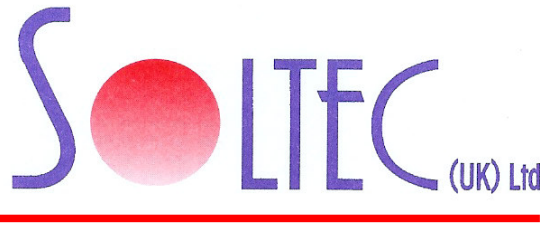


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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Second Revision 2007



1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1** Soltec (UK) Ltd is committed to the positive promotion of equal opportunity in employment. It is the aim of the Company to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment in employment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, grade or association. This principle will apply to recruitment and selection, job/task allocation, promotion, transfer, training, appraisal, discipline and grievance and all terms and conditions of employment.
- 1.2** Other related Policies and Procedures will be reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1** This policy seeks to promote equal opportunity, to ensure the elimination of discrimination and to encourage the development of good employment practices in respect of all employees.
- 2.2** The reasons for developing and seeking to achieve equality of opportunity in employment are:
- to ensure the most effective use of the potential workforce in the interests of the local community;
 - to ensure the Company meets its legal responsibilities under Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983); Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986; Race Relations Act 1975 (amended 2000); Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

3. MAIN STATUTORY PROVISIONS

3.1 Sex Discrimination Act and Race Relations Act

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended by the Sex Discrimination Act 1986) makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of gender and marriage in recruitment, promotion, training or transfer, terms on which a job is offered and dismissal. The Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) makes it unlawful to discriminate on racial grounds or against racial groups, in recruitment, promotion, training or transfer, terms and conditions of employment and dismissal. Racial grounds include any discrimination based on colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins.

Both Acts permit a job to be offered to a member of a particular racial group or gender if membership of that group or gender is a genuine occupational qualification (GOQ) for the job. However, the use of GOQs is limited to very specific circumstances, e.g. in cases where the post holder would provide personal welfare services for a racial group whose needs could most effectively be met by a member of the same group.

Where there have been few or no members of one sex in particular work for the previous 12 months, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 allows an employer to give special encouragement and provide specific training. The term "positive action" refers to a variety of measures designed to counteract the effects of past discrimination and to help eliminate sex stereotyping. This is legal on the groups of sex or race, as long as it does not involve positive discrimination. Managers wishing to address the balance of their workforce are advised to seek professional Human Resource advice.

In both Acts three kinds of discrimination are defined:

- **Direct Discrimination** - This occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another on the grounds of his or her gender, marital status, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin
- **Indirect Discrimination** - This occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which, although applied to all individual groups is such that:

the proportion of persons of a particular racial, sexual or other group who can comply with it is significantly smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it;

it cannot be shown to be justifiable based upon the needs of the job, e.g. rigidly insisting on certain educational qualifications which may not be essential to performance of the job;

it is to the detriment of the individuals concerned because they cannot reasonably comply with it, e.g. applying an unjustifiable age or height barrier which may exclude women and some ethnic groups.

- **Victimisation** - is unlawful and occurs when a person is discriminated against because he or she has asserted his or her rights under either the Sex Discrimination or Race Relations Acts, or has been involved in its enforcement.

4. THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

4.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 aims to end discrimination against people with disabilities. It makes it unlawful to discriminate in:

- the recruitment and retention of employees;
- terms and conditions of employment;
- opportunities for promotion or transfer;
- induction;
- training and development;
- discipline, dismissal or by subjecting a person to any other detriment.

A person is disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- A “mental impairment” includes a mental illness or mental disorder only if it is a clinically well recognised illness.
- An impairment has a “long-term effect” if it has lasted at least 12 months or can reasonably be expected to last at least 12 months or for the rest of the person’s life. However, if the impairment has ceased but is likely to recur and would continue to have a substantial adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, then the impairment will qualify as a disability.
- A person with a “severe disfigurement” will be treated as disabled if the impairment has a substantial adverse effect on the ability of that person to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- An impairment is to be taken to affect “normal day-to-day activities” if it affects mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or perception of risk of physical danger.
- A person who controls or corrects an impairment by medication or a special aid will still be treated as disabled.
- A person who suffers from a progressive condition (such as cancer, multiple sclerosis or muscular dystrophy) will qualify as a disabled person if the condition is expected in future to have a substantial adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- The Bill has been amended to extend protection to persons who have had a disability in the past and which has lasted for at least 12 months. Even where the disability ceases to have a substantial adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, the disability is to be treated as continuing to have that effect if it recurs.

