



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Introduction

JRH Support is working to achieve equal opportunities in service provision and employment. It is the policy of the company that all conditions of service and job requirements should fit with the needs of the company and those who work in it, regardless of: age, gender, race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marital status pregnancy or maternity.

The policy works to ensure that no present or future employee or job applicant is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements that cannot be justified and that the needs of particular groups are identified and addressed within legal parameters. The company recognises the effects of organisational discrimination and seeks to guarantee equality of opportunity for all.

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the statutory requirements as laid down in relevant legislation. In addition, full account will be taken of all available guidance, in particular, codes of practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The success of this policy depends upon the commitment, compliance and goodwill of all staff.

Definitions

Equality and Diversity is about accepting and embracing people's differences and creating an environment that people can thrive in. Harnessing differences creates a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where talents are fully utilised and organisational goals are met.

Equality is about treating people fairly and with respect, giving regard for others rights and wishes.

Diversity is simply *otherness* or those human qualities present in other individuals and groups that are different from our own and outside the groups to which we belong. Diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences.

Diversity encompasses the properties and characteristics of a person. It includes characteristics that are inborn and unchangeable: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/ qualities/ disabilities, race and sexual orientation, and includes differences that are acquired, and those that may change throughout our lives. Some examples include; educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, parental status, religious beliefs, health and work experience.

Responsibilities

JRH Support has the primary legal and moral responsibility for ensuring that discrimination does not occur and is met by an effective policy that is continually monitored. The Managing Director has overall responsibility for coordinating implementation, monitoring and review of this policy.

The General Manager has a responsibility to ensure that this policy is communicated to all the staff and to ensure that all recruitment and employment practices are dealt with in a consistent manner and in accordance with the company's procedures.

Individual employees at all levels have a duty to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate, harass or victimise another employee or service user. In particular individuals are expected to:

- Value and respect their colleagues on the basis of their behaviour, skills and performance in their day-to-day duties.
- Co-operate with measures introduced by the company to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
- Not to discriminate, for example, during recruitment selection decisions, promotions, transfers and training.
- Not to induce, or attempt to induce other employees or management to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not to victimise or attempt to victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information on discrimination.
- Not to harass, abuse or intimidate other employees, potential employees and service users.

The company is liable (together with its employees) for any acts of unlawful discrimination by its staff committed during the course of their employment even when such acts are carried out without the company's knowledge or approval.

Service Users

JRH Support's aim is to offer equal access to all who are referred to the service. Each referral is assessed on a case-by-case basis in order for a decision to be made based on the needs and risks of the individual, and is in line with the eligibility criteria of JRH Support. Individuals who are referred to the service will not be discriminated against on the grounds of his or her age, gender, race, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

Employment

JRH Support's workforce is diverse and we will make necessary attempts to retain and/or widen the diversity. Where permissible under statutory regulations, under-represented groups will be positively encouraged to apply for jobs, promotion and training. Where appropriate, the company will practice lawful positive discrimination in favour of disabled applicants as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Recruitment

JRH Support has a recruitment and selection procedure that is in accordance with current legislation and this policy. The recruitment and selection policy aims to ensure: -

- The recruitment of the most suitable person for the job based on their skills, qualifications and capabilities.
- That no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on any grounds covered by this policy, or is disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

Selection

All candidates will be considered solely on their ability to do the job both at the shortlisting and interviewing stage.

Selection should always be competitive except where a member of staff is being redeployed to accommodate their disability, health needs, maternity or other similar situation.

More than one person must carry out the selection process and they must be fully aware of and adhere to this policy.

All applicants are entitled to be informed of the reasons for their non-selection, when requested.

Interviews will be carried out as objectively as possible using a set of 'core questions' that cover the main aspects of the job, although it is accepted that every interview will differ to some extent. Information necessary for personal records will be collected only after a job offer has been made and accepted.

Interview questions must be related only to the requirements and circumstances of the job and must not be of a discriminatory nature.

Disabled applicants and candidates will be selected for interviews if they demonstrate that they fulfill the essential requirements of the post, with the need for any reasonable adjustments taken into account.

Dignity at Work

JRH Support aims to create a culture in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect. This means that the company will put actions in place to remove the causes of harassment or bullying at work. Staff can use the Personal Harassment Policy if they feel they have been bullied, harassed or victimised at work and the company will adopt a 'zero-tolerance' approach to any acts of bullying, harassment and/or victimisation.

The Manager and seniors have a responsibility to set the standards of acceptable behaviour expected of staff and should ensure that their own behaviour cannot be construed as personal harassment by acting with fairness and equity. This includes using one's judgement to correct standards of conduct or behaviour that could be seen as harassment and to remind staff of these standards.

Each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour. Acts of bullying, harassment and victimisation may constitute gross misconduct, which can lead to summary dismissal.

Disciplinary Procedure

Discrimination, harassment and instances of abuse against sectors of the workforce or service users will be treated as disciplinary offences.

In applying the disciplinary procedures, care must be taken that members of particular groups are not disciplined or dismissed for performance or conduct that would be overlooked or condoned in other groups.

Grievance & Disputes procedure

Particular care must be taken to deal effectively with all complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation. All complaints must be processed through the Institute's Grievance & Disputes Procedure or Personal Harassment Policy.

Any employee who has, in good faith, complained and/or taken action under the Equality Act 2010 and/or other aspects of this policy shall not receive less favourable treatment than any other employee.

Complaints

Any person who believes that this policy has not been adhered to is entitled to make an informal or formal complaint under the relevant procedure (for example, the disciplinary appeals procedure or the grievance procedure, and the complaints procedure for service users and members of the public).

Any complaints received will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly. The fact that a complaint has been made shall not be disclosed without appropriate permission, or where it is felt that there may be a risk posed to other staff or service users.