EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Reviewed by the Directors

1. THE POLICY

Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is wholeheartedly committed to the principle of equality of opportunity. This statement extends the commitments Aztec Interiors Northern Limited undertakes, both in its capacity as an employer and as a provider of services to others. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is determined to make all efforts to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against any of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of: race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical disability or responsibilities for dependants. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is opposed to racist and sexist attitudes and practices. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited endeavours to translate this into all aspects of its everyday work.

Aztec Interiors Northern Limited recognises that specific and positive programmes of action are necessary in the workplace to ensure that the aims of this policy statement are achieved. Regular Project reviews are conducted by the Managing Director to ensure each section of the business operates with these objectives in mind.

Aztec Interiors Northern Limited recognises that progress requires full participation and commitment from all staff with regard to the policy, as well as the development of these procedures and structures in practice.

Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is committed to developing and maintaining working environments and practices, which ensure equality of opportunity in both the recruitment and advancement of staff. Discriminatory attitudes or behaviour, whether racist, sexist or of any other kinds, are unacceptable at any time and will be dealt with by the necessary disciplinary procedure. Commitment to equal opportunities is a requirement for all Aztec Interiors Northern Limited staff.

Recruitment procedures are applied equally to internal and external applicants. The Managing Director will monitor these procedures and practices as a priority.

All staff should have a genuinely equal opportunity to progress within Aztec Interiors Northern Limited, including the opportunity to participate in related training to develop their full potential.

Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is committed to providing services which are relevant, attractive and accessible to all those who might wish to use them. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited staff is required to be fully aware of their responsibilities in this respect and to ensure that systems of recruitment or referral to our services do not operate to exclude or discourage participation. Furthermore, that any Aztec Interiors Northern Limited scheme or project is welcoming and attractive to all potential participants. These aims are priority in the provision of Aztec Interiors Northern Limited and the allocation of resources.

Monitoring of all services is carried out in order to identify any inequalities in content or participation and to determine the steps needed to rectify them. This includes attention to publicity, environment, referral processes and the links with outside organisations and individuals involved in the provision of our services. Every effort is made to ensure that, in maintaining these links, our policies and priorities are not compromised. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited is willing to communicate its equal opportunities policy to minority organisations, in the attempt to develop further strategies in the ongoing insurgency against discrimination. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited subsequently supports the development of such minority organisations, which advocate anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities promotion.

2. PURPOSE

The objective and purpose of the Equality and Diversity Policy is to ensure that no individuals are disadvantaged in realising their goals by factors such as race, religion, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief or disability. To achieve this company, aim, it is essential for the company to develop a policy and process to work towards a situation where any unfair disadvantage is eradicated.

The Company's immediate task is to ensure that the policy is implemented. This involves every employee, contractor and visitor to the company to ensure they support and uphold the policy.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with the Managing Director. Its application is also required from people who work with Aztec Interiors Northern Limited in providing our services but who are not Aztec Interiors Northern Limited staff. Those who hold management, supervisory or other senior positions in the organisation have additional and particular responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of its application and the commitment of all staff and others to it.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, visitors and sites operated by the company.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Policy Framework

- The Company welcomes and accepts its responsibilities under all relevant legislation.

- We recognise that all staff, contractors and visitors will benefit from working in a supportive environment, with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. This policy is intended to give everyone an equal chance to participate to their full potential. It applies to staff, contractors and visitors to the Company. Contractors must agree to work within the spirit of this policy.

5.2 General Implementations and promotion of best practice on selection, promotion and training opportunities

- Posts will be advertised to attract all suitably-qualified and experienced applications from all areas of the Community. Posts will be advertised internally and will be placed with the local Job Centre. Posts will also be placed in the local paper and include the intent of the company to ensure there is diversity and equality of opportunity.

