

Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

TCHC is committed to eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all staff and customers by encouraging and promoting diversity throughout our business and in partnership with those that conduct business with us.

We believe that all individuals are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect. As such, we will take steps to ensure that no one is treated less favourably on grounds of race, nationality, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, sex, marital or parental status, age, religion, sexual orientation, proposed or actual sex re-assignment, economic group, employment status, beliefs, trade union membership, or any other condition where discrimination is not justified. Our policy is also relevant to those individuals who apply to work at TCHC and those who work on our premises – contractors, regular visitors and trainers.

1 Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of our commitment to eliminate discrimination and provide equality of opportunity for all staff and learners by encouraging and promoting diversity throughout our business and in partnership with those that conduct business with us.

We believe that all individuals are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect. As such, we will take steps to ensure that no one is treated less favourably on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, sex, marital or parental status, age, religion, sexual orientation, proposed or actual sex re-assignment, economic group, employment status, beliefs, trade union membership, or any other condition where discrimination is not justified.

Our policy applies to all employees, learners, employers and work placement provider businesses and the staff. The policy is also relevant to those individuals who apply for work with TCHC and those who work on our premises - contractors, regular visitors and trainers.

2 Rationale

We acknowledge the business benefits associated with a workforce and customer base that truly reflects all sections of society. We value the ethical gain of creating an environment in which individual differences are welcomed and one where the contribution of all staff and learners is recognised and appreciated.

In addition TCHC recognises and accepts our statutory legal obligations as set out below:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Religion or Belief Regulations 2003
- Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006, 2007
- Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations 2011

(This list is not exhaustive)

The above legislation demonstrates the legal responsibility placed on all employers and their associates to ensure that unlawful discrimination does not take place throughout the employment or training relationship.

We accept that any decisions for recruitment, selection, promotion, training or any other benefit must be made on the basis of aptitude and ability and opportunities must be made available to all staff and learners.

3 Procedures

In line with our commitment to equality and diversity, TCHC has developed employment practices and procedures to support both the legal framework and the provisions of this policy. These employment practices and procedures are demonstrated in the following areas.

3.1 Recruitment and Selection

Wherever possible, all recruitment opportunities will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally and will include an appropriate short statement on equality of opportunity.

Selection criteria (Job Description and Person Specification) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable and non-discriminatory.

Wherever practicable, more than one person will be involved in the short-listing and interviewing process.

All staff will receive training and guidance on equality and diversity – including staff responsible for brokering work placements in businesses.

We will ensure that employers and work placement providers associated to TCHC acknowledge and comply with the provisions of our policy, before any work placement is approved.

Equal opportunities monitoring data will be collated. Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants or learners for vacancies or placements will be recorded and monitored.

3.2 Training and Development

All staff will have access to appropriate training and development to allow them to successfully carry out their roles or qualifications. Each training and developmental need will be treated on its individual merits and in accordance with the needs of the business.

A flexible approach to training may be required in certain circumstances – for example, where training takes place outside normal hours or requires time away from home. This may disadvantage part-time employees or those with care responsibilities and could potentially stop them taking advantage of any training opportunities. In these cases, additional or alternative provisions will be considered.

All new staff will have an equal opportunities induction or equivalent to cover TCHC's responsibilities to them as well as theirs to TCHC.

Relevant policies and practices regarding selection for training and personal development are regularly reviewed to ensure that fairness and equality prevail.

All placement candidates will receive a copy of this equality and diversity policy and our customer complaints procedure.

3.2 Promotion

Staff promotion will take place on the basis of objective assessment of the specific abilities, skills and knowledge required for the post.

Equal access to promotion will be exercised. Promotion opportunities will be advertised such that they are accessible to all staff, whether full time, part time, or working from home.

Some specialised posts are only suitable for people with particular skills - but consideration must still be given to all staff, and a fair selection process adopted, as some staff may have skills of which TCHC is unaware.

3.3 Disciplinary procedures

We will ensure that members of staff involved in the disciplinary process are trained appropriately so that they may undertake these duties by objective and justifiable means and in adherence with the relevant procedures.

In addition, any member of staff or learner breaching this equality and diversity policy will be regarded as behaving in a manner that constitutes an act of misconduct and will be dealt with through the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

3.4 Grievances

Any individual member of staff who believes that they are being unjustly discriminated against, or that this equality and diversity policy is not being adhered to, has the right to raise the matter as a grievance in the expectation that every effort will be made to resolve issues as effectively and quickly as possible.

The grievance procedure is designed to resolve matters informally in the first instance. Where this is not appropriate, the grievance procedure can then be used to deal with matters on a more formal basis.

The grievance procedure is, wherever possible, intended to focus upon resolution and organisational learning rather than blame or punishment.

4 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure that the terms of this policy are adhered to. The Managing Director is responsible for:

- Providing strategic direction to the development of equality and diversity initiatives in TCHC
- Researching, formulating and developing policies and practices relating to equality of opportunity
- Reviewing and updating the Equality and Diversity policy in line with best practice and legal requirements
- Examining statistical data regularly and taking action as appropriate.

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to ensure that action is taken to address matters which appear to contravene the policy and which fall within their remit. This can be done with the advice and guidance of the Managing Director.

It is the personal responsibility of every staff member and learner to act in a professional and courteous manner to colleagues, customers and members of the public. It is only when this standard is being achieved that TCHC can ensure equality of opportunity for all.

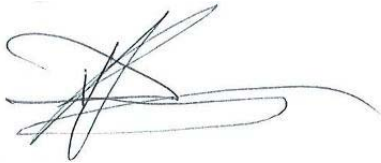
5 Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to monitor and review the effectiveness of this Equality and Diversity Policy.

TCHC currently have systems in place to monitor the following areas:

- Current composition of staff and work placement candidates
- Recruitment and selection – internal and external
- Grievance and disciplinary actions
- Leavers (staff and work placements)
- Training and development (staff and work placements)

This information is collected and analysed to identify and remove any existing barriers, which may be hindering the progress of equality within TCHC.



Dale Morgan, Chief Executive Officer - TCHC