

1. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Balcas Timber Limited.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

Gender, including gender reassignment

-) Marital or civil partnership status
-) Having or not having dependents
-) Religious belief or political opinion
-) Disability
-) Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish Traveller)
-) Age
-) Sexual orientation

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all employees to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which employees treat visitors, customers, contractors and suppliers.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

We are committed to:

-) Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
-) Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons, including but not limited to senior managers, employees, consultants, contractors, part-time and fixed term employees, visitors, customers and suppliers are treated with respect
-) Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
-) Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
-) Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies

-) Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
-) Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as gross misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings up to and including dismissal.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

The Chief Executive Officer has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager, team leader and supervisor also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment which is its objective.

In order to implement this policy, we will ensure that:

-) The policy is communicated to all employees and made known to job applicants.
-) Managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities through appropriate and regular training.
-) Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques.
-) Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce.
-) Adequate resources are made available to fulfil the aims of this policy.

3. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Where appropriate, lawful affirmative/positive action will be taken with stated targets and timetables.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The provision of equality of opportunity will be monitored through the collection and analysis of information on community background and sex of all our employees and job applicants. We will also monitor our workforce composition and undertake periodic reviews as required by Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

Progress on the implementation of this policy and any equal opportunities and affirmative/positive action programmes will be reviewed annually.

5. COMPLAINTS

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Company Grievance Procedure. However, if the complainant deems it more appropriate, he or she can raise the matter directly with the Human Resources Manager. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employees to pursue complaints under the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to an Industrial Tribunal or, under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, to a Fair Employment Tribunal.

Every effort will be made to ensure that complainants will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action for the perpetrator and may warrant dismissal.