

Equal Opportunities Policy



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Introduction

EU Signs recognises that it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all persons without discrimination. This policy sets out the organisation’s position on equal opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and promotion, giving guidance and encouragement to employees at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation or religion.

EU Signs is committed to encouraging diversity and equality of opportunity among its staff and service users to achieve their full potential in carrying out their activities.

EU Signs acknowledges and respects the cultural and religious diversity that exists within the United Kingdom and is working to achieve a workforce that is representative of the societies in which the organisation works.

Aim

The aim of the equality opportunities policy is:

- To ensure that equality and diversity principles are fully embedded within the organisation.
- To strengthen the organisation’s reputation as an employer.
- To help build common purpose, common values and a shared identity.
- To provide equality of access to EU Signs services to all sections of the community, recognising that some individuals and groups may require specific measures to facilitate this.
- To ensure that EU Signs is genuinely open to individuals from all groups in the community and to increase recruitment from currently under-represented groups.
- To maximise the contribution of staff.
- To combat unfair/unlawful acts of discrimination throughout the organisation.
- To ensure that EU Signs employment practices do not break the law.
- To remove barriers which directly or indirectly restrict equality of opportunity and access to services.

Scope of the Policy

This policy will influence all aspects of EU Signs operations including recruitment, training, management and services delivery.

Advertising Vacancies and Training Opportunities

- Wherever possible all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally
- Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies and training opportunities reach under represented groups – both internally and externally
- Wherever appropriate vacancies will be notified to job centres, careers offices, schools,colleges, universities etc., with significant minority groups as well as to minority press/media and organisations

Selection and Recruitment

Selection criteria (job description and employee specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job

- Wherever possible more than one person will be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process and all should be aware of the company’s equal opportunity policy
- Reasons for selection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded where considered relevant but it is our company’s aim to take reasonable steps to employ and promote on the basis of ability and qualifications with regard to gender, marital status, colour, race,ethnic origin, nationality or disability in line with our

Equal Opportunities Policy

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Positive Action – Training, Promotion and Conditions of Employment

- Under-represented groups will be encouraged to apply for training and employment opportunities with the company
- Wherever possible, special training will be provided for such groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion, however, recruitment to all posts will be strictly on merit
- Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary/unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet with the special needs of disadvantaged and/or under-represented groups

Personnel Records

- In order to ensure the effective operation of the equal opportunities policy (and for no other purpose) a record will be kept of all EU Signs employees and job applicants.
- Where necessary, employees will be able to check their own record of these details, otherwise access to this information will be strictly prohibited unless required by UK law.
- The company has employment policies in place covering equal opportunity, recruitment and training & development policies in line with current legislation. These are regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure effectiveness. All company policies are designed to promote good practice and ensure fair and equal treatment of all new and existing employees.

Access to services

- EU Signs are committed to ensuring that all individuals and groups can use the services that are offered.
- EU Signs will keep under review the conditions under which service users' access services, including the means by which services are publicised, to ensure equality of opportunity.
- The need to translate information about services offered will always be considered when developing service related literature.

Access to premises

The organisation is committed to ensuring that whenever it is possible and reasonable to do so, any features of the premises used to provide services, which create a barrier to, equal access will be adjusted.

The quality of services

- The organisation is committed to ensuring that the highest standards are maintained in the provision of services.
- EU Signs will keep under review the procedures that are used and the practices that are established to ensure that no person is treated less favourably when receiving services.

Legislation and codes of practice

The following pieces of legislation and codes of practice have informed this policy:

The Equality Act 2010

This legislation introduces nine protected characteristics which are grounds upon which it is unlawful to discriminate. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

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The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants with spent convictions. Some employers are exempted and can take into account both spent and unspent convictions. For example, if the job involves working with vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, people with learning disabilities or people with mental health issues, or involves handling money or security work.

European Community Directives

- Establish the need for Member States to ensure that men and women receive equal treatment as regards access to employment, including promotion, training, working conditions, pay, social security and dismissal.

Definitions

Unfair discrimination

This occurs when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group of people would be treated on grounds such as their sexual orientation.

Unlawful discrimination

This occurs when a person or group of people is treated less favourably than another person or group of people would be treated based on their protected characteristic or * religious or political opinion. *Only in Northern Ireland

Each of the above are grounds covered by current UK anti-discrimination legislation.

Discrimination can arise in the following ways:

- Directly
- Indirectly
- Discrimination by association
- Victimisation
- Harassment
- Third party harassment

Direct discrimination

This form of discrimination occurs when a person who is entitled to be treated equally, is directly adversely affected by a decision that results in that person being treated less favourably. Most often, though not exclusively, this will be as a result of a decision to directly discriminate against a person based on prejudice or stereotyping.

