



Royal Association for Deaf people

Equal Opportunities Policy

Please click here for a BSL version of this policy
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGSP5dvy0Wc>

Purpose and Scope

- This policy supersedes any previous versions and does not form part of an employee's contract.
- The employer is fully committed to promoting a good and harmonious working environment where every employee is treated with respect and dignity and in which no employee, volunteer, client or supplier feels threatened or intimidated, especially on the grounds listed in the policy statement above. The employer will not condone any behaviour which amounts to harassment on these or any other grounds.
- The employer's equal opportunities policy also extends to all employees and all employees must ensure that the principles apply to the way they treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.
- If you have any questions about the content or application of this policy, you should contact your line manager in the first instance or the Director responsible for your area.

Policy Statement

The employer is committed to equal opportunities as a service provider and as an employer and to that end treats all employees or service users equally irrespective of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

or any other protected characteristics

Discrimination on grounds of trade union membership is also not acceptable.

It aims to ensure that:

- The policies and practices promoted by the employer do not discriminate unlawfully

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- The employer adheres to equal opportunities legislation and codes of practice
- All employees, volunteers or anyone working on behalf of the employer and its service users understand the responsibilities they have as individuals to ensure that there is no discrimination in the workplace or provision of services
- The employer provides an environment which is free from harassment and discrimination.

Definitions

Diversity ensures that people are valued as individuals. It is about recognising, valuing and taking into account people's different backgrounds, cultures, knowledge, skills and experiences, encouraging and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce.

Equality is about treating people fairly regardless of who they are, their background or lifestyle.

Equality and diversity work together by addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by people in under-represented groups.

Discrimination occurs when people are treated unfairly or less favourably, or are excluded or disadvantaged when compared with people from other groups. Some forms of discrimination are defined by law as shown above.

There are four types of discrimination:

- **Direct discrimination** when an individual is treated less favourably than another (in the same circumstances) because of a particular characteristic (such as sex, race etc - see above). An employee can also suffer direct discrimination even if they do not have a particular characteristic if they are discriminated against because they are either perceived to have the characteristic or because they associate with someone who has a particular characteristic.
- **Indirect discrimination** occurs where an employer's policy or procedures apply to everyone but have the effect of disadvantaging a particular group of people.
- **Victimisation** occurs where an individual is treated less favourably by the employer because they have complained about an incident(s) of discrimination or supported someone else who has made a complaint. Examples of victimisation could include:-
 - denying the employee training opportunities;
 - unreasonably excluding the employee from important meetings;
 - pressurising the employee to drop the allegation;
 - threatening the employee that his/her career will be damaged if he/she persists with the allegation.

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- **Harassment** is behaviour which is unwelcome or unacceptable and which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating environment or violating someone's dignity. The intention for the harasser is irrelevant. This can be either persistent harassment over a period of time or an isolated incident. Examples of such behaviour are:-
 - **Physical conduct** – unwanted/uninvited physical conduct, including - unnecessary touching or brushing against another employee/volunteer/supplier/client's body, assault, coercing sexual intercourse, physical threats, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures.
 - **Verbal conduct** – inappropriate communication (including manner and tone), unwelcome/uninvited advances, propositions or remarks, innuendoes, lewd comments or abusive language, which is sex or race based or which refers to a person's age, disability, sexuality, religion or personal appearance.
 - **Non-verbal conduct** - making abusive or offensive gestures, displaying of offensive written or visual material, other unacceptable non-verbal conduct which denigrates a person for whatever reason.

The Policy in Practice

To ensure that the employer operates its equal opportunities policy effectively, it undertakes not to impose any requirement or condition, on any aspect of employment and/or service delivery, without justification, which could disadvantage individuals on grounds of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Trade union membership

The policy will also be adhered to in all aspects of employment:

- Recruitment and selection
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Decisions about promotion
- Training opportunities
- Transfers
- Grievance and discipline
- Decisions about redundancies

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Responsibilities for Management

The CEO and Directors have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with discrimination law.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example, communicate clearly, be aware of manner and tone and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.

Managers will, where necessary, be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness.

Responsibilities for all Employees

Everyone has a responsibility to comply with this policy and all staff and volunteers should ensure that their behaviour towards any person they deal with when working for the employer does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or bullying.

All employees and volunteers should:

- Set a good example by treating all staff, volunteers & clients with dignity and respect.
- Understand this policy.
- Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and bring it to the attention of their line manager immediately.

Raising a Complaint

If you wish to make a complaint about a breach of this policy, you should do so under the employer's grievance procedure.

If you are found to make a malicious allegations under this policy, then you may be disciplined. The sanction imposed could be up to and including dismissal.

Disciplinary Action

Any employee who is found to be in breach of this policy may be disciplined which could lead to a sanction up to and including dismissal.

Also, employees should realise that both the employer and they could be personally liable for a breach of this policy.

The Right to Withdraw Services

If the employer provides services, in any capacity, and the end user is deemed to have breached this policy, the employer may withdraw its provision of those services and further refuse to provide any future services to that end user.