



***Equality and Diversity Policy***  
***(Incorporating Equality Act 2010)***

**OF**

***SSG – SUPPORT SERVICES GROUP LIMITED***

**Policy Statement**

SSG Support Services Group Ltd is committed to eliminate discrimination, promoting diversity and providing equal opportunities, which is demonstrated through our employment policies, procedures and practices. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each person feels respected and able to give their best. All employees have a duty to co-operate to ensure that this policy is effective to ensure equal opportunities and to prevent discrimination. Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who breaches this policy and serious breaches will be treated as gross misconduct. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

To that end, the purpose of this policy is to provide diversity and equality to all in employment, irrespective of their protected characteristics such as gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, pregnancy, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees, whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly, equally and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

## **Our Commitment**

- To ensure SSG Support Services Group Ltd activities are of high quality and responsive to our client's needs, ensuring that our employees adequately respond to the needs of our client.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- To ensure that SSG Support Services Group Ltd fulfil its legal obligations under the equal opportunities legislation and complies with provisions contained in various Codes of Practice.
- The commitment to diversity and equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Breaches of our diversity and equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

## **Implementation**

The responsibility for enforcement of this policy rests with Ahmad Rafique (Managing Director), who will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and associated initiatives. All employees have an obligation to avoid discrimination and promote equal opportunities. The implementations of initiatives in support of the policy are the responsibilities of the Directors, Managers and Supervisors. This Equality Policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Scope and Purpose of Policy**

The company will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability or age, pregnancy, trade union membership, or part-time or fixed-term status.

This policy applies to the advertising of jobs and recruitment and selection, to training and development, opportunities for promotion, to conditions of service, benefits and facilities and pay; to health and safety and to conduct at work, to grievance and disciplinary procedures and to termination of employment, including redundancy.

The company will take appropriate steps to accommodate the requirements of workers' religions, cultures, and domestic responsibilities. Our various family friendly policies in the Employee Handbook should be consulted for specific guidance on our approach to these issues and your entitlements

### **Equality and Diversity at Work**

In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policies, procedures and practices, we aim to:

- Ensure that our employment, training and development policies, procedures and practices comply with this policy and do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual;
- We intend to become an employer of choice by promoting and developing policies that support a work-life balance, equal pay and ensuring that we maximise employment opportunities for all;
- Monitor our employment processes by age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and race and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent; Recruit employees in a manner which is fair and open;
- Ensure employees are aware of their personal responsibility to apply this policy;
- Eliminate discrimination in the provision of training and development to ensure that all employees can realise their full potential and contribute to the company:
- Ensure that all Managers / Supervisors undertake relevant training in equal opportunity issues to raise their awareness, understanding and importance of equal opportunities in the work place and in-service delivery;
- Promote a culture of fairness and respect in all employment policies, procedures and practices;
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities to all employees regardless of protected characteristics;
- Take positive action to encourage under-represented groups to apply for posts or specific training;

- Ensure pay structures reward to all employees fairly.
- Recognise that employees have the right to work in a supportive and safe environment free from harassment.
- Ensure that we have in place procedures for equal pay.
- Make reasonable access adjustments, wherever possible, to enable the employment and redeployment of staff with disabilities.

### **Guidelines for Recruitment**

The company aims to ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any of the unlawful grounds listed above. Recruitment procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure that applicants are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. Job selection criteria are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

The company may monitor applicants' racial origins, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion and age as part of the recruitment procedure.

- The governing factor for appointments will be based on merit, competence and the ability to do the job.
- All jobs will be advertised externally and internally.
- All job advertisements will carry wording designed to encourage applicants from all sections of the community.
- Recruitment literature will describe jobs without gender, race or disability bias.
- Consideration will be given to using a range of advertising media to encourage and attract applicants from all sections of the community.
- All applicants will be assessed in the same way using the same evaluation and selection criteria.
- Selection criteria will not be set to unlawfully discriminate (directly or indirectly) on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, pregnancy, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership, social class and should solely be related to the requirements of the job.

