



# AGE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Personnel & Office Services  
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AGE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

# AGE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

(covering all employees)

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# AGE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

(covering all employees)

Lothian Valuation Joint Board is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly irrespective of their age and has taken steps to ensure that it fully meets the requirements of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lothian Valuation Joint Board values its employees equally regardless of their age. The Joint Board aims to create an environment in which all staff and visitors are treated with respect and dignity and seek to provide a positive working environment free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age.
- 1.2 The Joint Board seeks to ensure that through the implementation of relevant policies and procedures age discrimination whether intentional or unintentional does not occur. The Joint Board will carry out a review of current practices to ensure that everyone is treated with equal dignity and fairness regardless of their age and in particular that age discrimination is eliminated
- 1.3 Age will not be a factor in any decisions made concerning recruitment & selection, access to employee benefits, opportunities for promotion or training, performance management, application of discipline or capability procedures or selection for redundancy.
- 1.4 This Policy will be reviewed five yearly.

## 2 RECRUITMENT

- 2.1 Recruitment, progression and promotion are based entirely on relevant criteria, which do not include age or age related criteria.
  - The use of age specific language in advertisements will be avoided
  - Person specifications shall focus on job needs only.
  - Where practicable, advertisements will be designed to attract a mixed-age response through external advertising.
  - Age related details will be separated from the application form as far as practicable. Direct age related details (such as date of birth) will be separated via the equal opportunities monitoring form. Application forms will be reviewed to minimise inferred calculation of age.
  - The Joint Board will monitor age groups of candidates short listed, interviewed and appointed.

## 3 SELECTION

- 3.1 Candidates will be selected on the basis of skills and abilities. Recruitment procedures will ensure that the process is fair, consistent and does not discriminate against a particular age group.

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- Only job-related questions should be asked of job applicants. Candidates will be measured against criteria to help decision-making.
- All successful applicants will be subject of a pre-employment medical examination irrespective of age. Assumptions about capability or mental fitness will not be based on the age of the applicant.
- Panel members must not make judgements about abilities of a candidate based on age.

## **4 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 Promotion and career development opportunities will be provided equally for all staff whatever their age.
- Procedures relating to appraisal, re-grading and the award to accelerate or decelerate increments and other employment situations where selection is required will apply to staff regardless of age. Any such review will focus on skills, abilities and potential.
  - Age monitoring will be used to ensure age bias does not occur.

## **5 PAY & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

- 5.1 Lothian Valuation Joint Board recognises that incremental pay progression and other service-based rewards are an acknowledgement of the increasing experience and loyalty of staff. Any such awards will be in line with the requirements of the Age Discrimination Regulations. Pay scales will not be age related.
- 5.2 All policies will be reviewed to check whether they include reference to age related or length of service related entitlement. Where age or length of service related criteria are used these will be reviewed and revised where necessary.

## **6 DIGNITY AT WORK**

- 6.1 Age related abuse, harassment or bullying e.g. name calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, intrusive questions are serious disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Joint Board's Disciplinary Procedure.

## **7 VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT & REDUNDANCY PAY**

- 7.1 Any new voluntary redundancy scheme will be based on objective criteria and will not be based on age unless such criteria may be justified under the regulations.
- 7.2 Redundancy pay will normally be based on the statutory scheme as allowed under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

## **8 RETIREMENT**

- 8.1 The normal retirement age for Joint Board staff is 65.
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## 8.2 *Early Retirement*

It is recognised that staff may seek, by mutual consent, to retire at an earlier age.

## 8.3 *Requests for Extension of Contract*

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 creates a right for employees to request to work beyond a compulsory retirement age. The Joint Board will consider any requests to continue to work after retirement age.

8.4 The Joint Board will write to employees at least six-months prior to their standard retirement date and inform them of their right to request continuation of employment.

8.5 The Joint Board has in place procedures for meeting and responding to requests from employees to continue working beyond their intended retirement date. Requests must be made no later than 3 months before the retirement date and will be considered by the Executive. Such requests will be granted where they are also in the Joint Board's interests. Examples might include: -

- Where the applicant possesses specialised skills that could not be easily or quickly replaced
- Where a specific piece of work or project needs to be completed
- For short periods to cover an absent colleague

8.6 The employee will be given the opportunity to discuss the request with the Human Resources Manager and Depute Assessor. The Joint Board may or may not agree to the request. The Human Resources Manager will inform the employee of the decision within a reasonable timescale of meeting. There shall be no right of appeal.

