

Equal opportunities and non-discrimination policy

Below is a simple template for an equal opportunities and non-discrimination policy and procedure: depending on your organisation you may want to flesh it out further – please see the resources at the end for more information.

Please note: *This information is intended to offer assistance and provide information where appropriate and Community Southwark is not liable for action taken, or not taken, as a result of reading this guide.*

Statement of policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on any unlawful grounds.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

The organisation will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for its recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The organisation will maintain a neutral working environment in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated.

Discrimination is unacceptable and breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

Recruitment and selection

The organisation will endeavour, through appropriate training, to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

Promotion, advancement and appointment will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Job descriptions, where used, will be in line with this equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.

The organisation will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.

The organisation will not confine its recruitment to areas or media sources that provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.

All applicants who apply for jobs with the organisation will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.

Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other employees.

Training and promotion

Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.

All training and promotion will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

The organisation will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring may involve:

- The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin, the sex, age and disability of all current employees,
- The examination by ethnic/national origin, sex, age and disability of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants,
- Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and employees.

Harassment policy

The organisation will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying.

Bullying and harassment means any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended. It is not necessarily always obvious or apparent to others, and may happen in the workplace without an employer's awareness.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is totally unacceptable and to explain what solutions there are to employees who may suffer harassment or bullying.

The organisation intends to provide a neutral working environment in which no one feels threatened or intimidated.

Harassment is a discriminatory act and is also a criminal offence. It is very difficult to define as it can take many forms, but in the main it takes the form of unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another, for example:

- Patronising or belittling comments.
- Comments about appearance/body/clothes.
- Leering or staring at a person's body.
- Unwelcome sexual invitations or pressure.
- Promises or threats, concerning employment or conditions, in exchange for sexual favours.
- Displaying offensive or sexually explicit material.
- Touching, caressing, hugging or indecent assault.

Please remember the test is that the behaviour is UNWELCOME, UNINVITED AND UNRECIPROCATED.

Bullying is also difficult to define. Obvious examples are:

- Threats of or actual physical violence.
- Unpleasant or over repeated jokes about a person.
- Unfair or impractical work loading.

Procedure

If you encounter a problem of this nature, it is vital that you make the person responsible aware that his/her remarks or conduct are offensive to you. This should be done in a simple, straightforward way.

It is recognised that complaints of harassment or bullying are often of a sensitive or worrying nature and that it may be difficult to speak directly to the other employee involved. If this is the case, you should put your request in writing and hand it to the harasser or bully.

When or if the informal approach fails or if you believe that the harassment or bullying is of a very serious nature you must bring the matter to the attention of the Chief Executive. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment or bullying so that the formal complaint can be investigated, including the date, time and whereabouts of the act.

A formal complaint will be investigated thoroughly and during the investigation all possible actions will be taken to separate you from the alleged harasser or bully.

You will be informed of the findings of the investigations and will be given an opportunity to comment.

If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser or bully will be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

If you bring a complaint of harassment or bullying you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. If however after a full and fair investigation, the organisation has grounds to believe that the complaint was brought with malicious intent, you will be subject to disciplinary action under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

The organisation's appeal procedure applies to appeals against decisions made under the equal opportunities and discrimination policy and the harassment policy.

Signed:

Position: Chief Executive....

Revision dated: 1 July 2014....

Next review date: 30 June 2015.....

Resources

The following resources are useful in keeping your policies and procedures up-to-date:

- Acas: [Bullying & Harassment](#)
- Acas: [Delivering equality and diversity booklet](#) (2011)
- Acas: [Equalities & Discrimination](#)
- Citizens Advice: [Discrimination at work - bullying and harassment](#)
- Gov.UK: [Discrimination: your rights](#)
- Gov.UK: [Workplace Bullying & Harassment](#)
- Health & Safety Executive: [Advice for Individuals](#)
- Resource Centre: [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) (information & samples)
- The Workplace Wellbeing Charter: [Equality & Diversity in the Workplace; a guide for employers](#)
- UK Young Autism Project: [Equal Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy](#)
- UNISON: [Bullying & Harassment](#)

Support

If you would like any support with policies and procedures or any other issues facing your organisation, please contact the Development Team at Community Southwark: development@communitysouthwark.org.uk or 020 7358 7020.