

Valuing Diversity

At **The Housing Executive** we recognise our responsibilities in regards to Equal Opportunities and the promotion of diversity in the work place. **Carol Drummond**, a director and founder of the company, is responsible for ensuring that all employees understand and act in accordance with this Equal Opportunities Policy and the Equality Act 2010, in dealings with both fellow employees, candidates, clients and suppliers. We believe that a service that values diversity in its candidates and employees will attract talented people from the widest range of backgrounds. We aim to run a professional and accessible organisation that everybody can trust and value.

We value difference and believe that benefits are to be gained from a diverse workforce as it is a central factor in determining efficiency, productivity and overall business success. We review and monitor all aspects of our registration and recruitment process as a means to eliminate unjustifiable discrimination and to support best practice. Promoting equality means more than just gathering statistics, we draw together the information provided by our equal opportunities monitoring, evaluate it, and any imbalances found are addressed and acted upon. For example, we actively seek to identify diverse candidate pools if we find that they are not fairly represented in our recruitment. We may widen the media in which we advertise, to ensure as diverse an employee and candidate base as possible. We also strive to help our clients meet their own diversity targets.

Our Policy:

We will not discriminate against or treat unfairly any individual on the grounds of their: age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, political beliefs, spent convictions, or membership/non-membership of a Trade Union. We place an obligation upon all staff to respect and act in accordance with this policy. We have an unequivocal commitment to the principle and operation of equality in terms of how we deliver the best recruitment service to our clients and candidates, and in how we support our own staff.

The Housing Executive will not discriminate unlawfully when deciding which candidate is submitted for a vacancy or assignment, or in any of our terms of employment or terms of engagement for temporary or full-time workers. **The Housing Executive** will ensure that each candidate is assessed only in accordance with the candidate's merits, qualifications and abilities to perform the relevant duties required by the particular vacancy. We will also not accept instructions from clients that indicate an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

Race

Candidates will only be assessed in accordance with their merits, qualifications and abilities to perform the relevant duties required by the employer regardless of their race. In this case the term race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin (Equality Act, 2010). Moreover, members of Black and Asian minority ethnic groups (BAME) may have special experience that could be of particular value to the services **The Housing Executive** provides.

Sex / Caring Responsibilities

Our aim is to ensure that opportunities are available fairly to both men and women, and we will not discriminate on the grounds of sex. Both women and men will of course be invited to apply for all posts. Furthermore, an individual's caring responsibilities will not have a detrimental effect on them being considered for a role. We endorse and encourage our clients to consider all types of working, such as part-time working, job sharing, term time working, and flexible hours, so that roles are accessible to individuals with caring responsibilities.

Disability

The Housing Executive will not treat a disabled candidate or employee, less favourably, on the grounds of their disability, i.e. worse than someone without that disability when all surrounding circumstances including the abilities of the disabled person, are the same. It is also our policy not to treat a disabled person less favourably for a reason related to their disability. People with disabilities are actively encouraged to register with **The Housing Executive** and to apply for any jobs advertised by us.

The Housing Executive aims to provide the best service possible for candidates with disabilities. We commit to taking reasonable steps to provide auxiliary aids or suitable adaptations for people who declare themselves to have a disability in order to help them during the recruitment process or in the work place; this applies to candidates who register with us and our own employees. We understand that our duty applies to all aspects of employment, including recruitment and selection, training, transfer, career development and retention.

Age

Social attitudes can result in unfair assumptions being made about an individual because they belong to a certain age group. Suitably experienced staff will be considered and recruited regardless of age (subject to any legal restrictions) and **The Housing Executive** positively values the experience that comes with age. We therefore will not discriminate directly or indirectly, harass or victimise any person on the grounds of their age. We will actively encourage clients not to include any criteria in job specifications that is directly or indirectly age specific and every attempt will be made to help our clients recruit on the basis of competence and skills and not age.

The Housing Executive is committed to recruiting and retaining employees whose skills, experience, and attitude are suitable for the requirements of the various positions regardless of age. No age requirements will be stated in any job advertisements that we produce.

Gender Reassignment

The Housing Executive recognises that any employee or worker may wish to change their gender during the course of their employment. We will support any employee or worker through the reassignment provided that full medical counselling has been undertaken. **The Housing Executive** will make every effort to try to protect an employee or worker who has undergone, is undergoing or intends to undergo gender reassignment, from discrimination or harassment within the workplace.

Sexual Orientation

An individual's sexual orientation will not affect their chance of becoming employed by or through **The Housing Executive**, or benefiting from our services. We recognise that some groups are treated unfavourably as a result of their sexual orientation and undertake to prevent such discrimination. **The Housing Executive** will not treat individuals less favourably on grounds of sexual orientation throughout the entire employment relationship; regardless of whether a person's sexual orientation is towards people of the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes. All candidates and employees are protected from sexual orientation discrimination: lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and heterosexuals/straight people.

Religion/Belief

We believe that individuals should be enabled to retain and affirm their unique identity in regards to their religion or beliefs. In order to eliminate unlawful discrimination at **The Housing Executive** we aim to promote good relations between people with different religions and beliefs and we would not consider an individual's religion/beliefs relevant to their suitability for a role.

The Housing Executive has in place procedures and policies to aid compliance with this equal opportunities policy and for dealing with complaints of discrimination. These are available immediately upon request.

For more information on equal opportunities please visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>