

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Equality of opportunity means that an individual's diversity is viewed positively and in recognising that everyone is different, valuing equally the contribution that individual's experience, knowledge and skills can make.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 IOH is committed to maintaining its role as an organisation which is pro-diversity and anti-discriminatory. Where everyone's diversity is valued and appreciated and in recognising that everyone is different, valuing the unique contribution that individual's experience, knowledge and skills can make in delivering service goals. This diversity should be visible at all levels of the organisation. Our aims are:

1) To recruit, develop and retain a workforce that is able to deliver high quality services to all of our clients and their employees.

2) To ensure that IOH is a fair employer achieving equality of opportunity and outcomes in the workplace.

- 2.2 Everyone who works for IOH or applies for work, must be treated fairly and valued equally. All recruitment processes, conditions of service, job requirements and learning and development opportunities, must fit with the needs of the business and those who work in it. Regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership.

- 2.3 IOH will strive to provide an environment in which people want to work and to be a leader in good employment practice.

- 2.4 IOH is also committed to enabling each member of staff to achieve his or her full potential in an environment characterised by dignity and mutual respect.

3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 IOH will not tolerate the following:

Direct Discrimination – occurs when treating an individual less favourably than you would treat anyone else in the same circumstances.

Indirect Discrimination – occurs when a requirement or condition of employment has the effect of discriminating unfairly or unjustifiably between one group or an individual and another. This can happen unintentionally.

Victimisation – occurs if someone is given less favourable treatment than others, because they have exercised their rights under the policy or relevant legislation (e.g. by making a complaint or providing information on discrimination or has supported someone else who has made a complaint of discrimination).

Harassment or Bullying – undermines people’s dignity and effectiveness at work. It may involve action, behaviour, comment or physical contact, which is unwanted, not reciprocated and which causes offence.

3.2 Any action or behaviour found to be in breach of this Policy may be regarded as misconduct or gross misconduct in accordance with IOH’s Disciplinary Procedure.

4.0 OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 As a Business (Our Chairman and Founder)

The Chairman is responsible for providing leadership to the business through the appointment of an Equality and Diversity Champion.

IOH will conform to current legislative requirements, and the specific requirements laid down in the Equality Act 2010.

IOH seeks to ensure the quality of access and provision to its services, which meets the needs of our customers.

IOH is committed to encouraging supporting contributions from all parts of our business and from our clients.

IOH seeks to dismantle the barriers that prevent equality of access to employment and promotion and development for all.

4.2 Our Employees

Staff are responsible for co-operating with measures introduced by management to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination within the business and when delivering our services.

Not themselves discriminating e.g. any person responsible for selection decisions in recruitment, promotion, transfer, training etc or those responsible for the provision of services.

Not persuading, attempting to persuade or instructing other employees, unions or Management to practice unlawful or unreasonable discrimination.

Not victimising or attempting to victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information on discriminatory practice.

Not harassing, bullying or intimidating other employees, including their peers, subordinates or seniors. This includes sexual or facial harassment.

Informing management if they suspect or are aware that discrimination of any kind is taking place.

4.3 IOH Managers

Making clear to employees the company policy on equality and diversity and all supporting policies in relation to both employment and service issues.

Promoting equality and diversity by their behaviour and action.

Ensuring that complaints under this policy are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

Ensuring that partner organisations, sub-contractors and other relevant stakeholders working with the business adhere to the principles of the Equality and Diversity Policy.

4.4 The Equality and Diversity Champion

Promote the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Take the leadership in ensuring that staff have access to appropriate training in Equality and Diversity.

Actively support efforts to make the workplace and IOH as a whole into an inclusive environment.

Make an effort to communicate, when appropriate, the benefits of diversity and IOH's successes within any associated agenda or campaign.

Support managers and staff in overcoming obstacles in mainstreaming diversity and equality issues when any obstacles present themselves.

5.0 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

5.1 The overriding principle in relation to decisions concerning recruitment and selection is that they must be based on objective and job related criteria, which will be applied fairly and consistently.

6.0 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Every new employee will undergo a comprehensive induction programme including access to training in equality and diversity.

6.2 All employees will have the opportunity to undertake training in equality and diversity awareness.

6.3 Information on training and development opportunities should be widely publicised and all employees will be encouraged to undertake training and development, which will enable them to progress within the business.

7.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 The Equality and Diversity Champion will have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Policy in consultation with appropriate staff groups and external representatives (where appropriate or required).

7.2 The Equality and Diversity Champion will ensure the policy is reviewed with respect to changes in legislation and/or at any time where it can be shown the needs of the business, its employees or our customers are not being met.