

TCR Training Limited
Equal Opportunities Policy

1. OUR POLICY ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1.1 At TCR, we will work towards equality of opportunity for all and will devote our energies and resources to the achievement of this aim.

1.2 We will not discriminate on grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, gender, HIV status, immigration status, marital status, social or economic status, nationality or national origins, race, religious beliefs, responsibility for dependants, sexuality, trade union membership or unrelated criminal conviction. We will promote equality of access and opportunity for anyone who suffers from unfair treatment on any of these grounds including those disadvantaged through multiple forms of discrimination.

1.3 We will strive to eliminate racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination. We recognise that this requires not only a commitment to remove discrimination but also action through positive policies to redress the inequalities produced by past discrimination.

1.4 Our services (and information about services) will be designed to be appropriate to the needs of our clients.

1.5 We will act to ensure equal access to our jobs at all levels and to develop all employees and consultants to their full potential.

1.6 We are committed to opposing harassment and victimisation of employees and associates on the grounds stated above in 1.2, and will take positive action to counteract harassment in the workplace.

1.7 Management and all employees and associates are responsible for implementing this policy when carrying out their duties. Employees are expected to participate in the preparation and carrying out of practical measures to improve TCR's performance, and they are also responsible for their behaviour towards colleagues and users of our services, and are expected to meet appropriate standards.

2. THE POLICY IS FOR EVERYONE

2.1 This policy is for everyone. Its aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment and opportunity. Everyone is affected by inequality within society and at some time in their lives all people are likely to experience discrimination and/or harassment. Research has shown that some people experience higher levels of discrimination and the main grounds for this discrimination are listed in paragraph 1.2 of this policy.

3. WHY WE HAVE A POLICY

3.1 TCR has a legal duty to provide all services and employment opportunities fairly and without discrimination. This duty arises from the Disabilities Discrimination Act, Race Relations legislation, Human Rights Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, Equal Pay legislation, and the equal opportunities requirements of legislation relating to the services and opportunities we provide to employees and clients alike. We will comply with all relevant codes of practice. We also have a moral and social duty to acknowledge that discrimination and inequality occur in our society and find ways to tackle discrimination and follow legal options to promote equality.

3.2 Inequality due to direct and indirect discrimination is a powerful factor in our society. People's daily lives and their life chances are affected significantly by whether they are black or white, male or female, gay or heterosexual, disabled or "able-bodied", and by whether they are seen to be "too young" or "too old".

3.3 The adverse effects of being excluded from opportunities by discrimination and harassment can be very severe and can include violent racial attack, inability to get a job suited to one's skills or to get a job at all, or being hindered in performing the daily necessities of life by the physical obstacles and emotional barriers that our society presents to people with mobility problems, or those who are partially sighted or hard of hearing. The effects of such discrimination can be continuous and permanent, for example, the feelings of anguish, low self-esteem and of being an outsider that constant racist remarks and innuendo can produce in black people and people from the minority ethnic communities.

3.4 Services based on traditional assumptions will usually not provide equal access to, for example, black people and people from the minority ethnic communities, disabled people and women. Black people and people from the minority ethnic communities and people with a disability tend to be under-represented at all levels in the workforce, as do women at senior and middle management levels. Older and younger people can also be under-represented. Employees from a range of different groups experience harassment and victimisation in the workplace.

3.5 Improvements in personnel practice to help ensure that good candidates apply from all parts of the community and that the best person for the job is appointed, usually produce significant alterations in the recruitment and promotion profiles and hence eventually in workforce composition. Other positive action such as employee development initiatives, flexible working arrangements and anti-harassment policies, can help meet the needs of those responsible for dependants, attract people back from career breaks, and advance people in the workforce who are disadvantaged by a lack of attention to their varied and legitimate needs as employees. It is in these and other ways that the present barriers to equal access in the jobs that we offer can be removed.

3.6 Exclusion from opportunities not only disadvantages those who experience discrimination and harassment but also deprives the wider community of the full contribution of their talents and energies. Empowering people to contribute more fully enriches our communal life.