Indirect discrimination

This is created by the application of unjustifiable rules or conditions that may at first appear fair and neutral, but once they are put into practice, a smaller proportion of one group than another group can comply with them. As such, they place those groups, which cannot comply at a distinct disadvantage, and so may indirectly discriminate against them.

Victimisation

This occurs where a person is treated less favourably than another person would be treated because he/she has complained about discrimination, or it is suspected they are going to complain, and the person is then made to suffer a detriment.

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Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

An example might include inappropriate language or behaviour which focuses attention on a person's religion or belief. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except pregnancy and maternity and marriage or civil partnership. Employees are also protected from harassment based on the perception of having a particular protected characteristic or by association with a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Sexual Harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of people at work or whilst volunteering.
Racial Harassment	Unwanted conduct of a racial nature or other conduct based on racial grounds, affecting the dignity of people at work or whilst volunteering.
Disability Harassment	Offensive or intimidating behaviour relating to a person's disability. It can include unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct relating to the person's disability, which causes that person offence or distress.
Sectarian Harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sectarian nature, or other conduct based on religious belief or political opinion affecting the rights of people at work or whilst volunteering. Sectarian harassment may amount to an unlawful act under the terms of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order.
Bullying	EU Signs considers that bullying constitutes a form of harassment. As such, any form of bullying for whatever reason is unacceptable to EU Signs. A member of staff who engages in bullying will be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Forms of harassment may include

- Unwanted physical contact, ranging from touching to serious physical assault
- Verbal or written harassment in the form of jokes, offensive language, gossip, slander, sectarian songs, letters
- The visual display of posters, graffiti, flags
- Isolation or non co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities
- Coercion, ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering or stalking
- Bullying, physical, verbal or emotional or a combination of these carried out by an individual or a group of people. Examples of types of bullying:
 - Physical: taking belongings, hitting, pushing and other forms of violence
 - Verbal bullying: name calling, teasing and other hurtful or insulting remarks
 - Emotional bullying: spreading stories and rumours, exclusion from social groups, ridicule and humiliation.

Responsibilities

All staff are expected to adhere to the requirements of this policy.

Staff

- All staff are expected to become familiar with this policy and to ensure that their language, behaviour and practice are consistent with its requirements.
- Staff who manage staff and co-ordinate activities are to ensure that staff are familiar with the content of this policy and for taking appropriate action to promote the policy content as required.

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Directors

- Keeping under review the aims of EU Signs equal opportunities policy
- Monitoring the progress being made towards implementation of the policy.
- Promoting equal access.

Partners and Suppliers

To ensure that their practices are consistent with EU Signs equal opportunities policy.

Action to implement the policy

In order to ensure that equal opportunities considerations underpin all of EU Signs activities - most obviously in the areas of recruitment and selection, pay and benefits, conditions of service, training and development and all aspects of service development and provision – EU Signs will develop, implement and monitor a specific set of action plans.

EU Signs are committed to taking action as appropriate to ensure that:

- All applicants receive full and fair consideration in all employment decisions under the organisation’s control.
- The recruitment, support and management of staff are conducted in accordance with the principles of this policy.
- EU Signs employment decisions are based solely on relevant and objective job-related criteria.
- Consideration is given to flexible working patterns such as job-share when filling vacancies, and to agreeing wherever possible to requests to job-share in existing jobs.
- The organisation is committed makes use of positive action measures to redress the effects of existing inequalities.
- The workplace and design of jobs/tasks are regularly reviewed to identify possible barriers to employment and service uptake, and action is taken as appropriate to remove any barriers to equality of opportunity.
- All staff are aware that harassment in the workplace or in service delivery is not acceptable and that EU Signs will investigate all complaints, taking action as appropriate to prevent any form of harassment from continuing.
- All staff are aware of the importance of using appropriate language and behaviour to ensure the dignity of all staff and users of EU Signs services.
- All staff will receive training to assist them to translate the requirements of this policy into practice.
- Existing policies, procedures, documentation and work practices are reviewed to ensure they each reflect the aims of this policy and that any equality targets which may be required are established to ensure equality of opportunity is reflected at all levels of the organisation and in all EU Signs activities.
- Whenever it is possible and reasonable to do so, adjustments that may be required by a person who has a disability will be undertaken.
- Staff and service users are aware of their right to complain about discriminatory policies, procedures, practices, language or behaviour.
- Procedures are available to ensure both informal and formal complaints are dealt with fairly, lawfully and sensitively.
- The effects of this policy are monitored.

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Monitoring

EU Signs are committed to ensuring that the principle of equal opportunities for all is being achieved in practice. Monitoring is the only real way to ensure that the organisation’s aims are being translated into practice, therefore all aspects of employment practice and service provision will be monitored on a regular basis using the following categories:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnic origin
- Marriage and Civil partnership
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Primary care responsibilities
- Preferred language
- The results of monitoring will be used to inform future policy and practice developments.

Signed:

Nigel Tokalak
 Managing Director
 Date: 15th January 2024

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