

Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Statement

The organisation is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to equality of opportunity, diversity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

It is this organisation's policy to treat all job applicants and employees fairly and equally, regardless of sex, pregnancy, trans-gender status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, civil partnership status, age, race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origins or disability. The organisationcare service will monitor the composition of the workforce to ensure that this policy is effective.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our organisation as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the organisation.

Through this policy and procedure and the training and development of managers and staff, the organisation will do all it can to promote good practice in this area in order to eliminate discrimination and harassment as far as is reasonably possible. The organisation will also continue to work towards its dedicated goal of encouraging and promoting equality and diversity within the workforce.

The Human Resource Manager has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity, diversity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Procedure

1. The organisation aims to provide services to which all clients/customers are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class. We will make sure that our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients.
2. The organisation is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about good employment practices and efficient use of our most valuable asset, our employees. Every manager and employee has personal responsibility for the implementation of the policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of the policy, or other questions, should be addressed to the Human Resources Manager as should any requests for special training.
3. The organisation will not discriminate on grounds of sex, trans-gender status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, religion or beliefs, marital status, civil partnership status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origins, disability or age, or any other grounds (whether prohibited by legislation or otherwise).
4. The non-discrimination principle inherent in this policy includes the prohibition of discrimination against an individual because they associate with someone of a particular race,

religion, sexual orientation, age, etc, for example an employee who is married to someone of a minority ethnic origin or who socialises with gay or lesbian friends.

5. The prohibition on discrimination applies equally to situations where someone thinks or perceives (whether rightly or wrongly) that a colleague is of a particular race, sexual orientation, religion, age, sex or that they have a disability, is a transgender person, or is pregnant.

6. The policy applies to the process of recruitment and selection, promotion, training, conditions of work, pay and benefits and to every other aspect of employment, including general treatment at work and the processes involved in the termination of employment.

7. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

8. Where increased pay and/or enhanced benefits are offered to employees on the basis of length of service, these are intended to reward loyalty, maintain motivation and reflect higher levels of relevant experience.

9. The policy applies to job applicants (both internal and external) and all employees and other workers whether full time, part time, temporary, seasonal or contract.

10. Employees should note that the imposition of any provision, criterion or practice which has a disproportionate adverse impact on someone for a reason related to sex, transgender status, race, married status, civil partnership status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or age will be unlawful unless it can be objectively justified. In the event of any query or doubt, the Human Resources Manager should be consulted.

11. When establishing criteria for recruitment and promotion into vacant posts, the organisation will consider carefully whether any minimum or maximum number of years of relevant experience is necessary for effective performance of the job. Such restrictions will not be imposed unless there is a proper job-based reason why they are necessary.

12. The organisation recognises the dangers of unconscious bias arising at work, which is where an opinion is formed on an individual by a manager or colleague without them necessarily being aware they have formed it. There are many different forms of unconscious bias, ranging from an affinity towards those of a similar background to placing too much significance on what has been identified as a negative trait.

13. The organisation works against forms of unconscious bias in all decisions taken for employment, including recruitment, promotion and training opportunities, with a focus on promoting diversity and inclusion.

14. To counteract unconscious bias, the organisation will implement the following procedures:

- a. referring to specific job criteria when making recruitment decisions
- b. discounting any favourable personal relationships with staff
- c. making decisions collectively between HR and management.

15. The organisation does not operate any compulsory retirement age, and each employee may choose for him/herself when to stop working, subject to them continuing to be sufficiently fit to perform their job to a satisfactory standard.

16. Employees who are disabled or become disabled in the course of their employment should inform the organisation about their disability. Management will then arrange to discuss with the employee what reasonable adjustments to their job or working conditions or environment might assist them in the performance of their duties. The employee will also be encouraged to suggest any adjustments that they believe would be helpful. Careful consideration will be given to any proposals and, where reasonable and reasonably practicable, such adjustments will be made. There may, however, be circumstances where it will not be reasonable or reasonably practicable for the organisationcare service to accommodate proposals put forward by the employee.

17. Any member of staff may use the Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct. If the matter relates to sexual or racial harassment or harassment on the basis of disability, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, religion or belief or age, then the complaint may be raised directly with Human Resources Manager. The organisation is concerned to ensure that staff feel comfortable about raising such complaints. No individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or the complaint is made in bad faith, for example out of malice.
18. Where an employee is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct, then they may implement the organisation's grievance procedure.
19. Any employee who makes a false accusation of harassment will be subjected to disciplinary action. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.
20. All employees and job applicants will be asked, on a purely voluntary basis, to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities that they have. The organisation guarantees that the information provided on this form will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policy.
21. This policy will be monitored on a regular basis by senior management. Where there are issues with the way the policy is working, these will be looked at closely with a view to identifying measures to improve the effectiveness of the policy.

Signed: Ian Booy (MD)

Date: 31/07/24

Policy review date: 30/07/25