



**Able Canopies Ltd**  
**Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

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## **1. Purpose**

The aim of the policy is to ensure

- Fair recruitment and selection
- Equal access to training opportunities
- Equitable terms and conditions of employment
- Appropriate provision of services for different sections of the community

Able Canopies recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination.

Able Canopies will seek to promote the principles of equality and diversity in all its dealings with employees, workers, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors, recruitment agencies and the public.

All employees and those who act on the Company's behalf are required to adhere to this policy when undertaking their duties or when representing the Company in any other guise.

Able Canopies is also committed to compliance with relevant equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance.

However, Able Canopies is also mindful of the provision in discrimination law for the rare circumstances when an organisation may need to justify discrimination rather than have a disproportionate effect. This could be, for instance, where there is a conflict with other legislation that Able Canopies has to comply with or between service needs. In such circumstances Able Canopies is committed to following the required proper assessment and objective justification of any decision in order to demonstrate that the provision, criterion or practise is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

## **2. The Definition of Equality & Diversity**

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visual and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for Able Canopies.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to direct employees of Able Canopies, workers (engaged through, or by, an employment agency and supplied to Able Canopies on a temporary basis), and all job applicants regarding recruitment.

Where Able Canopies services are provided by external contractors or third parties on the basis of a specification set by Able Canopies, these contractors or third parties are responsible for adhering to Able Canopies Equality & Diversity Policy whilst providing services on behalf of Able Canopies Ltd.

This policy applies also to sub-contractors. Able Canopies will monitor the performance of contractors and/or third parties and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance and compliance with appropriate behaviours. However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party, these will be taken very seriously by Able Canopies and raised in the strongest possible terms with the Contractor or third party.

#### **4. Unlawful discrimination**

Unlawful discrimination of any kind in the working environment will not be tolerated and the Company will take all necessary action to prevent its occurrence.

Specifically, the Company aims to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, part-time status, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all aspects of employment, including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures
- training
- promotion and career-development opportunities
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures
- selection for redundancy

Equal opportunities practice is developing constantly as social attitudes and legislation change. The Company will review all policies and implement necessary changes where these could improve equality of opportunity.

While positive measures may be taken to encourage under-represented groups to apply for employment opportunities, recruitment or promotion to all jobs will be based solely on merit.

All employees will have equal access to training and other career-development opportunities appropriate to their experience and abilities.

However, the Company will take appropriate positive action measures (as permitted by equal opportunities legislation) to provide specialist training and support for groups that are under-represented in the workforce and encourage them to take up training and career-development opportunities.

We are committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, victimisation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

- This policy is supported by the senior management team.
- Additionally, we recognise that despite our best intentions circumstances may arise where we fail to provide an appropriate and professional service to people, consistent with the aims of this policy. We are committed to take action in such circumstances.

## **5. Implementation**

Able Canopies will have policies and procedures that support and uphold this equal opportunity policy. As a result, everyone can expect to be treated with fairness and for judgements to be made that respect their human rights and ensure natural justice. Decisions will be made with integrity following a process based upon transparent criteria.

Able Canopies will take action to communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers and others e.g. visitors, clients, contractors and suppliers of goods and services involved in its activities. We will continue to develop and implement programmes to ensure that all staff have received appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

## **6. Employment**

Able Canopies Equality & Diversity Policy is there to assist in the elimination of discrimination and ensure fair treatment for all employees by:

- Advertising all jobs in appropriate ways to ensure the widest possible response from all sections of the community
- Examining recruitment procedures regularly to ensure people are selected on their abilities and merits
- Offering fair terms and conditions of employment to employees
- Ensuring facilities and practices are supportive of employees with family responsibilities
- Providing equipment and facilities to enable people with a disability to obtain a job or continue working with Able Canopies Ltd.

## **7. Training**

Training will play an important role in assisting employees to implement Able Canopies Equal Opportunities policy and in developing employees' skills and potential.

All staff will receive training on Equalities and Diversity as part of their induction and within three months of joining our organisation.

