Title: **VALLEY PROVINCIAL LTD EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT**

Valley Provincial Ltd is committed to building an organisation that makes full use of the talents, skills, experience, and different cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic and diverse society, and where people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their potential regardless of race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sexual orientation, gender, disability or age.

Valley Provincial Ltd will follow the recommendations and guidance of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in all our employment policies, procedures and practices, and in dealing with customers and members of the public.

Equal Opportunity Policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- No-one receives less favourable treatment on grounds of any protected characteristic (including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation); or is disadvantaged by any conditions, requirements, provisions, criteria, procedures or practices that cannot be justified on any other grounds.
- No-one is victimised for taking action against any form of discrimination or harassment, or instructed or put under pressure to discriminate against, or harass, someone on the above grounds.
- The organisation is free of unwanted conduct that violates the dignity of staff or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, offensive or humiliating environment.
- Opportunities for employment, training and promotion are equally open to male and female candidates, candidates from all racial groups, candidates with or without disabilities, and candidates of any age, and of any sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- Selection for employment, promotion, transfer, training, and access to benefits, facilities and services, will be fair and equitable, and based solely on merit.

This policy has been written in line with the Equality Act 2010 and applies to all aspects of employment, from recruitment to dismissal and former employees' rights. The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 was reviewed in October 2024 with reference to section 26 and the new preventative duty for employers to stop sexual harassment before it starts.

We will take the following steps to put the policy into practice and make sure that it is achieving its aims:

1. The policy will be a priority for the organisation.
2. Paul Brown will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy.
3. The policy will be communicated to all staff and job applicants.

4. Staff and their representatives will be consulted regularly about the policy, and about related action plans and strategies.
5. All staff will be trained on the policy, on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties, and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in the organisation. Unacceptable conduct includes discrimination and harassment at work-related social functions.
6. Managers and staff in key decision-making areas will be trained on the discriminatory effects that provisions, practices, requirements, conditions, and criteria can have on some groups, and the importance of being able to justify decisions to apply them.
7. Complaints about discrimination or harassment in the course of employment will be regarded seriously, and may result in disciplinary sanctions, and even dismissal. The grievance procedure will be published in a form that is easily accessible.
8. Opportunities for employment, promotion, transfer and training will be advertised, internally and externally, and all applicants will be welcomed, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief.
9. All staff will be encouraged to develop their skills and qualifications, and to take advantage of promotion and development opportunities in the organisation.
10. Selection criteria will be entirely related to the job or training opportunity.
11. We will make reasonable changes to overcome physical and non-physical barriers that make it difficult for disabled employees to carry out their work, and for disabled customers to access our services.
12. We will take a flexible approach to working arrangements. We will consider requests for changes carefully and objectively and will accommodate them unless it would cause significant difficulties to the business or employees.
13. Information on the ethnic and racial background, gender, disability, and age of each employee and applicant for employment will be collected and analysed, to monitor each stage of the recruitment process. The information will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used to promote equality of opportunity. Monitoring may include promotion and training if necessary.
14. Grievances, disciplinary action, performance assessment, and terminations of employment, for whatever reason, may also be monitored by gender, racial group, age, disability, religion/belief and sexual orientation if necessary.
15. Requirements, conditions, provisions, criteria, and practices will be reviewed regularly, in the light of the monitoring results, and revised if they are found to, or might, unlawfully discriminate on any of the above grounds. We will also regularly review advertising, recruitment and application materials and processes, and this policy.
16. The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored regularly. A report on progress will be produced each year.

17. Customers and clients will be made aware of the policy, and of their right to fair and equal treatment, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sexual orientation, gender, religion/belief, disability or age.
18. Fair and equal treatment will be given to customers and members of the public by all staff. The business will investigate any complaints from staff that they are being harassed by a customer for reasons linked to protected characteristics and take suitable action to prevent further incidents.
19. The business will take all necessary steps to ensure that employees are legally entitled to work in the UK, making sure that employees from outside the EU have permission to work here by checking the validity of documents and keeping copies of them for two years after the employment has come to an end.
20. The company will draw up an Action Plan detailing how this policy will be implemented in practice.

This policy has been endorsed by Paul Brown (Managing Director) and has the full support of the management team.

Overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the policy lies with Paul Brown. For further information, contact should be made by calling 01322 292644.

Signed: Paul Brown _____

Paul Brown, Managing Director

Date: **16.12.2024** _____

Review date: **16.12.2025** _____