

POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

This organisation is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment, and in the selection of clients and volunteers. This means that all job applicants, employees, clients and volunteers will receive equal treatment, regardless of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins or disability.

2 THE LAW RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION

It is unlawful to discriminate against individuals either directly or indirectly in respect of their race or sex. The Race Relations Act (1976) and the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 are the relevant acts.

Codes of practice relating to sex and race discrimination have been produced by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality and have been used generally as a basis for this policy. There is also a code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled Persons published by the Department of Employment (Training), which is reflected in this policy.

3 FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

The following are the kinds of discrimination, which are against this organisation's policy:-

- 3.1 Direct Discrimination where a person is less favourably treated because of sex, race, sexual orientation or disability. An example is if a client was refused or declined purely the grounds that he or she is black, disabled or that she is a woman.
- 3.2 Indirect discrimination, where a requirement or condition, which cannot be justified, is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group. An example is where an age limit for clients may exclude many woman of that age group because they are unable to apply for a post or come to work as a result of family commitments. Another example is the restricting of recruitment of employees or the selection of clients to areas where there are few ethnic minorities, or a requirement, which is non-essential to the job description, which may exclude a disabled person (such as a requirement for a driving licence for a job which is mainly office-based).
- 3.3 Victimisation, where someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has taken action against the organisation under one of the relevant acts (Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Race Relations Act 1976, Equal Pay Act 1970 or The Disabled Persons (Employment) Acts 1944 and 1958).

4 POSITIVE ACTION

Although it is unlawful and against this organisation's policy to discriminate in favour or certain groups, on the grounds of their sex or race, positive action to enable greater representation of under-represented groups is permitted by law and encouraged by the organisation.

5 RECRUITMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND SELECTION OF CLIENTS

This organisation will take steps to ensure that applications are attracted from both sexes and all races and from disabled people, and will ensure that there are equal opportunities in all stages of the recruitment and selection process. The organisation will endeavour that any publicity relating to the organisation and employment and selection will make reference to this policy.

Promotion and selection within the Organisation is based solely on merit, and without regard to race, sex, disability or sexual orientation.

6 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Board or Directors, who will judge its effectiveness, will monitor this policy. In particular, Directors will monitor the ethnic and sexual composition of existing clientele, staff and of applicants who work with, for or alongside this organisation. The Directors will review this policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the Directors will implement them.

7 DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Acts of discrimination or harassment on grounds of sex, race, sexual orientation or disability by employees of the firm will result in disciplinary action. Any such acts may result in expulsion from the organisation. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated in similar fashion and the policy applies to all who are employed or connected with the organisation.

The organisation will treat seriously and take action when any client or employee has a grievance as a result of discrimination harassment on sexual or racial grounds or on the grounds of disability