

Equal Opportunities

1 Statement of Policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Chief Executive, Trustees and senior management team to the promotion of equality of opportunity by Commonweal Housing. The Charity seeks to act at all times in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It is our policy to provide employment, opportunity and services equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious beliefs
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us or people who use our services provided in our work as a charity, will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the 8 grounds listed above. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit or acceptance into a Commonweal charity project will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination. We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in the workplace is not only good management practice it also makes sound business sense. Our equal opportunities policy will help all those who work for us, with us or depend on us for our charity work.

2 To Whom Does The Policy Apply?

Commonweal's policy applies to:

- Employees
- Suppliers
- Project Partners
- Volunteer Workers
- Service users in projects operated solely or in partnership by Commonweal as part of its charity work.

3 Equality Commitments

We are committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- Complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate
- Regarding all breaches of equal opportunities policy as misconduct, which could lead to disciplinary proceedings. This policy is fully supported by Trustees and senior management.

4 Implementation

The Chief Executive has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each Trustee also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees to abide by the policy and help create the equality environment, which is its objective. In order to implement this policy we shall:

- Communicate the policy to employees, job applicants, suppliers, partners and service users in projects as part of our charity work.
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions, contracts and service users' agreements.
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including training on induction and management courses.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be aware of non-discriminatory selection techniques.
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as sub-contractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation, our workforce and our service users.
- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

5 Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive.

6 Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the staff procedures manual. A copy of these procedures is available from the Chief Executive. All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously promptly and confidentially. In addition to our internal procedures, employees have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal the anti-discrimination legislations as applicable from time to time. However, employees wishing to make a complaint to a tribunal will normally be required to raise their complaint under our internal grievance procedures first. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal. Service users who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through their service providers who are obliged to conform with anti-discrimination legislation as applicable from time to time. Service providers are obliged to keep us informed of the progress of the matter until it reaches a conclusion. Suppliers who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the Chief Executive who will conform with anti-discrimination legislations as applicable from time to time.

7 Exceptions

As a charity aiming to explore and resolve social injustices, Commonweal has to work on issues of inequality and in some such cases, reserves the right to discriminate in particular projects in favour of serving people who are suffering the injustice of inequality.

AH – Chief Executive Commonweal Housing

Last Reviewed June 2011