Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As a management team, we are deeply committed to fostering an inclusive workplace culture at CFES, where every individual is valued and has equal opportunities. We prioritize creating an environment that embraces diversity, seeing it as a catalyst for creativity and innovation. Our policies not only uphold non-discrimination throughout recruitment, hiring, and promotion processes but also align with legal requirements and best practices.

To reinforce these values, all employees undergo equality, diversity, and inclusion training upon joining CFES, with plans to introduce this as an annual module to raise awareness of diversity and unconscious bias. Our zero-tolerance stance against discrimination is reflected in our company policies, which support a fair and unbiased approach to all aspects of our organization. Ethical conduct and a diverse workforce are core to our values, enhancing our competitiveness in the marketplace.

Our commitment

cfes is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against customers.

This policy is intended to assist cfes 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. cfes has a separate dignity at work policy, which deals with these issues.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly in recruitment or employment because 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. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics. Direct discrimination is explained below.

Indirect discrimination, which is explained below, is also unlawful unless it can be justified.

Staff should not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

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 is 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.

Associative 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). For example, if someone has a disabled child, then making decisions based on that person's connection with the child would be associative discrimination on the grounds of disability.

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). For example, calling a man homophobic names because of a 'standing joke' that he is gay when he is known to be not gay is on the grounds of the perception that he is gay, and therefore is discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity), by third parties such as clients or customers. For an employer to be liable:

- The harassment must have occurred on at least two previous occasions (although not necessarily by the same harasser or suffering the same type of harassment);
- It must be aware that the previous harassment has taken place; and
- It must have failed to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment from happening again.

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 cfes is not complying with its duty to make reasonable adjustments, and is then systematically excluded from all meetings, such behaviour could amount to victimisation.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical 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 cfes has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

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

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.

cfes will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if cfes considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. cfes will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. cfes will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Dignity at work

cfes has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Customers, suppliers and other people not employed by cfes

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

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

Training

cfes will provide training as required to ensure that Managers and employees are aware of their responsibilities.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist cfes 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, cfes 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 cfes' disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you may use cfes' grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

cfes will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Use of cfes' grievance procedure does not affect your right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal. Complaints to an employment tribunal must normally be made within three months beginning with the act of discrimination complained of.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by cfes to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.