- Procedures for the fair and objective recruitment and selection, promotion or training of staff will be in place, and staff with responsibility for recruitment and selection, promotion or development will receive training in these. Application forms will be completed by all applicants to ensure all applications are treated equally. The monitoring format (Attachment 1 to this policy) will be attached to all application forms

- Training and promotion opportunities will be open to all and be made on the basis of equality and diversity with the intent to develop the company and the employees on a fair basis. Managers who undertake decisions or are involved with the selection for training

and promotion opportunities will have undergone training in diversity and equality to ensure there is equality in the training, development and promotion of members of staff.

- There will be an annual review of the monitoring to establish there is equality in selection for employment, training and promotion. The diversity will be monitored and compared in line with the local population and corrective action made for future advertising and selection to ensure equality is established.

- There will be regular staff development on a variety of equality and diversity issues.

5.3 Harassment and discrimination

- Procedures will be in place to help people to challenge harassment and discrimination. These will include informal and formal channels. Support will be available from a range of people to support and advise any member of staff, contractor or visitor who is concerned about personal harassment, discrimination or other equal opportunities issues including:

  - Managers
  - Directors
  - Managing Director

- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will ensure Directors and Managers are trained in the application of equality measures to prevent discrimination in:

  - recruitment
  - determining pay
  - raining and development
  - selection for promotion
  - discipline and grievances
  - redundancy selection.

- Company Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will be brought against members of staff who do not comply with this policy.

- All staff leaving the company will be sent grievance procedure to ensure any discrimination or harassment is dealt with and ensure staff are not leaving due to some unidentified harassment or discrimination

- Staff and unions will be consulted on all aspects of this policy.

  - Specific Area Implementation

- In addition to the general measures mentioned the company has identified areas where we will take specific action to improve equality. These are gender, sexual orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, pregnancy and maternity, transgender and transsexual, intersexuality, disability, age ethnicity, religion or belief.

  The Company will:

5.3.1 Gender

- Encourage flexible working arrangements [working hours, leave arrangements, etc.].
- Place value on experience gained away from paid employment.
- Ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged by revealing gender reassignment issues.

- Ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities because of their gender.

5.3.2 Sexual Orientation

- Ensure that staff and contractors are not disadvantaged by revealing their sexual orientation.
- Ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities because of their sexual orientation.

5.3.3 Civil Partnerships and Marriage

- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will ensure that staff and contractors are not disadvantaged or suffer any harassment because they are in a civil partnership or marriage
- Same sex couples who register as civil partners have the same rights as married couples in respect of employment rights.
- Recruitment and selection policies must not discriminate on the grounds of civil partnerships, marriage or sexual orientation.

5.3.4 Pregnancy and maternity

- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will ensure there is no discrimination against an employee because they are pregnant or have a pregnancy-related illness. This covers the protected period which finishes when maternity leave ends or when the employee returns to work
- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will. provide somewhere for pregnant and breastfeeding employees to rest and express milk. Toilets are not suitable for expressing milk. The employee should write to Aztec Interiors Northern Limited to say they are breastfeeding. Ideally this should be done before they return to work.
- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will not select a woman for redundancy because of her pregnancy, maternity leave or a related reason
- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will not unfavourably treat a woman because she is pregnant or on maternity leave during the protected period (the beginning to the end of the maternity leave)

5.3.5 Transgender, transsexual and Intersexuality

- Ensure transgender, transsexual and intersexual staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities
- Recruitment and selection policies must not discriminate on the grounds of transgender, transsexual and intersexuality
- Make every reasonable effort to provide adequate support for transgender, transsexual and intersexual staff to enable full participation in the company and other aspects of life
- Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will create a plan for support during the transition and after will need to address such questions as what information and training will need to be provided for managers and colleagues. The plan will need to identify the point at which the individual's new gender is formally established in terms of the employer's personnel records, and any consequent alterations (for example, security passes, the individual's choice of name for directories etc.
- The person undergoing transition may wish to take leave before returning to work in their new gender. Aztec Interiors Northern Limited will apply the same policy is applied as for sickness absence, and if it is possible to obtain special leave for this period, that would make the stress of that time easier to manage. This will provide the opportunity to brief managers and colleagues and to ensure that management stress the need for proper treatment of the work

