

## **Comprehensive Equality Policy**

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#### **Introduction**

Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited is committed to equality, and it welcomes diversity of gender, ages, abilities, ethnic origins, faiths and cultures of the people who make up our society. Such diversity is recognised to contribute to vibrant and creative communities and workplace culture. It is a fundamental principle of the Company's policies that all people should be valued with regard to their economic circumstances, sex, age, disabilities, culture, ethnicity, language (including British Sign Language), religion or sexual orientation. The Company is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all people particularly those who are:

- - seeking and using the Company's services;
- - employees or prospective employees of the Company or its contractors who supply goods or services to the Company; and
- - working or seeking work in a voluntary capacity supported by the Company.

#### **Objectives**

The aims of this policy are to:

- Enhance the quality of services through a diverse workforce that is reflective of the population served.
- Promote understanding and harmony between people.
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and attacks on any group or individual.
- Ensure that the Company complies with its statutory obligations under equality legislation.
- Ensure fairness, equal rights and access to employment and services.

#### **Statutory Duties**

##### Race Relations (Amendment) Act

The Company has a statutory duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote racial equality and ensure that employment and services are fair for all citizens. The Company also has responsibility for any services provided for it through other organisations. Under legislation the Company is required to set out arrangements for complying with the legislation and to give details of how any gaps will be filled. These arrangements form the Race Equality Scheme (The scheme is only applicable to public sector organisations. See the following for more details of a Race Equality Scheme: - [http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/pa\\_specific\\_schemes.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/duty/pa_specific_schemes.html)) covering all ethnic

minority groups, including travellers. However, Cambridgeshire Horizons Limited fully supports the General Statutory Duty of Public sector organisations, as defined in the 1976 Race Relations Act: -

**“General Statutory Duty** – ‘Every body or other person specified in Schedule 1A or a description falling within that Schedule shall, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need

- a) to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and
- b) to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups’.

Cambridgeshire Horizons also fully supports the Race Equality Scheme Duty and the Employment Duty, as defined in the CRE’s Template for Race Equality Schemes.

#### Disability Discrimination Act

The Company has legal obligations to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) as an employer and provider of goods and services. The Company has adopted Cambridgeshire County Council’s Disability in Employment Policy, which aims to:

- improve understanding of the nature of disability and the needs of disabled employees/potential employees; and
- ensure that good practice in employing and retaining disabled people is adopted; and
- ensure that the Company, as an employer, complies with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

The Company is working with disability organisations to improve the quality of goods and services provided, both directly and through contractors

#### Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women with regards to pay and other terms of employment.

The Act requires an employer to treat men and women equally who do the same or broadly similar work, or work that is given similar value through job evaluation.

The Act prohibits discrimination between men and women in relation to the provision of overtime or bonus payments and holiday and sick leave entitlements.

Under the Act’s provisions it would be unlawful and discriminatory to publish job descriptions or advertisements, which contain different rates of pay or conditions of service for men and women.

#### Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief

New regulations took effect from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 respectively. Amendments to the legislation on Disability will be enacted on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004 and Age on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. These 'light touch' regulations come under the Employment Directive and will therefore only cover employment and vocational training. It is very unlikely that they will be extended to Goods and Services, Housing, Education or Social Protection.

Sexual Orientation has been defined as an orientation towards the opposite sex, same sex or both sexes. It has specifically excluded sexual practices, in particular paedophilia.

Religion and Belief has been defined as any religion or religious belief or similar philosophical belief. It excludes any political belief.

Full details of the legislation can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk>

## **Monitoring**

The Company will actively seek to promote racial equality through policy development. This will mean that policies will be monitored to ensure that they address the specific needs of minority ethnic communities. Management and employees have a role to play in monitoring policies and services to ensure that they are not affecting some groups negatively and that the community is satisfied with them.

## **Consultation**

The Company already consults the public in a number of ways – meetings, roadshows, Annual Conference, by post, on the Internet and many other channels. The majority of the Company's documents (Including Minutes of Board Meetings, Policies and Strategies, Consultation Documents) are available to the public and Board meetings are also open to the public. The need to involve minority groups in consultation on policies and services is well understood by Officers of the Company and by Members and the Company is proactive in seeking their views.

## **Employment:**

The Company subscribes to the Cambridgeshire County Council's five policy statements that must be observed at all times, and are designed to promote equal opportunities in employment and to encourage applications from minority groups within the community. The five policy statements cover:-

- Promoting Sex Equality in Employment
- Promoting Racial Equality of Opportunity in Employment
- Promoting Equality of Employment for Disabled Persons
- Promoting Equality of Employment on Grounds of Age

- Promoting Equality of Employment on Grounds of Sexual Orientation

To contravene the Company's (The Cambridgeshire County Council as employer) equal opportunities policies by acting in a discriminatory way is a disciplinary offence that may lead to disciplinary action.

The Company's Recruitment and Selection Policies (i.e. which are those of the Cambridgeshire County Council – as the employer) give advice and guidance to managers on fair recruitment practices. Equal Opportunities Monitoring form records information on gender, date of birth, ethnic origin and disability and this is detached before the application is sent to the manager for shortlisting. This information is recorded and forms the basis of regular reports, which are reviewed by the appropriate Director and the Management Team. This ensures that applications are considered only on the information given regarding skills, experience, knowledge and qualifications. Managers involved in Recruitment and Selection are required to undertake training every three years and this covers fair recruitment procedures. The Cambridgeshire County Council's Recruitment Team advises managers on appropriate practice. The Cambridgeshire County Council has partnership agreements with Remploy and the Papworth Trust, which support disabled candidates and managers through the recruitment process.

The Cambridgeshire County Council's Human Resources Policies and Procedures give detailed guidance for managers on all aspects of the employment of staff, e.g. grievances, disciplinary, redeployment, redundancy, maternity and paternity. For further information, see the following pages on the cambridgeshire County Council website:

<http://camweb/personel/index.cfm>