

“No grounds” for alleged racial discrimination

A high-profile racial discrimination allegation claim was made against AMEC in 2007 – this allegation was based on a complaint from an individual applying to join the company claiming alleged racial discrimination in the recruitment process.

The complaint first came to AMEC’s attention in January 2007 when it was duly investigated. However the complainant, not satisfied with AMEC’s response, took the complaint to an employment tribunal which was heard in Cardiff in December 2007. The tribunal subsequently found no grounds for the claim.

The complainant, an engineer, told the employment tribunal that he was only granted an interview for a position with AMEC when he applied under a false name. The engineer first applied to join the company as a site engineer on a construction project in November 2006 but was told that there were no vacancies which suited his qualifications.

The engineer then applied for any available vacancy having altered his CV giving a false “Welsh-sounding” name and details including giving inferior qualifications. This application resulted in the engineer being contacted by the project to discuss a different employment opportunity.

At the hearing AMEC was able to demonstrate to the tribunal that the fictitious CV had also been rejected for the site engineer role originally applied for and was being considered for a quality inspector role. The Cardiff employment tribunal were unanimous in their judgment that AMEC had not racially discriminated against the engineer.

AMEC is a major international company, employing many thousands of people around the world, and select people solely on their suitability for the particular job. AMEC takes allegations of discrimination, in any form, very seriously, and was an issue covered in the Chief Executive’s brief to AMEC employees world-wide.

AMEC has in place robust policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical treatment of employees. Unlawful discrimination of any kind is in violation of our stated values, it is completely unacceptable within or outside our company, and will be dealt with accordingly if found to be happening.

A positive side effect of this allegation case was that it was an opportunity to re-scrutinise the company’s recruitment processes to assure they are in practice free from ethnicity bias. These processes are robust and are operating in a manner consistent with UK employment law as the tribunal clearly found..