

Social Enterprise Works

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Social Enterprise Works fully recognises that in society, certain groups and individuals are disadvantaged and discriminated against. We recognise that this discrimination can take many forms and be direct and indirect.

1.2 Social Enterprise Works will actively oppose discrimination against groups or individuals because of their

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Marital status
- Age
- Domicile
- Caring responsibilities
- Disability
- HIV status
- Unrelated criminal convictions
- Trades union activity
- Class
- Educational ability/skills level
- Conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable

1.3 This policy shall operate in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Act (1975), Race Relations Act (1976), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974), Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983), Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), Human Rights Act (1998), Protection from Harassment Act (1997) and Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (1999), Religion or Belief Employment Regulations (2003), Sexual Orientation Employment Regulations (2003), Age Discrimination Legislation (Oct 2006). In addition full account will be taken of any Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

2. Definitions

2.1 Two types of discriminations are covered by statute – direct and indirect:

Direct Discrimination

2.2 Direct discrimination occurs when a person or group is treated less favourably than other.

2.3 Segregating a person or group on the basis of their race, sex, or disability is unlawful. It is also unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a job applicant whose conviction is spent.

Indirect Discrimination

2.4 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a condition or requirement is imposed which, although applied equally to all individuals or groups, is such that:

- The proportion of persons of a group who can comply with it is significantly smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it.
- The Employer cannot show it as being justifiable based upon the needs of the job.
- It is with the detriment of the individuals concerned because they cannot reasonably comply.

2.5 For example, a dress policy that prevents women wearing trousers discriminates against women of a particular race or religion; a training policy that excludes part-time staff may discriminate against women, who fill the majority of part-time jobs.

3. Managerial Responsibility

3.1 The Policy sub-committee will have responsibility for monitoring the policy and ensuring that it is kept abreast of legislative and best practice requirements. The Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy and shall ensure:

- All staff is aware of the policy and the reason for the policy.
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible.
- Proper records are maintained.

4. Responsibility of Staff

4.1 The attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- Comply with the policy.
- Not discriminate in their day-to-day activities or induce others to do so.
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups on the grounds specified in the policy statement.
- Inform the Director if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

5. Training

5.1 Briefing sessions will be held for staff on equal opportunities issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equal opportunities is also included in staff induction.

6. Complaints

6.1 Staff who believes that they have been discriminated against should make their complaint informally or in accordance with Social Enterprise Works grievance procedure.

7. Management of Social Enterprise Works

7.1 The Management Committee will be elected at the AGM in accordance with our Memorandum and Articles of Association.

7.2 All information for Management Committee meetings will be circulated in advance and in a format, which can be easily understood or supplied on tape or large print format to those Committee members requiring it.

7.3 We will ensure that an appropriate grievance procedure is in place for members and Management Committee members and that both groups are informed of its existence.

7.4 Meetings of the Management Committee will be conducted in a participatory and accessible way, minimising bureaucracy and jargon where possible.

7.5 The Management Committee will ensure that decisions are made in the appropriate meetings where everyone is able to contribute, and not in informal discussions outside of the meetings.

7.6 Meetings will be held in premises physically and geographically accessible to members of the Management Committee.

7.7 Translation, signers and facilitators costs will be met as far as possible as well as childcare, travel and any other reasonable out of pocket expenses.

7.8 It is the responsibility of all involved with the Management Committee, sub-committees and Social Enterprise Works members to operate in the spirit of this policy and promote equality of opportunity within the organisation.

7.9 Social Enterprise Works will complete job descriptions for Management Committee members, which will encourage a diversity of skills and experience within the organisation.

7.10 All new members of the Management Committee will receive a full induction and appropriate training to enable them to fully participate on the Management Committee.

8. Clients/Service Users

8.1 Social Enterprise Works will, at all times, adopt a non-judgemental, respectful, unbiased and anti-discriminatory approach in its service delivery and working practices.