5.3.6 Disability

- Make every reasonable effort to provide adequate support for disabled staff to enable full participation in the company and other aspects of life.
- Where possible, continue to improve access to all areas in consultation with disabled people.
- Continue commitment to the principles of being positive about disabled people
- Ensure disabled staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities
- Recruitment and selection policies must not discriminate on the grounds disability
- Make every reasonable effort to provide adequate support for disabled staff to enable full participation in the company and other aspects of life

5.3.7 Age

- Not make decisions about staff, or potential staff on the basis of age e.g. suitability for training and development.
- Ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities because of their age.

5.3.8 Ethnicity

- Promote understanding of, and respect for, the cultural backgrounds of people from all ethnic groups.
- Whenever possible provide and publicise job opportunities to meet the needs of people from all ethnic groups.
- Ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities because of their ethnicity.

5.3.9 Religion or belief

- To ensure staff and contractors are not disadvantaged in work, training or promotion opportunities because of religion beliefs e.g. needing time and space for prayer or attending religious ceremonies

5.3.10 Social Media

- Social media will be monitored for derogatory comments, bullying or harassing behaviour about anyone, including but not limited to; the company, other members of staff, contractors, clients or rivals.

5.3.11 Harassment

- Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is; unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.
- The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- This policy applies to all staff at all times during their employment, whether on site or not.
- The senior management will intervene discreetly in any situations where they believe harassment is taking place. If a complaint is made to them they will investigate promptly and objectively as well as discreetly to address the issue.
- The first action in any investigation will be to look at mediation.
- If discipline is deemed necessary the following will take place with the accused party;
- Informing the employee of the problem

- Holding a meeting to discuss the problem
- Allowing the employee to be accompanied
- Deciding on appropriate action
- Providing the employee with an opportunity to appeal.
- Anyone experiencing harassment should report to the management. They will be given confidential support.
- Anyone witnessing harassment must report this to senior management, the information will be dealt with confidentially and the witness must not discuss the events with anyone else.

5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Information will be gathered on staff applications and promotion and the type of employment. This will be related to their gender, age and ethnic group. This will be analysed annually to help to identify areas where there has been progress, and areas where further development is needed.

- A record will be kept of the number and type of incidents of harassment so that progress can be monitored. Reports will be presented in such a way that individuals cannot be identified.

- Development of equality and diversity will be on-going throughout the year and a formal evaluation will be presented to the directors annually.

- Social media will be monitored for derogatory comments, bullying or harassing behaviour about anyone, including but not limited to; the company, other members of staff, contractors, clients or rivals

- The policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

All directors, managers and staff are responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

The directors are responsible for monitoring progress and assisting in further development of opportunities for all.

Complaints and suggestions concerning general equal opportunities issues should be made to the directors.

Anyone with a complaint about harassment should report it to a director.

7. SOME DEFINITIONS

The following are given to help understanding of the relevant issues involved in the management of Equality and Diversity and in ensuring that this policy is developed within the company.

Racism: all attitudes, procedures and patterns – economic, social and cultural – whose effect, though not necessarily whose conscious intention is to create, maintain and extend power, influence and privilege of one group of people over another.

Racialism: An implicit set of negative beliefs about a racial or ethnic group. It can result in offensive or violent behaviour towards members of a racial or ethnic group.

Sexism: All attitudes, procedures and patterns – economic, social and cultural whose effect, though not necessarily whose conscious intention, is to create, maintain and extend power, influence and privilege of one group of people over another.

Prejudice: An opinion or feeling about people of a different group, which is formed beforehand, without informed knowledge, thought or reason and which is likely to be sustained even in the face of evidence to the contrary.

