

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

The Partnership is committed to providing a working environment in which employees are able to realize their full potential and to contribute to its business success irrespective of their gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, religion or belief. This is a key employment value to which all employees are expected to give their support

In order to create conditions in which this goal can be realised, the Partnership is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout the Company. The Partnership expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

Specifically, the Partnership aims to ensure that no employee or candidate is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, race (including colour, nationality or ethnic origin), sexual orientation, marital status, part time status, religion or belief or disability. 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; and
- Selection for redundancy.

Equal Opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Partnership will keep its policies under review and will implement changes where these could improve equality of opportunity. This commitment applies to all the Company's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically connected with Equal Opportunities.

### **Harassment**

Harassment is physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which is unwanted and personally offensive to the recipient, and which causes the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated, intimidated, patronized, denigrated, bullied, distressed or harassed.

## **The way in which complaints of unlawful discrimination and harassment will be handled**

Discrimination and harassment are often complex matters, and there is no single way of dealing with every suspected or alleged instance. In some cases employees may be able to deal satisfactorily with an issue by raising it with their immediate manager.

If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint he or she should use the Company's Grievance Procedure which is set out in the Employee Handbook.

The Partnership will treat seriously all allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment.

### **If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment**

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment, the Partnership will investigate the matter fully.

In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations and provide an explanation of his or her actions.

If the Partnership concludes that no unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred, this will be the end of the matter.

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

If on the other than the Partnership concludes that the employee's actions amount to unlawful discrimination or harassment he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

### **Monitoring**

The Partnership will not tolerate unlawful discrimination or harassment of any kind in the working environment and will take positive action to prevent its occurrence.

In this connection the Partnership will monitor its policies and will implement changes in order to improve them as social attitudes and legislation change. This commitment applies to all the Company's employment opportunities and procedures, not just those specifically concerned with Equal Opportunities.