8.2 Social Enterprise Works will work in partnership with community organisations and other agencies to remove any barriers to fair and equal treatment.

8.3 Social Enterprise Works is unable to provide services for individuals and organisations who actively promote and exist solely to promote political or religious beliefs. Social Enterprise Works is reliant on funding from a variety of different sources and as such may be subject to further restrictions to whom it delivers services

8.4 Where a client/service user makes discriminatory remarks or displays such behaviour, staff will warn them that this behaviour is unacceptable within Social Enterprise Works and draw their attention to the Equal Opportunities Policy. If the problem persists the Director may authorise suspension or the withdrawal of services to the client/user.

8.5 In developing future strategies and services, Social Enterprise Works will seek the views of members, clients and stakeholders.

8.6 Social Enterprise Works will endeavour to meet the needs of clients and stakeholders by offering targeted events, activities and facilities, which will enable them to participate.

8.7 Social Enterprise Works will endeavour to work with and empower people within local communities who are most likely to suffer from the effects of social/financial exclusion and/or discrimination.

8.8 Social Enterprise Works complaints procedure will be prominently displayed and clients/service users made aware of its existence.

8.9 Clients and other stakeholders will be encouraged to become members of Social Enterprise Works and take part in the organisational decision making processes.

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Feedback

9.1 Social Enterprise Works will monitor the effectiveness of its services and this policy by:

- Monitoring the profile of our clients/service users and identifying gaps in service take up.
- Informal feedback from clients/users.
- Conducting regular client surveys in order to evaluate the service provided.
- The Director will hold responsibility for directing the monitoring and evaluation of service delivery. All staff are responsible for following specified monitoring procedures. The Policy sub-group will make annual reviews and recommendations.

10. Recruitment

10.1 Social Enterprise Works will ensure that:

- All vacancies have a Job Description and Person Specification, which will be adhered to in the selection process.
- All Job Descriptions will reflect the Equal Opportunities Policy and include a clause requiring all employees to accept and work within the spirit of the policy. A copy of the policy will be sent to all applicants.
- Job descriptions will be scrutinised to ensure they do not ask for unnecessary requirements or qualifications. Social Enterprise Works accepts that there may be other less formal forms of experience or qualification that could also be considered.
- All posts will be advertised as widely as possible.
- All applicants will be treated on merit at the selection and interview stages.
- Application packs will be available in accessible formats if requested. For example, in large print or on disc.

- Monitoring of equal opportunities in recruitment will be co-ordinated by the Administrator. Information will be treated in the strictest confidence and separated from the returned application forms.
- Accurate records will be kept for monitoring purposes.
- The "Invite to Interview" letter will ask if there are any special requirements for the interview. For example, car parking, accessible seating, hearing loop systems. The letter will also advise on the reimbursement of expenses.
- If a job applicant wishes to complain about Social Enterprise Works recruitment and selection process in general or his/her application for a specific post, he/she should write to the Director, who will arrange for the matter to be investigated and for the complainant to receive a written response and including a summary of any action taken, if any.

11. Employment

11.1 All employment policies have a bearing on equality of opportunity. Social Enterprise Works policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

11.2 All employees will receive a contract of employment, which sets out the main conditions of their employment.

11.3 All new employees will receive full induction training including equal opportunities policy and practice.

11.4 All employees have the right to receive support and supervision through the line management structure. Training and staff development needs will be identified through this structure and met within budgetary constraints.

11.5 Social Enterprise Works will meet all statutory requirements in relation to maternity, sick, paternity pay, etc and wherever possible will seek to go beyond statutory requirements in the interests of best practice.

11.6 Social Enterprise Works will have special regard to requests for the timing of annual leave and for special or extended leave or for changes in normal hours of working to meet religious or cultural needs of staff or groups and will give special consideration.

11.7 Social Enterprise Works will make reasonable efforts to meet the particular needs of any staff or group arising from their religious or cultural obligations and not place unreasonable constraints upon such staff or groups.