Discrimination: Less favourable treatment of an individual or group that is not based on their work performance or conduct as a member of staff or contractor.

Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favourably than others because of their sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, age or disability.

Indirect Discrimination: Applying a policy or practice equally to everyone but which has a negative effect on a particular sex, racial group etc.

Racial Discrimination: Less favourable treatment of an individual or group on account of their racial origin or colour of skin.

Sexual Discrimination: Less favourable treatment of an individual or group on account of their gender or marital status.

Gender: "is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is largely culturally determined but can refer to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex."

Intersexuality: (sometimes known as hermaphroditism) is where "the physiological sex is ambiguous and may or may not be accompanied by various degrees of gender dysphoria. The condition may arise due to certain congenital disorders or hormone imbalances in the foetus or placenta."

Transsexual: "A person who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite gender. Most transsexual people actively desire and complete Sex Reassignment surgery." However, it is important to note that not all transsexual people will go through surgery, sometimes because they cannot, for medical reasons.

Transgender: "A term used to include transsexuals, transvestites and crossdressers. A transgender person can also be a person who, like a transsexual – sometimes with the help of hormone therapy and/or cosmetic surgery – wishes to live in the gender role of choice, but has not undergone, and generally does not intend to undergo, surgery."

Gender Reassignment: The process of medical treatment to enable transsexual people to alter their bodies to match their chosen gender identity

Trans: is a word used in order to ensure an inclusive approach to cover both transsexual and transgender workers. This is a term that may be used without causing offence.

Transvestites: people who dress in the clothing of the opposite sex, but will not normally wish to change their physical characteristics and they are not covered by the legislation.

Harassment: Can be directed at any group or individual, and can include unnecessary touching, unwanted physical contact, leering, personal remarks, verbal or written abuse, visual displays, coercion, isolation or non co-operation. Harassment can be where there recipient considers their personal dignity is infringed.

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of men and women at work (European Code of Practice).

Repeated and/or unwanted verbal or sexual advances, sexually explicit or derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks.

Racial Harassment: conduct (whether by act or omission) which is intended to cause or does cause physical or mental distress to an individual or group on account of their colour, race, nationality or other ethnic origins.

Signed:  **Director**

Date: **January 2026**

Review Date: **January 2027**

8. CONFIRMATION OF EMPLOYEE READING POLICY

To be completed by ALL Personnel

I_____(Name in BLOCK CAPITALS)

I confirm that I have read the Company Equality and Diversity Policy and fully understand the responsibilities that apply to me in the capacity in which I am employed. If I am unable to fulfil those responsibilities in any way, I will inform my manager or the Managing Director as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT TO HEAD OFFICE.

Attachment 1 **Equality Monitoring**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Company has a Policy of Equal Opportunity. We welcome applications from anyone regardless of their age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, race, colour or disability. We promise to treat all applications equally. To allow us to monitor this policy and ensure it is working we require the following information. Completion is completely voluntary, all answers will be treated with the strictest confidence and your answers will not affect your application in any way.

***NATIONALITY**:* Which of the following best describes you?

WHITE	English	
	Irish	
	Scottish	
	Welsh	
BLACK / BLACK BRITISH	Caribbean	
	African	
	Other	
MIXED *please state:*		
CHINESE or other	Chinese	
OTHER *please state:*		

GENDER:

Male ☐ Female ☐

AGE:

Under 20 ☐ 21 - 25 ☐

26 - 30 ☐ 31 - 35 ☐

36 - 40 ☐ 41 - 45 ☐

46 - 50 ☐ 51 - 55 ☐

56 - 60 ☐ Over 60 ☐

DISABILITY: ***Do you have a registered disability?***

Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you require any assistance if called for interview?

Yes ☐ No ☐

POSITION APPLIED FOR	
REFERENCE NUMBER	

CONTACT DETAILS:

TITLE	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY	
POSTCODE	
TELEPHONE	
EMAIL	