

# Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

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## Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

This policy sets out Colchester Global Investors ("Colchester") approach to equal opportunities and diversity.

Colchester is committed to encouraging and achieving a working environment which is underpinned by fairness to all individuals, where equality and diversity are recognised, encouraged, and valued and the concept of individual responsibility is accepted by all.

Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

This policy sets out Colchester's approach to equal opportunities and to the avoidance of discrimination at work. It allows Colchester to have a clear and effective means of addressing concerns relating to equal opportunity matters.

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, recruitment, pay and conditions, training and development opportunities, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination of employment and providing references.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers, interns and agency workers of the Company. It also applies to the treatment of visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and other business contacts of Colchester's staff. This policy should be read in conjunction with Colchester's Harassment and Bullying Policy, and Grievance Procedure.

### Policy Statement

Colchester is committed to promoting equal opportunities and diversity in employment. All employees and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Together these are called 'Protected Characteristics'.

Colchester does not tolerate intimidation, bullying, harassment, or discrimination in any form under any circumstances. Individuals who make allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by Colchester as a result of taking proper and legitimate action against discrimination or harassment.

Selection for employment, promotion, training, development, or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit, skills, qualifications, ability and aptitude alone. All employees will be aided and encouraged to develop and fulfil their potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the Company. All decisions in this regard will be made on fair and objective criteria, free from discrimination.

### Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- all staff work in an open, equal opportunities environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, including harassment and victimisation;

- all staff are treated equally and fairly within each aspect and at each stage of the employment relationship, and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential;
- the message that this policy promotes is communicated throughout the workforce and all staff members know what constitutes unacceptable behaviour within the Company;
- all staff have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the policy. If any staff member is in any doubt about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct under this policy, they should contact a member of the management team;
- in order to ensure that Colchester has access to the widest pool of talent and secures the best workers for its needs, employment opportunities are open to all suitably qualified candidates.
- Colchester employs/engages an ability-based workforce that reflects the multi-cultural nature of its' local communities and labour markets;
- Colchester will effectively deal with unlawful discrimination where it is discovered; and
- individuals who make complaints under this policy in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result.

## Types of discrimination

There are various forms of discrimination and to varying degrees. Discrimination does not always represent a physical or conscious activity. How one individual perceives behaviour can be very different to how another colleague may perceive it.

A general description of some of the different types of discriminatory acts that may be unlawful is set out below. Some of the actions referred to below can be intentional and others unintentional:

**1) Direct Discrimination** – occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another person was treated, or would have been treated, in like for like circumstances, because of a protected characteristic they have. For example, refusing to promote a pregnant employee on the basis that she is shortly due to go on maternity leave.

**Associative Discrimination** – this is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. For example, an employee is discriminated against because their child is disabled.

**Perceptive Discrimination** – this is direct discrimination against an individual because others believe they possess a particular protected characteristic. For example, where an employee is directly discriminated against because their co-workers believe the individual is gay. It applies even if the employee does not actually possess that characteristic.

**2) Indirect Discrimination** – occurs where a practice, provision or criteria applied to all staff has the effect, despite on the face of it being a neutral practice, of disadvantaging a certain group of people who share a particular protected characteristic, and it cannot be justified. For example, asking all employees to work on a Saturday or a Sunday could indirectly discriminate against those employees with certain religious beliefs who cannot work on these days.

**Harassment** – occurs where an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which may violate that person's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or otherwise offensive environment for that person.

For example, it can include unwanted behaviour such as name calling, teasing and making lewd comments, ignoring or excluding colleagues, displaying pornographic material in the workplace and making repeated, unwanted insensitive jokes. Harassment is dealt with under Colchester's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Employees can complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them and they do not need to possess the relevant protected characteristic themselves.

**Victimisation** – occurs where an individual suffers a detriment because they complained about or supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.

