the problem with any of the company managers who will take appropriate action to try to resolve it, if possible. In extreme circumstances, the company may seek the advice of an independent external body for impartiality or professional advice.

Managers should be aware of any problem developing at an early stage and take corrective action to ensure that the situation is resolved in a conciliatory and effective manner and that staff do not feel excluded.

Although the Equal Opportunities Forum cannot look into individual problems, members of the Forum will welcome and look into any general comments or issues raised by staff.

Staff are encouraged to make clear to their colleagues if conduct or comments are offensive to them.

### **Complaints procedure**

If you wish to make any complaint of discrimination or harassment, you should approach any of the managers of the company who must act firmly, fairly and without delay. When you meet with one of the managers, you may wish to be accompanied by a representative or friend.

Where appropriate, an enquiry will be conducted into the complaint and if it is considered that the behaviour of an individual is unlawful, unfair or unacceptable, disciplinary action will be taken by the company against that individual, as laid down in the staff handbook.

All staff are subject to the disciplinary rules and should remember that unfounded allegations of unfair treatment can themselves be distressing to the recipients of such complaints. Such unfounded allegations may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

### **Further information and relevant legislation**

Training on Equal Opportunities is given to all members of staff. As part of our training we provide further information on relevant legislation including: -

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

If you require any further information, please contact the Diversity Advisor:

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