- Age limits, age requirements or length of service restrictions will not be set as criteria for the job unless they can be justified as they are likely to have a disproportionately adverse effect on women and people from minority communities or if there is a genuine occupational qualification complaint with section 5. (2)(d) of the Amended Race Relations Act 2000.
- Disabled job applicants who meet the essential criteria of the job description will be guaranteed an interview.
- Where selection tests are used, tests will be specifically related to the job and in the case of ability tests they should be fully validated so as to avoid any bias on the grounds of gender, marital status, race or disability.

The staff responsible for short listing, interviewing and making or recommending an appointment will be clearly informed of the selection criteria and the need for consistency.

Wherever possible, at least two people will interview applicants and all questions will relate to the selection criteria. No questions will be based on assumptions about roles in the home and the family, or the assumed suitability of different ethnic groups for the post in question.

Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect the performance of the job (for example, if the job involves irregular hours or extensive travel) this will be discussed objectively and will be asked equally of all candidates.

In the case of disabled applicants who identify themselves at the application stage, appropriate interview arrangements (such as accessible interview rooms or the assistance of a sign interpreter) should be offered to enable candidates to compete on an equal basis.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure we are achieving our policy objectives, we will monitor the effectiveness of our policy by keeping records of our recruitment selections process. We will annually monitor and measure the effectiveness of the policy reviewing our practices where there are shortfalls and developing recommendations and implement them.

The records will contain information such as Gender, Race, Age, Disability, Criminal conviction and marital status.

- All vacant posts will be open for job-sharing unless considered unsuitable (with regards to maintaining work efficiency) and should be advertised in manner so as to encourage job sharing.
- Any existing employee or any two existing employees will be able to apply to their manager for a job-share arrangement in respect of their job.
- When an employee becomes disabled as a result of an accident or illness, reasonable adjustments will be made to seek to ensure the employee continues in the job.
- Where an employee has cultural needs that may appear to conflict with existing work requirements, consideration will be given to varying the requirements especially where it may be that the requirement is unjustifiable. In any such cases, advice should be sought from their line manager.
- Where an employee experiences sexual harassment this will be viewed as a form of sex discrimination which shall not be condoned or tolerated by the company.
- Female employees are far more likely to suffer from such discrimination and it can be defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or conduct based on sex which is offensive to the recipient, which interferes with the recipient's work performance and creates a hostile working environment. The rebuttal of such unwanted conduct is often followed by threatened or actual employment retaliation. An employee experiencing conduct which is believed to be sexual harassment should follow the stages in the complaint's procedures.
- Where an employee experiences racial harassment this will be viewed as a form of racial discrimination which will not be condoned or tolerated by the company.
- Black and other minority ethnic employees are far more likely to suffer from such discrimination (though not exclusively) and it can be defined as an unwanted conduct of racial nature, or conduct based on race, it is offensive to the recipient and interferes with the recipient's work performance creating a hostile working environment.
- An employee experiencing conduct that is believed to be racial harassment should follow the stages outlined in the complaint's procedure.
- All other terms and conditions of employment will not be related to the gender, marital status, ethnic origin or disability of employees and as far as practicable will not obstruct or limit the employment or promotion of any employee.
- Employees who have recruitment and selection responsibilities and/or who have supervisory responsibilities will undertake training in recruitment, selection, and in equal

opportunities to ensure awareness and fairness in their assessment and selection process enabling them to encourage and promote equal opportunities for all.

### **Appraisal, Training, Career Development, Promotion and Transfer**

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff reviews. All workers will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation. All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities will be reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all workers who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them. This includes pay, bonus criteria, policies and all benefits offered.

- Where posts are internally advertised only (i.e. offering career-development and promotion opportunities to existing employees), the same principles as those governing external recruitment will apply.
- In the case of trainees, merit increment, honoraria, etc. are the criteria on which employees' pay rises through increment will not be based on criteria related to gender marital status, age, disability or ethnic origin.
- All employees will be encouraged to take suitable opportunities for training and advancement. In particular, in areas of work where certain groups are under- represented (especially in senior management), managers will take a pro-active role in ensuring employees from such under-represented staff take up training opportunities that assist their future possible entry into these areas of work.
- Employees who have direct contact with members of the public will undertake training on dealing with service users to ensure awareness of their customer needs and the public at large, ensuring satisfactory service delivery.
- In situations where employees are being re-deployed due to changes in the operational arrangements of SSG Support Services Group Ltd will be free from bias on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, ethnic origin and any other protected characteristics.

