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HRP/004 – Equality at Work

1. Purpose

It is the policy of Northern Powergrid to treat all employees and job applicants fairly and equally regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, age, disability or union membership status.

Furthermore Northern Powergrid will ensure that no requirement or condition will be imposed without justification which could disadvantage individuals purely on any of the above grounds. The policy applies to recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment including pay, promotion, training, transfer and every other aspect of employment. Northern Powergrid will regularly review its procedures and selection criteria to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and otherwise treated according to their relevant individual abilities and merits. Northern Powergrid is committed to the implementation of this policy and to a programme of action to ensure that the policy is, and continues to be, fully effective. All employees are required to comply with the policy and to act in accordance with its objectives so as to remove any barriers to equal opportunity. Any act of discrimination by employees or any failure to comply with the terms of the policy may result in disciplinary action.

This document provides a framework for applying equality within the Company.

Within this document the term “Company” means Northern Powergrid Funding Company and its subsidiary companies but the term shall not include CE UK Gas Holdings Limited and its subsidiaries.

This document supersedes the following documents, all copies of which should be destroyed.

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2. Scope

This policy covers all “workers” (job applicants, employees, casual employees, contingent workers, trainees, contractors, consultants) associated with the Company.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that there is consistency in what we do to make the workplace a fair and equal environment while ensuring compliance with the law. As an employer protection exists in relation to – sex, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, age, disability or union membership status.

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3. Equality at Work

3.1 General Principles

Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated according to their abilities and merits and to the requirements of the job. All employees will be given equal opportunity and training, where appropriate, if it is deemed an appropriate business need to aid development opportunities.

3.2 Legal Requirements

The company will meet all statutory obligations under relevant legislation and, where appropriate, anticipate future legal requirements. This will be informed by:

- The Equality Act (2010) and associated secondary legislation
- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008)
- The Civil Partnership Act (2004)
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Protection from Harassment Act (1997)

In addition, this will be informed by the Codes of Practice or Guidance issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and other relevant bodies.

3.3 General Principles

Northern Powergrid is committed to fair employment practices including diversity and equal employment opportunity. The company respects the unique attributes and perspectives of every employee. We rely on the diverse perspectives of all employees to help the company build and improve its relationships with clients and business partners. It is the policy and practice of the company to provide equal employment and promotional opportunities to all employees based upon their abilities, achievements and experience without regard to race, religion, colour, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, age or national origin, or any other factor as provided by the laws of the country where we do business. The company is committed to observing those laws that pertain to freedom of association, privacy, recognition and the right to engage in collective bargaining and to otherwise fully comply with all applicable employment discrimination laws wherever we do business. This applies to all aspects of the company's employment decisions including recruitment, hiring, placement, development, promotion, training, scheduling, benefits, compensation and termination. If a conflict arises among the requirements of this policy and the laws, customs or practices of a particular area, consult with the legal department to determine the most appropriate course of action

It is therefore important that all employees comply with the equality at work policy at all times when managing employees or dealing with each other. This is particularly important when:

- Recruiting and selecting employees
- Pre – employment health related checks
- Making decisions on promotion, pay rises and training
- Dealing with requests for part time working
- Managing pregnant workers and working parents

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- Making selections for redundancy
- Dealing with colleagues on a daily basis particularly in e-mail correspondence
- Carrying out formal reviews

Whilst this list is not exhaustive our aim is to ensure that all employees achieve their full potential and that our employment decisions and actions are not discriminatory.

3.4 Management Responsibility

The President and Chief Executive Officer, Northern Powergrid has overall responsibility for this policy. However, all managers and indeed all employees have a particular, direct responsibility with regard to equality at work and they should consider their own behaviour and be aware at all times that they act as role models for their own employees over whom they have responsibility. Managers should be alert to possible inappropriate behaviour, take corrective action and make sure that they do not condone unsuitable behaviour by ignoring it.

Managers should ensure that **all** employees are made aware of this policy, including consultants, contingent workers and contractors who are working with the company and that it is always included in any induction or familiarisation process.

3.5 Breaches of the Equality at Work Policy

If any employee feels they have witnessed or experienced unfair treatment while representing the company or by a fellow employee they should bring the matter to the attention of their line manager or Human Resources. (See HRP004/001 – Guidance on Harassment, Victimisation, Bullying and Discrimination and relevant Company Collective Agreements).

Formal disciplinary proceedings may be taken against anyone suspected of unfair treatment and this may lead to action, up to and including dismissal from the Company.

Employees may also be personally liable to an Employment Tribunal claim being brought against them for either an act of discrimination or for allowing discrimination to occur or to continue without taking appropriate action. This could lead to an award of damages being made against an individual. In extreme cases of harassment relating to a protected characteristic can amount to a criminal offence.

3.6 Publicising the Policy

We will communicate the policy to all employees by using the relevant media such as notice boards company briefings and inclusion of the policy as part of the induction process and documentation.

3.7 Monitoring the Policy

We will monitor the selection and appointment process and the make-up of the workforce on an on-going basis in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the policy.

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4. References

4.1 External Documentation

Reference	Title
	Equality Act 2010
	Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008)
	The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (2006)
	The Civil Partnership Act (2004)
	The Gender Recognition Act (2004)
	Criminal Justice Act (2003)
	The Human Rights Act (1998)
	The Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
	Special Education Needs and Disability Act (2001)

4.2 Internal documentation

Reference	Title
HRP/004/001	Guidance on Dealing with Harassment, Bullying, victimisation and Discrimination
HRP/005/005	Guidance on Speaking Up

5. Definitions

Term	Definition
Worker	A “worker” refers in this context would include: Employees – Permanent or Temporary / Job Applicants / Casual Workers / Contingent Workers / Trainees (including work experience trainees) / Contractors and Consultants (this is not an exhaustive list)

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6. Authority for issue

6.1 CDS Assurance

I sign to confirm that this document has been assured for issue on to the CDS system

		Sign	Date
Lynn Donald	Governance and Risk Officer	Lynn Donald	21/11/2013

6.2 Author

I sign to confirm that I have completed and checked this document and I am satisfied with its content and submit it for approval and authorisation.

Review Period - This document should be reviewed within the following time period.

Standard CDS review of 3 years	Non Standard Review Period & Reason		
		Sign	Date
Alison Armstrong	HR Advisor	Alison Armstrong	22/11/2013

6.3 Technical Assurance

I sign to confirm that I am satisfied with all aspects of the content and preparation of this document and submit it for approval and authorisation.

		Sign	Date
Deborah Piggett	HR Business Partner	Deborah Piggett	26/11/2013

6.4 Authorisation

Authorisation is granted for publication of this document

		Sign	Date
Lindi Hutchinson	Director of Human Resources	Lindi Hutchinson	27/11/2013