



Going For Independence Equal Opportunities

This equal opportunities policy is designed to ensure that, as a minimum, our organisation complies with its equality obligations under the various pieces of anti-discrimination legislation.

Key elements

- A statement of intent, including aim and objective of the policy
- Who the policy applies to (scope)
- Outline of specific commitments/actions which will be undertaken
- How the policy will be implemented and who is responsible
- Monitoring and review
- How complaints will be dealt with.

GFI wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is totally committed to achieving equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment. Citizens who access services, job seekers and employees will be treated fairly and without discrimination. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable criterion will not be tolerated.

GFI is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination (including harassment of any kind). The GFI will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur, in the delivery of services and in the course of employment. It will work with its partners to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice.

GFI will fulfil its legal obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended 2004), Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended 2000), the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexuality) Regulations 2003, the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 and other European Union Employment Directives, such as that covering age.

1 Statement of policy

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Managing Director and senior management team to the promotion of equality of opportunity in the Going For Independence(GFI) Community Interest Company.

It is our policy to provide employment equality to all, irrespective of:

- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Having or not having dependants
- Religious belief or political opinion
- 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 and with us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above grounds.

Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit 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 to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be utilised fully to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

2 To whom the policy applies (Scope)

The GFI Equal Opportunities policy applies to all those who work for (or apply to work for) the organisation, and include:

Job applicants and potential applicants
Employees
Contract workers
Agency workers
Trainee workers and students on work experience or placements
Customers
Users/ beneficiaries of the service

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 the Managing Director.

4 Implementation

The Managing Director of the GFI CIC has specific responsibility for the effective implementation of this policy. Each director, manager and supervisor (as applicable) also has responsibilities and we expect all our employees and Associates 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, Associates, job applicants and relevant others (such as contract or agency workers)
- Incorporate specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equal opportunities policy into job descriptions, role profiles and work objectives of all employed staff
- Provide equality training and guidance as appropriate, including information on induction and management courses for Associates and employees.
- Ensure that those who are involved in assessing candidates for recruitment or promotion will be trained in non-discriminatory selection techniques
- Incorporate equal opportunities notices into general internal communications practices (e.g. newsletters, intranet)
- Obtain commitments from other persons or organisations such as subcontractors or agencies that they too will comply with the policy in their dealings with our organisation and our workforce

- Ensure that adequate resources are made available to fulfil the objectives of the policy.

5 Monitoring and review

We will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of our equal opportunities policy.

The effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy will be reviewed regularly [at least annually] in consultation with staff and any relevant recognised trade union(s) [if appropriate] and action will be taken as necessary. For example, where monitoring identifies an under-representation of a particular group or groups, we shall develop an action plan to address the imbalance, as appropriate to the size of the GFI organisation .

6 Complaints

Employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed company procedures.

A copy of these procedures is available from the Managing Director GFI.

All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. In addition to our internal procedures, employees and Associates have the right to pursue complaints of discrimination to an industrial tribunal or the Fair Employment Tribunal under the applicable UK anti-discrimination legislation.

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.

Date: July 2009

Signature: *P A Bennett*

Managing Director, Going For Independence CIC