5. EQUAL PAY ACT 1970 (AS AMENDED 1983)

5.1 A member of staff is entitled to equal pay (and other contractual terms and conditions) with a member of staff of the opposite gender if:

- they are doing work which is the same or broadly similar;
- they are doing work which has been rated as equivalent by an analytical job evaluation scheme;
- they are doing work of equal value in terms of the demand made on the worker (whether or not there has been a job evaluation scheme).

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MEASURES

Soltec (UK) Ltd aims to have a workforce which is representative of the local population. Equal Opportunities measures include:

6.1 Recruitment and Selection

Soltec (UK) Ltd aims to ensure that no employee or prospective employee will be treated unfavourably on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, association or grade. The selection criteria and procedures operated in the Authority will be reviewed periodically to ensure a system exists whereby individuals are selected, promoted, trained and treated solely on the basis of the abilities and the performance which are appropriate to the post applied for or held.

6.2 Training

Training on the policy, procedures and the legislation relating to equal opportunities in employment will be provided to those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff.

6.3 Advertising

Job advertisements must not include any statements which are contrary to Soltec (UK) Ltd Equal Opportunities Policy and must include the statement "Working towards Equal Opportunities".

6.4 Job Descriptions and Employee Specifications

Job descriptions and the essential requirements listed in the person specification will include only those skills and qualities actually needed to do the job.

6.5 Interviews

All applicants will be asked the same questions based on the person specification and job description.

6.6 Dignity at Work

Soltec (UK) Ltd considers it essential to support a policy that prohibits personal harassment and bullying between employees and aims to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

6.7 Job Sharing Policy

Soltec (UK) Ltd will create, as far as is practically possible, the opportunities to accommodate those individuals who wish to work in a job arrangement.

6.8 Part Time Working

Soltec (UK) Ltd will create, as far as is practically possible, the opportunities to accommodate those individuals who wish to work on a part time basis or flexible working arrangements.

6.9 Family Friendly Policies

Soltec (UK) Ltd provides better conditions in this area than the law

requires. These include maternity leave and special leave such as paternity, carers and compassionate.

6.10 Communication

Soltec (UK) Ltd will bring this policy statement to the attention of all employees in the Company and elsewhere as appropriate.

6.11 Disputes

Soltec (UK) Ltd will enable a member of staff who believes that he or she has been treated inequitably within the scope of this policy to raise this matter through the Grievance Procedure.

6.12 Disciplinary

Soltec (UK) Ltd will take disciplinary action against any member of staff who is found to have discriminated against or harassed others because of their gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, association or grade or to have victimised another employee who is asserting his or her rights under legislation and policy.

6.13 Monitoring

Soltec (UK) Ltd will seek to monitor statistical information in relation to the recruitment and selection procedures, the structure of the workforce and access to training.

6.14 Equal Pay

Soltec (UK) Ltd will ensure that all employees undertaking jobs of equal value will be paid and treated equally in relation to pay and other terms and conditions of employment.

6.15 Protection of Pay

Soltec (UK) Ltd will ensure fair and consistent arrangements for staff during organisational change.

6.17 Restructuring

In any restructuring, the Company will ensure that all requirements of employment legislation and contractual responsibilities are complied with in full.

6.18 Redundancy

Soltec (UK) Ltd will ensure that selection criteria for redundancy are fair and non-discriminatory, and that all staff is properly consulted.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The Company responsibility

Soltec (UK) Ltd recognises its responsibility for ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unlawful discrimination to its employees or prospective employees.

7.2 The Managing Director

The Managing Director will have overall responsibility for ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unlawful discrimination within the company.

7.3 The Assistant Manager

The Assistant will have delegated responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy and that individuals within the organisation receive proper guidance and training and that the effectiveness of the policy is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

7.5 Individual members of staff

While the primary responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity rests with the Managing Director and Assistant Manager, individual members of staff at all levels also have certain responsibilities.

All staff should:

- co-operate with the policy and arrangements introduced to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination;
- not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff on account of their race, sex or marital status;
- inform their Manager if they suspect that discrimination is taking place in the working environment.

8. CONSULTATION

The effectiveness of this Policy is dependent on the support and co-operation of all concerned, and links will be maintained with staff representatives and other bodies such as the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and National Advisory Councils on the Employment of People with Disabilities.

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On behalf of Soltec (UK) Ltd

Signed:

Date:

Garry Rouse
Managing Director

Date	22/04/04	Rev	04-1	04-2					
Originated	AC	Date	19/10/05	04/01/07					
Checked									

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