All employees will need to show that they:

- Understand their workplace responsibilities as stated by the Equality Act 2010
- Have knowledge of the protected characteristics that are covered by the law.
- Understand what is meant by discrimination and be able to recognise the different types
- Understand what is deemed as prohibited conduct within the Equality Act

- Be aware of the importance of equality and diversity training so that the workplace can become more tolerant and understanding.

## **8. Responsibility**

All members of Able Canopies staff will take responsibility for their actions.

Specifically:

- The overall managerial responsibility for equal opportunities lies with the Managing Director
- The Managing Director is responsible for taking action in relation to equal opportunities in employment matters, for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy and for ensuring appropriate provision of supportive staff development.
- All employees are responsible for ensuring that they act at all times in a way that is consistent with our equal opportunities policy. Individuals may be personally accountable should any complaint arise or in respect of breaches of policy.
- People not employed by Able Canopies but who play a part in its activities, e.g. visitors, clients, contractors and suppliers of goods and services will be made aware of our expectation that they will operate within the scope of this policy. We will expect contractors and suppliers to demonstrate their commitment through evidence of their own equal opportunities policy.

## **9. Responding to feedback**

Able Canopies is committed to respond positively to constructive criticism and complaint in relation to equal opportunities. We recognise that making complaints and expressing concerns in relation to equal opportunities can be challenging. We will, therefore, develop specific advice and support to enable staff to put forward their concerns effectively.

We will take appropriate action to protect staff from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or within the organization, or in the course of their duties. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of staff will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary or grievance procedure.

## **10. Work/life balance**

Able Canopies aims to improve the working lives of its employees by a framework of policies such as a Flexible Working & Time off for Dependants.

## **11. Discrimination**

Discrimination may take seven main forms and is defined in law along with the protective characteristics associated with each provision as listed below:

- I. Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.
- II. Associative discrimination occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

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- III. Discrimination by perception occurs when someone discriminates against the individual because they think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic. Relevant protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
  - IV. Indirect Discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone places a group who share a characteristic e.g. type of disability at a particular disadvantage. Indirect discrimination may be justified if it can be shown that the provision, criterion or practice is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
  - V. Dual discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourable because of a combination of two protected characteristics. This means that it will be possible for an applicant to claim that they have been treated less favourably not just because of their race but also because of gender.
  - VI. Detriment arising from a disability arises when you treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability. This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person had a disability. This type of discrimination is only lawful if the action can be justified and the employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
  - VII. Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated unfavourably, disadvantaged or subjected to a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, this policy or the Harassment & Bullying Policy or because they are suspected of doing so. (However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint).
  - VIII. Third party harassment occurs when an employee is harassed by someone who does not work for the employing organisation such as a customer, visitors, client, contractor or visitors from another organisation. The employer will become legally responsible if they know an employee has been harassed on two or more occasions by someone and it may also be different individuals each time and fails to take reasonable steps to protect the employee from further harassment.

## **12. Complaints of discrimination**

Able Canopies will treat seriously all complaints of discrimination made by employees, clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, you are encouraged to raise the matter as soon as possible with your manager or other senior employee using the Company's Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you make an allegation of discrimination, the Company is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.

## **13. Communication**

This Equality & Diversity policy is available on the shared drive, and Able Canopies website. Please contact the Managing Director should you require a copy in an alternative format.

The details of this policy will be proactively communicated and promoted to all current staff and new starters.

#### **14. Monitoring**

The Managing Director will ensure Equality monitoring will be carried out to measure the effectiveness of Able Canopies Equal Opportunities Policy, to check the policy is working and act as a basis for future plans.

Monitoring information will only be used for this purpose and will be treated confidentially.

We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

We will monitor recruitment and selection procedures to ensure discrimination is not occurring.

Signed:



Tracy Meakins – Managing Director

Date: 03 12 2019

#### **Associated Policies**

- **Flexible Working Policy**
- **Ethical Sourcing Policy**
- **Complaints Procedure**
- **Induction Procedure**
- **Disciplinary Policy & Procedure**
- **Gender Reassignment**
- **Harassment & Bullying**