3.7 It is for these reasons that at TCR we have adopted and energetically pursued action plans on service delivery, democratic participation and employment to begin to remove the barriers to equal opportunities. The most effective plans fully involve those who experience discrimination and harassment.

4. THE POLICY IN MORE DETAIL

4.1 TCR recognises that the discrimination takes specific forms and has particular effects. We are committed to taking action that is effective in dealing with this situation and which respects the distinct experiences, needs and aspirations of each person. We will take action to combat direct, indirect and institutional discrimination, and to afford people with a disability equality of opportunity.

4.2 Age

Discrimination against people because they are "old" or "young" is endemic in our society. Inaccurate assumptions based on prejudice and stereotypes are often made about the abilities and characteristics of younger and older people that adversely affect them. Too often, younger and older people are denied full involvement in decisions about their lives and are not allowed the independence and responsibility that is their right. Exclusion from employment is experienced by many and with other factors leads disproportionately to poverty, low income and inability to enjoy the good things in life. Younger people experience high levels of physical violence and fear for their safety confines many older people to their own homes. Younger and older people who are black or from the minority ethnic communities are often doubly disadvantaged.

We will take action to combat this discrimination and to afford equality of opportunity for older and younger people.

4.3 Disability

Many people in our community have a disability, including people with mobility difficulties, people with sensory impairment, people with learning difficulties and people with mental health problems. The needs and wants of those with different disabilities vary considerably. However, they all share the adverse effects of prejudice and stereotyping in the wider community that lead to inaccurate assumptions about their abilities. For many, this is aggravated by a physical environment designed by and for "able bodied" people, a lack of access to information and by a neglect of their particular rights and needs in the way that services and work are organised. As a result, many people with a disability are excluded from the facilities and opportunities that others take for granted including reasonable independence, immediate and accessible information and responsibility for making decisions about one's own life. This is often associated with poverty or low income. People with a disability who are black or from the minority ethnic communities are often doubly disadvantaged. We will at all times act in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act Code of Practice.

4.4 Black People and People from Minority Ethnic Communities

Racism is a powerful destructive force in our society. Prejudice and stereotypes about black people and people from the many different minority ethnic communities lead to both direct and indirect discrimination. This discrimination is experienced as a daily fact of life. It ranges from unequal access to services that for the most part are designed to meet the needs of the majority white community, to less favourable treatment in the recruitment process, to racist remarks and innuendo, and in its most extreme forms to racial harassment and attack. Many black people and people from the minority ethnic communities live in fear in our community.

TCR welcomes diverse communities and cultures and sees them as a positive force for the good of all. We are committed to promoting understanding and co-operation between our various communities and to the combating of racial discrimination in all its forms. We are opposed to discrimination against all minority ethnic communities.

4.5 Women

Women in our community are disadvantaged in a variety of ways by the manner in which our society is organised. The roles of men and women are socially defined and are strongly influenced by the power that men hold. As a result women can experience disadvantage from both direct and indirect discrimination which can prevent them from reaching their full potential and from having the control over their lives which they wish to have. The discrimination women can experience ranges from unequal access to services which often do not respect the particular needs and aspirations of women, to greater difficulty in achieving advancement in the workplace due to the way in which work is organised, for example in relation to the care of dependants, to sexual harassment in the workplace, and to the fear of sexual violence. Many women in our community are fearful for their safety. Often black women and women from the minority ethnic communities are doubly disadvantaged.

We are committed to promoting equal opportunities for women and will take action to remove direct and indirect discrimination in the services we provide, and in our employment policies and practice.

4.6 HIV and AIDS

Both adults and children with HIV or AIDS are the subject of widespread fear and rejection in our society. There remains much ignorance and misinformation in our community about the risk of infection. Often there are also irrational and punitive attitudes towards people with HIV or AIDS based on assumptions about their lifestyle or sexuality. As a result people with HIV or AIDS can suffer great disadvantage including loss of job and denial of essential services. Discrimination also occurs as a result of services not being sufficiently flexible to the sometimes rapidly changing needs of people with AIDS.

We are committed to ensuring that the fear of people with HIV or AIDS is dispelled and that they are supported in the workplace.

