

MBarron Consulting Limited

Equal Opportunities Policy

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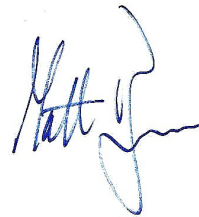
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1 Principles

MBarron Consulting Ltd (MBCL) wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment. We aim to encourage, value and manage diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality of opportunity, it is in the best interest of this organisation to recruit and develop the best people for our jobs from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible. That diversity adds value.

MBCL recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination. Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through for example exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect (where there is a requirement or condition on all, but which has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified).

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not. Employees and associates of MBCL have a duty to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees and/or associates of MBCL should draw the attention of MBCL management team to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

2 Statement of Intent

MBCL aims to create a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

We are committed wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly in all aspects of their employment or association with MBCL.

Our aim is that the workforce (employees and associates) will be truly representative of all sections of society. Selection for employment, associate status or promotion or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit, ability and experience only. Selection for training will be on the basis of job requirement only. Intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.

MBCL will challenge discrimination in its own policies. It aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants, employees whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or associate irrespective of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or age.

All employees or associates of MBCL must be eligible to work in the UK and be capable of obtaining UK government clearance to work on sensitive matters as this is the core business of the organisation. Applicants, employees or associates who are found not to be eligible to work in the UK or cannot (for whatever reason) obtain UK government security clearance shall not be eligible to work for MBCL.

3 Implementation

3.1 Ownership

The Operations Manager of MBCL is responsible for the policy's day-to-day implementation. Consultation will take place with staff and associates on the implementation and development of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Operations Manager to monitor effectiveness, and to review and develop the policy where necessary. Monitoring and review will take place annually.

Each employee or associate is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees or the termination of contracts for services with associates.

3.2 Vacancy advertising

Wherever possible, all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally. Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches underrepresented groups internally and externally. Wherever possible and appropriate, vacancies will be notified to job centres, careers offices, schools, colleges, polytechnics, etc, with significant minority group rolls, as well as to minority press/media and organisations. All vacancy advertisements will include an appropriate short statement on equal opportunity.

3.3 Selection and recruitment

Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job. Wherever possible, more than one person must be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process, and all should have competency in equal opportunities. Short-listing and interviewing selection shall be based entirely on merit and experience regardless of gender, race or disability. Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies must be recorded.

MBCL will ensure that all new employees receive appropriate induction on the policy and action plan and that associates will be fully informed.

3.4 Positive action - training, promotion and conditions of service

Recruitment to all jobs (including associate status) will be strictly on merit. Wherever necessary, use will be made of lawful exemptions to recruit suitably qualified people to cater for the special needs of particular groups. Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

Appropriate training and guidance will be provided to develop equality and diversity. Adequate resources will be made available to fulfil the aims of this policy. The policy

will be widely promoted, and copies will be freely available and displayed in the companies offices.

3.5 Personnel records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the equal opportunity policy (and for no other purpose) a record will be kept of all employees' and associates' gender, racial origins and any disability. Where necessary, employees will be able to check/correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted. Such records will be analysed, and appropriate follow-up action taken.

3.6 Intervention

Employees or associates who feel they have been discriminated against should raise the matter with the MBCL Operations Manager. Initially the employee/associate and Operations Manager should aim to resolve the matter informally. It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and easily resolved once the problem is clear.

If they are dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint is very serious, or the Operations Manager is the cause of the complaint, the employee should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal grievance to the Managing Director.

4 Letting people know about the Policy

- This policy shall be displayed at the MBCL main operating office.
- The policy shall be available from the MBCL internet site www.mbarronconsulting.com providing total transparency of our policy.
- The policy shall be located and version controlled with the company internet based Electronic Quality Management System (EQMS) allowing all staff and authorised associates to view the policy.
- Reference to our equal opportunities policy shall be made in all sub-contracts initiated by MBCL ensuring that all suppliers are aware of our equal opportunity policy.