

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

SOMAX aims to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, pregnancy or maternity, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership.

What this policy covers

SOMAX recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination.

SOMAX will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public.

All employees and those who act on SOMAX's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing SOMAX in any other guise.

The company is under a legal obligation that 3% of its staff should be registered disabled. Any member of staff who is registered disabled, or becomes so, should inform Mr S Werkshagen.

Before any post is advertised the appointing individual should ensure that the company is within quota or that the appropriate exemption certificate from the Department of Employment is held.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

Unlawful discrimination

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and SOMAX will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

Recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures training

Promotion and career-development opportunities

Terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities

Grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. SOMAX will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.

Recruitment of ex-offenders

SOMAX actively promotes equality of opportunity for all candidates, including those with criminal records where appropriate.

SOMAX requires you to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. Any such information should be sent in a separate confidential letter to the designated person. Only those who need to see it as a formal part of the recruitment process will have access to this information.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from being appointed.

Any recruitment decision will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offence(s). SOMAX will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures in accordance with SOMAX's Disclosures Policy, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Career development

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.

All employees will have equal access to training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, SOMAX will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

Learner Equal Opportunities

Set out below is the policy in regard to providing equality of opportunity for individuals access when seeking to gain teaching, development or assessment.

Commitment

The policy establishes the expectation that all have a right to equality of opportunity irrespective of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, nationality, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, or socio-economic status, background or class.

Aims

We will seek to ensure the following is reviewed and implemented

- The content and assessment of awards allows for the widest diversity of individuals
- The content and demands of its awards are non-discriminatory and appropriate to the skills and knowledge specifications indicated by national standards

- The style and language used within its documentations is easily understood and attempts not to reflect stereotyped or biased attitudes
- Promotional and marketing materials and activities reflect diversity of individuals
- Verifiers and Assessors associated with the assessment apply a fair and just process
- We operate or equal opportunities policies in line with legal and Awarding bodies requirements
- Ensure an effective appeals procedure is in operation, and made known to all individuals

Implementation

In order to achieve this policy we will endeavor to

- Issue this policy to all members of staff, ensure it is made available on request from individuals and other interested parties
- Provide development activates appropriate to the needs of staff
- Ensure issues of equal opportunities are addressed as part of development, reviews and guidelines.
- Appoint a member of staff responsible for the development and implementation of policy and to advise on changes and amendments as appropriate

In the event of matters relating to this policy, individuals are to inform the centre in writing. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the individual they should contact the awarding body.

Procedure

Complaints of discrimination

SOMAX will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination made by employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee using SOMAX's Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, SOMAX is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under SOMAX's Disciplinary Procedures.

Investigating accusations of unlawful discrimination

If you are accused of unlawful discrimination, SOMAX will investigate the matter fully.

During the course of the investigation, you will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of your actions.

If the investigation concludes that the claim is false or malicious, the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If the investigation concludes that your actions amount to unlawful discrimination, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.