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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights belong to everyone and affect every aspect of our lives. They are about the right to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. They are about the freedom to voice ideas openly. They protect individuals from arbitrary and excessive action that may result in loss of life, liberty, degrading treatment or intrusion into people's personal lives. In the workplace, human rights include the right to a safe working environment, the right to fair remuneration and equal pay for the equal work, the right to organise and participate in collective bargaining and the right to be protected from forced labour and trafficking.

As a business, we respect the human rights outlined and understand the need for a safe working environment that is compliant with the relevant domestic health & safety legislation.

1. Equal opportunities

1.1 Optimise Heat & Steam Ltd is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. We embrace the principles of **equality, diversity, and inclusion**. You and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (**Protected Characteristics**). Optimise has a good attitude towards diversity and Inclusion. Equality follows naturally from having a positive perspective towards diversity and inclusion. We believe everyone should be given the opportunity to fulfil their individual potential and have their diverse characteristics respected. A positive inclusive environment embraces engagement and belonging. Inclusion will ensure that everyone at Optimise feels accepted, valued, comfortable, and confident in themselves.

2. About this policy

2.1 This policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010 and outlines our compliance as it sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

2.2 **The HR Administrator** is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.

2.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

3. Discrimination

3.1 You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers, or other work-related contacts or when wearing a work uniform), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

3.2 The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- a. **Direct discrimination | Explicit Bias:** this is the conscious process in which we evaluate another person, deem them “acceptable” or “unacceptable,” and then treat that other person according to how we see them. Treating someone less favourably because of their Protected Characteristic is prohibited. For example, consciously using language that is derogatory, disrespectful or a slur, when speaking about people with different identities or, passing someone (or whole groups of people) over for a promotion based on their gender, sex, age, race, or parental status
- b. **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- c. **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- d. **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- e. **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.
- f. **Unconscious | Implicit bias:** this refers to the human tendency to form opinions about others in the office without having enough relevant information. Bias can stem from stereotypes, preconceived notions, past experiences, or gut instinct. Unconscious bias occurs when an individual is unaware of a prejudice. For example,

regularly showing more respect or giving preferential treatment to certain people based solely on particular characteristics, automatically changing how you speak to other coworkers, who identify differently than you or reflexively feeling discomfort when you are around individuals or groups with certain characteristics (for example race, neurodivergent, sexual orientation, or gender), even though you do not know anything about them as people.

Recruitment and selection

- 3.3 Recruitment, promotion, and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.
- 3.4 Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying, discriminating on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.
- 3.5 Optimise wants to meet the aims and commitments set out in our equality policy. This includes not discriminating under the Equality Act 2010. We believe in the equality of opportunity and recognise that diversity creates a strong, flexible, and creative workforce. Monitoring our recruitment procedure is an important part of our effort to ensure that we are an equal opportunities employer in practice.

The monitoring form is voluntary. All information entered will be kept confidential, no personal details are assigned to this form to protect an individual from being identified, the form will be removed before the selection process begins and will in no way affect an application.

Should Job applicants not wish to complete a monitoring form they will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability.

Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

4. Disabilities

- 4.1 If you are disabled, become disabled or have any disability [this includes physical or mental] we encourage you to participate in a consultation with Management so you are able to advise us about your condition, this way we can consider reasonable adjustments or support that may be appropriate; changes to workplace, transferring you to another role, appropriate aids etc.

4.2 If you have to have a pacemaker fitted, tell us as soon as possible as we would need to do some additional testing on emissions/gases produced from welding as this can affect the pacemaker.

5. **Recruitment of ex-offenders**

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

The company 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 offences. The Company will discuss with you the relevance of any offence to the job in question.

11.2 If you fail to reveal any information relating to disclosures, this may lead to the withdrawal of an offer of employment.

6. **Part-time and fixed-term work**

6.1 Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

7. **Breaches of this policy**

7.1 We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

7.2 If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

7.3 You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.