



Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Management Committee to the promotion of equality of opportunity in Gay and Lesbian across Down.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- gender, marital or family status
- religious belief or political opinion
- disability
- race or ethnic origin
- nationality
- sexual orientation
- age

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All full-time and part-time employees, volunteers and job or volunteer applicants (actual or potential) will be treated fairly and selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities is not only good management practice, it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all employees and volunteers to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce and volunteer base will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

We are committed to:

- preventing any form of direct or indirect discrimination or victimisation
- promoting equal opportunities for women and men
- promoting equal opportunities for people of all religions and none
- promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities
- promoting equal opportunities for ethnic minorities
- promoting equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientation
- promoting equal opportunities for people regardless of their age
- promoting a good and harmonious working environment where all men and women are treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment will be tolerated
- fulfilling all legal obligations under the relevant legislation and associated Codes of Practice
- taking any necessary positive/affirmative action, including setting goals and timetables.

Breaches of our equal opportunity policy and practice will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

This policy is fully supported by the Management Committee.

2. Implementation

The Chairperson has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy.

In order to implement this policy, we will ensure that:

- The policy is communicated to all employees and volunteers, through the groups web site.
- Managers, supervisors and Management Committee members are aware of their responsibilities through appropriate and regular training.
- An equal opportunities programme will be developed when paid staff are engaged and will include a range of initiatives, indicating where appropriate affirmative/positive action, with targets and timetables.
- Appropriate training and guidance will be provided, including training on induction and management courses. In particular, all those involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory recruitment and selection techniques.
- When paid staff are engaged, an information system will be established to assist the effective implementation of this policy and guidelines will be drafted for assessing the provision of equality of opportunity.
- Adequate resources are made available to fulfil the aims of this policy.

3. Affirmative action

Where appropriate, lawful positive action measures such as special encouragement in advertisements or special training will be developed. These measures are available to us in certain circumstances, for example where there is an under-representation of a particular group in specific areas.

4. Monitoring and review

The provision of equality of opportunity between women and men, irrespective of ethnic background or disability, will be monitored through the collection and analyses of statistical data (anonymous where relevant) on the community background, ethnic background, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, family status and status as a disabled person of all full-time and part-time employees and job applicants. We will also monitor our workforce composition and undertake periodic reviews as required by Article 55 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.

When paid staff are engaged, progress on the implementation of this policy and any equal opportunities and affirmative/positive action programmes will be reviewed annually in consultation with the recognised trade unions/employee representatives. A joint employer/employee equal opportunities committee will be established for this purpose.

5. Complaints

Employees or volunteers who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through any chosen Management Committee member. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Anonymous complaints shall not be considered.

These internal procedures do not replace or detract from the right of the employees to pursue complaints under all relevant legislation.

Every effort will be made to ensure that employees and volunteers making complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Date:

Signature: Chair