



| <b>REHABILITATION EDUCATION &amp; COMMUNITY HOMES LTD.</b> |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>WRITTEN BY:</b><br>L. Burford                           | <b>REVIEWED BY:</b><br>J. Skelly              | <b>AUTHORISED BY:</b><br>N. Sæedi         |
| <b>POLICY TYPE:</b><br>General                             | <b>PREVIOUS REVIEW DATE:</b><br>December 2016 | <b>TO BE REVIEWED BY:</b><br>January 2021 |

**1. STATEMENT**

R.E.A.C.H Ltd has a duty and responsibility to ensure that their staff operates in an environment that embraces and encourages equality and diversity, and strives to be an employer for whom individuals want to work and promote best employment practice.

Equality of opportunity means that an individual’s diversity is viewed positively and, in recognising that everyone is different, valuing equally the unique contribution that individual experience, knowledge and skills can make.

The principles of this policy will be appropriately considered during the development and review of other staffing policies.

**2. PRINCIPLES**

The Equality Act [2010] defines the following as ‘protected characteristics’:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

R.E.A.C.H Ltd is committed to and strives to ensure that every individual who works for the REACH Ltd, or who applies to work for it (providing that they have a legal right to work in the UK), will be treated fairly and equally valued regardless of their protected characteristics or other circumstances, including, social and employment status, HIV status, or trade union/non trade union membership.

This policy relates to all aspects of employment including individual standards of behaviour, the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and selection, training and development, performance development, pay, promotion and transfers, provision of benefits and leaving the organisation.

R.E.A.C.H Ltd is committed to building a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the communities in which it operates.

R.E.A.C.H Ltd will work to protect defined groups of staff against unlawful treatment based on protected characteristics by ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. All staff will be expected to attend training on equality and diversity.

## HR 21. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Board and Senior Managers recognise the value of equality and diversity. They will work for the aims of this policy, best practice and equality legislation to deliver a positive working environment for all staff.

Equality and diversity in all employment practices will be monitored and annual equality audits will be undertaken and provided to The Board covering workforce data (race, gender, age, disability, contract status i.e. part time); information relating to equality policies that are in place, pay and grading information and details of the monitoring processes used for equality and diversity.

Where certain groups are found to be under represented within the Organisation, R.E.A.C.H Ltd will consider positive action (see 6).

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with appropriately and may lead to legal and / or disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

### **3. POLICY**

R.E.A.C.H Ltd expects all staff to comply with the content of this policy.

The impact of any behaviour is the important element in allegations of breaches of equality and diversity policy and legislation, not the intent. It is no defence for staff to say that they did not intend their behaviour to cause offence, or to blame the recipient for being over sensitive.

The value of equality and diversity will be covered in all induction sessions.

### **4. LEAGAL OBLIGATIONS**

There is legislation in place which protects individuals against direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment (including bullying) and victimisation because of their protected characteristic or other circumstances. The principles which underpin such legislation are extended to all staff regardless of any personal characteristic.

### **5. RESPONSABILITIES**

The Board will

- have overall responsibility for ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unlawful discrimination and promote equality within R.E.A.C.H Ltd.

The HR Officer will:

- create and review regular reports in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy, as required;
- review, and as necessary, amend the policy;
- ensure they are satisfied that the organisation is taking all reasonable steps to strive to be representative of the population it serves
- ensure that all existing and future HR policies, procedures and practices are non-discriminatory.
- have delegated responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the policy that staff within R.E.A.C.H Ltd receive proper guidance and training and that the effectiveness of the policy is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

## **HR 21. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- provide advice and guidance to staff and managers;
- ensure that all complaints and alleged breaches of this policy are dealt with seriously, sensitively, confidentially and in a timely manner.

All Managers should:

- lead by example by promoting equality of opportunity and challenging discriminatory conduct;
- ensure the policy is implemented in their area of delivery;
- expect their staff to do their best to promote equality of opportunity;
- ensure that staff are aware of this policy and should they become witness to, or aware of any breach, of this policy, they must report it immediately to their line manager or HR.
- identify and highlight any examples of actual or potential unjustifiable discrimination within the limitations of legislation to HR;
- deal with breaches to this policy promptly, sensitively and confidentially.

All staff have responsibility for adhering to and practicing this policy and should:

- co-operate and comply with the policy to ensure equality of opportunity;
- not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so;
- not victimize, harass or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristic or other circumstances
- Inform their manager or a member of the HR team if they suspect that discrimination is taking place.

## **6 POSITIVE ACTION INITIATIVES**

The aim of positive action is to ensure that people from underrepresented groups can compete on equal terms. Where certain groups are found to be underrepresented in the Organisation, R.E.A.C.H Ltd will consider positive action e.g. offering development to a specific group or encouraging applications through targeting advertising to a specific group of individuals.

R.E.A.C.H Ltd will not promote unlawful positive discrimination.

## **7. MONITORING**

Statistical information relating to gender, race, disability and age, as a minimum will be collected and collated for all recruitment and selection exercises, staff in post, training, discipline and grievance process and staff exits.

Where monitoring is required against a population group base line, nationally available population statistics will be used.

An annual audit will take place, and be reported to the board covering workforce statistics, policies, pay and grading and monitoring. Recommendations which come from the board will be actioned.

## **8. COMPLAINTS**

Any individuals who believes that an act in breach of this policy has taken place should raise the issue as soon as possible with the individual concerned, their line manager or HR.

## HR 21. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

If the complaint is against an individual's line manager then the individual should raise the issue as soon as possible with their line manager's manager or with HR.

Any complaint will be dealt with seriously in line with the Grievance Procedure and may lead to legal and / or disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

Complaints against the Organisation will be dealt with using the Complaints Procedure.

### 9. DEFINITIONS

| <b>Term</b>               | <b>Definition</b>  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Equality                  | Treating all people equal regardless of personal characteristics   |
| Diversity                 | Recognising, valuing and using the differences which people have   |
| Direct Discrimination     | Treating a person less favourably because of a particular characteristic covered by discrimination legislation   |
| Indirect Discrimination   | Applying criteria or practice equally to all people but which has the effect of disadvantaging a group of people covered by discrimination legislation and has a detrimental impact on an individual   |
| Harassment                | Unwanted conduct, real or perceived, that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.   |
| Bullying                  | A form of harassment which may be related to an abuse or misuse of power   |
| Victimisation             | Treating a person less favourably because they have or intend to make a complaint or allegation or has given evidence in relation to a complaint.  |
| Protected Characteristics | Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (this includes lack of belief) sex, sexual orientation |