## 8.7 *Further Requests*

If the Joint Board agrees to the request to continue working, any extension of employment will normally be for a fixed period of one year. Staff who wish to work on beyond that fixed period will again have the right to request to remain in employment and the same basis for consideration as outlined above, will be followed with any further extensions normally being for a fixed period of one year. The process will be repeated until actual retirement takes place.

## 9 *ABSENCE MANAGEMENT*

9.1 The absence management process will be applied to all staff regardless of age. Monitoring of absence trends in age groups will take place to ensure that the absence management process is being fairly applied across all age groups.

## 10 *LOCAL AGREEMENT*

10.1 This document is a local collective agreement between the Joint Board and the recognised Trade Unions. Every effort will be made by both parties to ensure that this document will be maintained as a local collective agreement and adjusted by agreement to meet changing future needs. In the event of failure to reach agreement both parties reserve the right to terminate this local agreement by giving four months notice in writing. In such circumstances the terms of the local agreement will cease to apply to existing and future employees.

# AGE DISCRIMINATION POLICY CONSULTATION

This document seeks staff feed back in developing the Joint Board's Age Equality Policy and action plan.

## 1 AGE EQUALITY GOALS

Initial consultation has identified four key areas for consideration and action to promote age equality, and should be incorporated into the Action Plan: -

- **Culture Change** - The need for transparency, awareness and main- streaming of all age equality issues and initiatives.
- **Getting In** – Possible barriers to various age groups, gaining access to all career paths within the Joint Board. Perceived lack of advice, mentoring and encouragement from senior staff and line managers for those in junior posts.
- **Getting Back** - Support/flexibility for career breaks. Permitting flexibility for changing work/life balance eg switches to part-time from full time work.
- **Getting On** - this requires improved information and encouragement for promotions to senior grades irrespective of age.

## 2 AGE EQUALITY ACTIONS

As stated above the Joint Board is committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly irrespective of age. As a result of initial consultation the Joint Board proposes to ensure equality by adopting suitable monitoring techniques under the four key areas.

- **Culture Change** - Assessment of the impact of Joint Board policies on age equality: raising awareness and mainstreaming age equality into Joint Board strategies and performance management
- **Getting In** – Assessment of the age balance in staff groups and analysis of candidate selection in age groups where appropriate
- **Getting Back** - Development of a workplace culture that recognises and respects family and carer responsibilities and flexible work options.
- **Getting On** - Career progression, promotions and grading reviews: At regular staff performance review meetings raise staff awareness of procedures related to age equality.

Monitoring will be the responsibility of the Management Group.

### **3 FURTHER INFORMATION GATHERING & CONSULTATION**

Age Equality will become a standing item on the Joint Consultative Committee agenda. The Committee comprises management and elected representatives from Unison. The JCC meets on a regular basis and will identify key issues, barriers and gaps and to suggest priority areas for action on age equality.

### **4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Age Equality Duty requires the Joint Board to assess the impact of all its policies and practices on age equality. Impact assessment will review:

- Whether the Joint Board's commitment to age equality is reflected in the policy/strategy?
- How the policy helps to promote diversity and inclusivity and/or deal with any current inequalities?
- What senior staff member is charged with overseeing age equality and monitoring and measuring progress?

### **5 IMPLEMENTATION & RESPONSIBILITIES**

The implementation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Assessor and her senior staff.

Any member of staff who considers that s/he has not been treated in accordance with the Joint Board's policies resulting from this Policy should raise their concerns with their line manager, or with the manager to whom they report, if the concern is about their actions. Continued dissatisfaction should be made in writing

The management group will be responsible for ensuring that Joint Board promotes age equality across its entire staff and in all its operations.

## LOTHIAN VALUATION JOINT BOARD AGE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

### **1 CONSULTATION**

- (a) To invite comment and discussion of this scheme from staff and union representatives – April and May 2007.
- (b) To seek Joint Board approval of the policy - June 2007.
- (c) To publicise the policy on the Joint Boards web page and invite comments June and July 2007.

### **2 MONITORING**

To ensure that we have adequate age monitoring of recruitment, selection, performance management, training, grievance, discipline, bullying and harassment and those leaving the Joint Board,

### **3 STAFF AWARENESS TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

- (a) Deliver appropriate training for all Joint Board staff in age equality.
- (b) Ensure that all newly recruited staff are given as part of their induction information on age equality.