

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement Of Intent

Manchester Care and Repair is committed to a programme of action to implement, support and promote diversity and equal opportunities in relation to our staff, volunteers, clients and all other stakeholders.

MC&R recognises that we rely on our staff and volunteers to be productive, creative and innovative in order for us to achieve excellence in the way we deliver our services.

The implementation of positive diversity and equal opportunity initiatives plays a crucial part in this quest for excellence. Therefore Manchester Care and Repair recognises that we need high calibre people from a range of backgrounds in order to best serve what is an increasingly diverse client base.

Our policy aims to promote:

- Equality of opportunity for all.
- A workplace where people are treated with dignity and respect and valued for who they are and the contribution they make to the organisation.
- Active opposition to all forms of prejudice, discrimination, bullying and harassment on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment), race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, colour, creed, age, socio economic status, caring responsibilities, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, sexuality, physical ability, mental health or HIV status. Eligibility criteria related to our charitable objects will be clear with no discrimination within eligible groups..
- A culture where diversity is celebrated and difference is not seen as a problem but as an opportunity to improve our services and to attract more clients.
- Accessible services through which our quality services reach new clients in a wider range of disadvantaged groups.

3.1 Responsibility for the Equality and Diversity Policy

Overall Responsibility

Because the implementation of this diversity and equal opportunities policy is central to the way we operate, the responsibility for ensuring that its terms are adhered to rests with the Chief Executive.

Other responsibilities

- All employees have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.
- Staff who believe that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through the Company's grievance procedure in the staff handbook and volunteers through the volunteer handbook.

3.2 Commitments

Knowledge and Skills

- Familiarisation with MC&R's Equality and Diversity policy will be a key element in the induction of all new staff, volunteers and partners such as contractors.
- Equality and Diversity training will be a mandatory training element for all staff and volunteers.
- New starters will receive Equality and Diversity training within 6 months of their start date.
- Equality and Diversity training will be updated and refreshed to reflect changes in legislation and best practice and will be delivered every two years.
- Briefing sessions on topics associated with Equality and Diversity will be delivered to all staff twice a year.
- Staff who are responsible for making decisions in recruitment, promotion, transfer, training and work allocation will be guided by a Handbook and trained to ensure that their decisions are made on fair and objective criteria and do not discriminate unlawfully against members of staff, volunteers, job applicants or clients thereby ensuring that all of our employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment
- Contractors will be invited to attend Equality and Diversity briefings annually. Attendance and participation of contractors will be actively encouraged by offering "out of hours" sessions.

Communication

- Our equality and diversity policy is made widely available including on our web-site
- All staff attend regular Team Meetings at which Equality and Diversity is a standing agenda item.
- Equality and Diversity is a standing item at Senior Management Meetings.
- An Equality and Diversity Forum chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by representatives from all levels and teams in the organisation. Convene at regular intervals throughout the year Meetings are minuted and actions feed into an Equality and Diversity Action Plan.
- Equality and Diversity implications are considered and documented in every Board paper.
- Clients receive information on our service standards including equality and diversity

3.3 Monitoring Performance and Progress

General

- The Equality and Diversity Forum reviews progress against the action plan at each meeting.
- Staff and volunteers equality and diversity survey results and the percentage of BME clients reached relative to census population data are reviewed by the Equality and Diversity Forum annually. Any inequalities or under representation issues are discussed and agreed actions are incorporated in the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Staff

- All staff, board members and volunteers are requested to complete an equality and diversity survey annually.
- Monitoring data for new starters is collected from application forms.
- Survey results are collated and published by HR.
- Survey results indicate any under represented groups and actions are then put in place to address significant under-representation.

Clients

- Client records incorporate data, which enables comparison with census population data.
- The percentage of BME clients reached is monitored and reviewed to ensure our services reach disadvantaged clients proportionately.

Other stakeholders

- Ensuring diversity of contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers is a developing activity

Note

Definitions related to Discrimination and harassment are attached.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Equality and Diversity guidance notes to staff and the associated policies and procedures listed below.

- Grievance Policy/Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Policy/Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Guidance on Conflict of Interests/Standards of Behaviour
- Whistle blowing policy
- Harassment Policy
- Disciplinary Policy/Procedure
- Equal Pay Policy

Definitions

- 3.4 **Direct discrimination** – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- 3.5 **Associative discrimination or discrimination by association** – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- 3.6 **Discrimination by perception** – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- 3.7 **Indirect discrimination** - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- 3.8 **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that

individual. Employees may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards them personally.

- 3.9 **Harassment by a third party** – harassment of employees by third parties such as customers or clients.
- 3.10 **Victimisation** – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or are suspected of doing so.
- 3.11 **Protected characteristics** – relate to various pieces of UK legislation - age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage / civil partnership, maternity and pregnancy. These issues are referred to as "Protected characteristics".