

The Planning Cooperative: Equality and Diversity Policy

Experience has shown that for any individual subjected to harassment or discrimination or treated unfairly for whatever reason, there will be a detriment to the work performance of the individual concerned and this is more than likely to also impact on the work performance of others in the area, including yours. This clearly does not make good business sense.

Assessments of an individual's capability to contribute to business must not be based on people's moral judgements or assumptions about how an individual's gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, marital status, age, non-standard working pattern or any other difference that is irrelevant, affects that individual's ability to do their job (see the following sections for further details).

The Planning Cooperative's Equality and Diversity Framework also acknowledges that to be a truly diverse organisation, we need to be supportive to different ways of working for ourselves and our clients and incorporate them into our accepted ways of how a job can be done, for example, home-working, compressed hours, flexible working hours, job share, part time hours.

The Planning Cooperative works with all elements of society. Having and applying Equality and Diversity policies, supports the delivery of relevant policy/services to our clients and minimises the loss of valuable experience and expertise. It supports the Planning Cooperative in being a consultant of choice, now and in the future.

In summary it is The Planning Cooperative's Policy:

- * That any form of unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying is totally unacceptable in the workplace, training event or any other participative event.
- * To promote diversity and equality of opportunity for all staff.
- * To take the fair treatment of all staff seriously, and seek to make sure that all staff are able to work and develop their talents to their full potential, free from harassment, discrimination or barriers in the workplace.
- * That all staff have a responsibility to confront harassment.
- * That all staff have expectations that are realistic and reasonable and take responsibility to make sure that Director's are informed of any unfair treatment, or barriers to performance at work, of themselves or others, at the earliest opportunity.
- * That everyone has the right to contribute, free from prejudices.
- * To support and encourage staff to provide information about themselves which helps us to understand the structure of its members and to develop relevant policies and services to improve life at work for all staff.
- * To support staff to work alternative working patterns.
- * To review and re-issue, as appropriate, this Equality and Diversity Policy Statement at least annually.

Age

Age Diversity covers all ages and is not only about older people. It is about recognising the contribution that staff of all ages can make, and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defines a "disabled person" as a person who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long term means likely to last or has lasted for at least 12 months. This covers a whole range of impairments including hidden disabilities such as dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy, and so on. It is Policy that reasonable adjustments will be made in terms of employment and access to goods, services, facilities and premises.

Gender

This policy reflects the Sex Discrimination Act in covering sex as a whole (and, therefore, includes everyone). The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) prohibits sex discrimination against individuals in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises. It also requires that married people should not be treated less favourably than single people of the same sex. Since the Civil Partnership Act 2004 came into force on 5th December 2005, the same protection is afforded to those in a civil partnership as those who are married.

Victimisation because someone has tried to exercise their rights under the SDA or Equal Pay Act 1970 is prohibited. The SDA applies to women and men of any age, including children. The SDA applies to England, Wales and Scotland. The Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 covers staff in Northern Ireland.

Gender Reassignment

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 makes it unlawful for employers to treat less favourably a person who:

- * Has undergone gender reassignment;
- * Is currently undergoing gender reassignment;
- * Intends to undergo gender reassignment.

Gender reassignment is the change from one gender to another to enable transsexual people to match their gender identity. If you intend to undergo gender reassignment, or if you are informed that a member of the Planning Cooperative intends to undergo gender reassignment, you may find a Gender Reassignment checklist helpful, this is available on request.

Race

The policy reflects the Race Relations Act 1976 in covering racial grounds as a whole (and, therefore, includes everyone).

Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief is defined as being any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. This does not include any philosophical or political belief unless it is similar to religious belief. It will be for Employment Tribunals and other Courts to decide whether particular circumstances are covered by the Regulations. However, factors relevant to the question are likely to be collective worship, a clear belief system, or a profound belief affecting the way of life or view of the world.

Policy on religion or belief reflects the legal requirements under the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 which means that it is unlawful to discriminate against workers on the grounds of religion or belief in the circumstances described.

Religious Observance in the Workplace

The Law does not say that employers must provide time and facilities for religious or belief observance in the workplace. However, employers should consider whether their policies, rules and procedures indirectly discriminate against staff of particular religions or beliefs and if so whether reasonable changes might be made. It is, therefore usual that:

* Requests for annual leave to celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies in respect of their religion or belief should be granted where it is reasonable and practical to do so.

* If arranging events/working lunches, remember to ask clients and attendees whether they require a specific menu.