**Bullying** – offensive, malicious or insulting behaviour and abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

**Lawful Practices** – whilst it is Colchester's aim to act within the boundaries of the equal opportunities legislation at all times, the law provides exceptions for certain practices and acts that may appear to be contrary to the aims of this policy, but which, for example, may be justified by objective and operational means. If an employee has any concerns in respect of any workplace behaviour that they suspect may be contrary to this policy, the employee should contact their manager and/or HR.

## Duties and responsibilities

Those working at a managerial level can have a significant impact on the effective implementation of this policy and are expected to lead by example. Colchester requires all managerial staff to act in accordance with both the spirit and the letter of this policy at all times, and to ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour are maintained amongst the teams that they manage.

The success of this policy can only be achieved with the co-operation of all employees. Each employee has a personal responsibility to apply this policy in the workplace.

All employees have a legal responsibility to comply with this policy and may be found personally liable for unlawful acts of discrimination if found to act in breach of the terms of this policy. Conduct in breach of this policy may also result in the Company becoming liable for the actions of its workers, and both parties may be liable to pay compensation.

Everyone should try to create an atmosphere of equality within the workplace, which includes treating all fellow workers, visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and other business contacts of Colchester with dignity and respect. Employees should avoid any behaviour that could be discriminatory or be considered as harassment. If an employee becomes aware of any actual or potential breach of this policy, they should report it immediately to their manager and/or HR so that appropriate action can be taken by the Company.

Where relevant, clients, suppliers and visitors to Colchester should be made aware of this policy. Employees should speak to their manager immediately if they engage in conduct that is unacceptable in accordance with the terms of this policy.

All employees are encouraged to participate in furthering this policy. If an employee requires further information or has any ideas to contribute, they should contact their manager and/or HR.

## When does this policy apply?

The policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and includes conduct outside of the workplace that is related to work such as meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues. The policy also applies to conduct that may impact Colchester's reputation such as the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to Colchester.

Below are some specific areas of application:

### **1) Recruitment**

Selection for employment at Colchester will be on the basis of merit, ability and aptitude, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination.

Job applicants must not be asked questions that might suggest an intention to discriminate because of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments to accommodate a disability are needed for an interview.

### **2) Training**

Employees may be required to participate in training and development activities from time to time, to encourage the promotion of the principles of this policy.

### **3) Promotion**

All promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit and will not be influenced by any of the protected characteristics outlined in this policy. Promotion opportunities will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity.

## **Breaches of this policy and enforcement**

If an employee believes that they have not been given equal treatment, the employee should raise the matter immediately with their manager and/or HR in the first instance. Where the employee wants to take formal action, Colchester's formal Grievance Procedure should be followed.

Any complaints or allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated very seriously and in confidence. Complaints may be investigated by the Company to the extent that it considers appropriate.

While Colchester welcomes complaints relating to breach of this policy made in good faith, any false complaints or complaints in bad faith will be viewed by Colchester as an act of misconduct. This will normally result in disciplinary action being taken by the Company against the employee concerned.

If an employee discriminates against or harasses any other worker because of any of the protected characteristics in breach of this policy, the employee will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct, and may result in dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. Colchester takes breaches of this policy seriously.

## **Monitoring**

In order to maintain equal opportunities best practice and identify barriers to workforce equality and diversity, information relating to equal opportunities matters and the make-up of the workforce may be recorded and analysed by Colchester. We may use anonymised statistics and data to monitor and review the composition and movement of workers and its provisions, practices, criteria, policies and procedures taken in respect of such matters.



The information obtained from equal opportunities, diversity and ethnicity monitoring will be held in strict confidence and will be used to ensure our processes are fair, transparent, promote equality of opportunity for all and/or for compliance with applicable procedures, laws and regulations. Employee personal data may be provided to Clients and potential clients in response to Requests for Information, Due Diligence Questionnaires, or similar requests. Any reporting of personal data will be provided to third parties on an aggregated anonymised basis and will only be made available to third parties where employees have freely provided their explicit written consent. Employees are free to withdraw their consent to the processing of this data at any time.

## Miscellaneous

This policy does not form part of employee's contract of employment and can be amended at any time.