4.7 Lesbians and Gay Men

Lesbians and gay men experience widespread discrimination in our society that exhibits high levels of intolerance towards them. Attitudes are so hostile that many people who are gay or lesbian do not feel safe enough to acknowledge this to the wider world. As a result they have the daily experience of denying a major part of their own identity. Coming out and being out often lead to victimisation, harassment and attack. We are committed to reducing the hostility and fear towards lesbians and gay men in the workplace to a position where there is full acceptance of lesbians and gay men as equal and valued citizens.

4.8 Other forms of discrimination

People can also experience discrimination because of their religious beliefs, their marital status, their caring responsibilities or past unrelated convictions. People can also be discriminated against on grounds of their perceived social or economic status, or because they are homeless or have a history of dependency on alcohol or drugs. Many people experience double disadvantage as a result of being members of more than one group e.g. black disabled people, disabled women, and disabled lesbians and gay men. TCR is opposed to discrimination on these grounds.

4.9 Discrimination and Harassment defined

Direct discrimination takes place when a person is treated less favourably than others in the same circumstances on the grounds listed above in 1.2.

Indirect discrimination is when a condition or requirement is applied which adversely affects a particular group considerably more than another which cannot be justified in terms of genuine requirements for the job or need for a service.

Harassment is unwarranted behaviour that is objectionable to the recipient. Harassment can be on the grounds listed above in 1.2. It has many forms and could include physical contact, intimidation, bullying, threatening behaviour, derogatory references, remarks, jokes that are found offensive or objectionable, displaying or distributing obscene or offensive materials, making stereotyped assumptions about people, deliberately undermining others' abilities and confidence, or refusing to work with or serve a group.

Institutional racism is defined as ‘ the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour that amounts to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping that disadvantages minority ethnic people’.

As part of its equal opportunities in employment initiatives, TCR operates policies that aim to promote a work environment free of harassment.

5. WHAT WE WILL DO

5.1 In providing our services, and employment, TCR Training Limited will

- review and improve our services and employment practices regularly to make sure they respond to the needs of all parts of the community, making particular efforts to involve the usually under-represented groups
- adopt strategies that properly represent the priorities of the usually under-represented groups
- lead, train and encourage staff to become responsible for the achievement of equality of opportunity when providing client services
- ensure that the specifications for contracted out or purchased services require consultants and sub-contractors to meet the needs of all clients and monitor their performance to ensure that they do
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all our services in meeting the needs of all our clients. The analysis of such information will be used to plan our future services.
- make sure that all parts of the community are aware of our job opportunities
- regularly monitor the composition of the workforce to ensure that there is fairness in our employment policies and practices, and to establish the nature of positive action to redress imbalances is required
- make further efforts to ensure that our recruitment and selection procedures lead to the appointment of the best person for the job
- ensure that our employee development and training policies for all our employees give fair and equitable attention to the needs of underrepresented groups, and
- continue to take determined action to ensure that employees are protected from all forms of harassment.

6. HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY

Managing Director - The Managing Director is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented and reviewed at regular intervals.

Directors - Directors are responsible to the Managing Director for ensuring that the policy is implemented within the areas of their control, and will adopt action plans for this purpose. These plans will support the Equal Opportunities Action Plan for the company as a whole.

Managers - managers are responsible to the Directors ensuring that the Equal Opportunities Policy is acted upon and is properly reflected in their treatment and development of individual employees.

Employees - all employees are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and are expected to participate in the preparation and carrying out of practical measures to improve the company's performance. Employees are also responsible for their behaviour towards colleagues and clients, and are expected to meet appropriate standards. TCR will support all employees by making sure they know what the Policy is, involving them in planning, providing supportive management, arranging training and other activities to improve understanding and knowledge, and by making sure they understand their responsibilities under the law.

Consultants and Associates - Some of TCR's services are provided by external personnel. These personnel are responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy when providing these services on the company's behalf, and this also applies to subcontractors. TCR will monitor the performance of all associates and take all necessary steps to ensure good performance.



.....
Margaret O'Grady

Managing Director