

Equal Opportunities

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Equal opportunities

Foreword

Watts is committed to the provision of equal opportunities. To ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, both the content and implementation of this Equal Opportunities Policy will be kept under review.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to clarify Watts commitment to **preventing** unlawful and unfair discrimination and **stimulating** equal opportunity.

General Statement of Intent

Watts is committed to the provision of equal opportunities. It is Watts policy to treat all job applicants and employees fairly and equally, regardless of their sex, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age or perceived age, race, colour, nationality, national origins, ethnic origin or disability.

Furthermore, no applicant, client or member of staff should be disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justified.

In order to communicate and promote its equal opportunities policy, Watts will:

- Ensure that all employees of Watts are made aware of the provisions of this policy and their obligations under the law by circulating this policy to all staff.
- Include Watts' statement of policy in relevant contract documents with clients and/or potential clients.

Ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment, selection and support of staff are given training in the law as it relates to equality of opportunity and in the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for the policy

The Human Resources Department are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for reviewing policy and practice.

It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to ensure that their own working practices are lawful and fair. Under discrimination legislation, staff are personally liable for their own actions. An effective equal opportunities policy depends on staff as much as on management, and staff attitudes and activities are very important. A breach of Watts' equal opportunities policy by staff constitutes a disciplinary offence. For example any of the following actions by individual staff members would be unlawful:

- Discrimination in the course of employment against fellow staff members or job applicants on any of the grounds referred to in the general statement of intent, for example in selection decisions for recruitment, promotion, transfer and training.
- Inducing or attempting to induce other staff members or management to practice unlawful discrimination by encouraging them to refuse to employ people on any of the grounds referred to in the general statement of intent.
- Intimidating individuals who have made allegations or complaints of discrimination or who have provided information about discrimination.

To assist in promoting equal opportunities individual employees should:

- co-operate in the measures introduced by the company, which are designed to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination;
- draw the attention of management to suspected discriminatory practices; and
- feel free to suggest measures which assist in the promotion of equal opportunities, for example measures which may help a disabled person carry out his/her work.

Recruitment And Selection

Watts' overall objective is fair and equal opportunity in all aspects of its business, including recruitment and selection

Recruitment

As part of its strategy to ensure equal opportunity, Watts will:

- publicise Watts' commitment to equal opportunities and its equal opportunities policy; and
- use a range of recruitment sources to reach both sexes and all racial groups.

Selection

As part of its strategy to ensure the equality of opportunity in the selection of its staff, Watts will:

- ensure that there are clear consistent procedures for dealing with applications;
- ensure that selection criteria are based on requirements that are necessary and justifiable. selection criteria will be kept under review; and
- ensure that interviews are conducted by more than one person where this is practical. Questions asked at interviews will relate to the requirement of the job applied for. Interviewers will be trained in the provisions of all current legislation relating to discrimination and in the avoidance of unlawful and unfair discrimination. Interviewers must avoid stereotyping on the grounds of racial group, sex, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, disability or age.

Appraisal, Promotion and Training

Watts shall not restrict access to opportunities for promotion and training on the grounds referred to in the General Statement of Intent.

In order to ensure equal opportunity in these areas Watts will:

- ensure that staff responsible for performance appraisals are instructed not to discriminate on unlawful grounds;
- examine assessment criteria from time to time to ensure that they are not unlawfully discriminatory;
- ensure that all relevant employees are informed about and have access to all appropriate training opportunities; and
- ensure, as far as possible, that access to promotion and career development is not indirectly discriminatory, for example by being based on length of service alone.

Terms of Employment, Benefits, Facilities and Services

Watts shall avoid discriminating on unlawful grounds in relation to the terms of employment, the benefits, the facilities and the services, which it offers.

For example the company:

- consider applications for part-time working, flexible working, domestic leave and extended leave; and
- where possible, accommodate particular cultural and religious needs.

Equal Pay

Watts is committed to the principle of equal pay for men and women. In this context 'pay' includes not only remuneration but also other benefits of employment such as promotion and training opportunities and access to facilities provided within the employment package from time to time. The company is committed to introducing and maintaining pay systems which are transparent, based on objective criteria and free from sex bias.

Women and men employed by the firm are entitled to equal pay if they are undertaking work which is substantially similar or is of equal value to the organisation unless there are specific and clear reasons unconnected with their sex which explain and justify any differential in pay.

Contract Workers

Watts shall apply the same standards to ensure non-discrimination in relation to contract workers as it does in relation to staff members.

Harassment

Racial and sexual harassment, as well as harassment concerning any of the areas stated in the statement of intent can make working environments intolerable and performance can suffer as a result. Watts and its employees have a responsibility for recognising harassment when it occurs and they should make every effort to ensure that the harassment ceases.

Ex-offenders

Applicants with a background of offending are not automatically debarred from consideration.

Trade Union Membership

Staff may join a union relevant to them if they wish and are eligible to do so under the union's rules.

Monitoring

Watts will monitor and evaluate the implementation of its equal opportunities policy. Information gathered will be treated as confidential and is only intended for the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy. It will not be used to influence selection decisions.

Information will be gathered on sex, ethnic group and disability in the monitoring of applications, selection and the reasons for leaving employment.

Data collected will be analysed to identify where there are barriers to equality and why these exist. On the basis of this information, decisions will be taken on what action is necessary to break down any inequalities. Unlike individual records, access to aggregate data will not be restricted. Reports based on the equal opportunities monitoring data will be made available to interested parties.

Definitions of Discrimination

This equal opportunities policy is written in accordance with the statutory requirements of the following legislation:

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Employment Act 2002
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Fair Employment and Treatment Order (Northern Ireland) 1998