## **Dismissal and Redundancy**

We will monitor redundancy criteria and procedures to ensure that they are fair and objective and do not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees.

We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures are carried out fairly and uniformly for all workers, whether they result in the giving of disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

- In cases where employees are being dismissed, this decision will not be made on grounds of their gender, marital status, disability or ethnic origin and decisions will be made solely in accordance with our Company's disciplinary procedure.
- Intentional, direct and overt acts of race and sex discrimination, and racial and sexual harassment will be regarded as gross misconduct and therefore a dismissible offence.

## **Equal Opportunities for All**

- This policy also seeks to ensure that our Company does not discriminate on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, trade union activity, religious and political beliefs, poverty and social exclusion. These areas are not covered by anti-discrimination' legislation or Codes of Practice in way legislation covers all protected characteristics of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, gender, marital status or domestic responsibilities, and disability.
- The objectives and our Equal Opportunities Policy apply equally to these areas as it does for those that have supporting legislation.

## **General Provisions**

- Whilst the overall responsibility for the Policy lies with the Company's Directors, every employee has a personal and legal obligation to avoid discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for all. SSG Support Services Group Ltd will ensure that employees are aware of these obligations.
- We will regularly examine staffing information through workforce surveys, applications and on any other aspects of personnel activity in order to ascertain the makeup and experiences of the employees by gender, gender reassignment, race, ethnic origin, pregnancy, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital

status, civil partnership, social class and in order to monitor progress in implementing the Equal Opportunities Employment Policy.

- All personnel policies and procedures, particularly those relating directly to equal opportunities will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are operating in a non-discriminatory manner and are adequately assisting the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Employment Policy.
- Complaints of the discrimination by employees should be raised at an appropriate level of the Grievance Procedure and complaints by job applicants should be made to the Managing Director. Any complaints will be treated seriously, in confidence and sensitively.

### **Fixed-Term Employees and Agency and Temporary Workers**

We will monitor our use of fixed-term employees and agency workers, and their conditions of service, to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits, training, promotion, and permanent employment opportunities.

### **Part-Time Workers**

We may monitor the conditions of service of part-time employees and their progression within the company to ensure that they are being offered appropriate access to benefits and training and promotion opportunities. We will also ensure requests to alter working hours are dealt with appropriately.

### **Breaches of the Policy**

If you believe that you may have been disadvantaged on any of the unlawful grounds listed above, you may raise the matter through the company's grievance procedure. If you believe that you may have been harassed on any of the unlawful grounds you are encouraged to raise the matter through our anti-harassment policy. Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Workers who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations of a breach in this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. If, after investigation, you are proven to have harassed any other worker on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, disability or age or otherwise act in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result

in summary dismissal. The company will take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

As this policy applies equally to the company workers' relations with visitors, clients, customers and suppliers, if, after investigation, you are proven to have discriminated against or harassed a client or supplier you will also be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Monitoring and Revision of Policy**

This policy is reviewed regularly by the company.

The company will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving the objectives stated in the EOP statement by monitoring the composition of job applicants and the benefits and career progression of its workers

### **Equal Opportunity in Service Delivery**

#### **Customer First Policy**

SSG Support Services Group Ltd takes active steps to provide equal opportunities, in service, delivery and the employment of staff. We are committed to building on our existing achievements through improving our services and employment practices.

Equal opportunities mean that our customers, their employee, general public and their services users will not be treated less favourably because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, sexuality, age or religious belief.

We are committed to equal opportunities, both in the delivery of services and in the employment of staff. Our commitment to equal opportunities means we will encourage the development of understanding and appreciation of diversity and lifestyles.

We expect our workforce to have a positive attitude to equality issues, treating each other equally and fairly regardless of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, sexuality, age or religious belief.

Approved By



Ahmad Rafique (C.E.O.)

1<sup>st</sup> October 2021