

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Aims:

- To ensure that the company displays commitment to promoting diversity through all aspects of its services and employment;
- To emphasise the benefits gained from valuing differences between people;
- To ensure the company promotes equal opportunities for all, irrespective of colour, race, religion or belief, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital/civil partnership status, sexuality, disability, age, or any other protected characteristic;
- To ensure the company reflects the diversity of the UK and to making its services accessible to all;
- To ensure the company creates and sustains an inclusive work environment which provides quality of opportunity for everyone;
- To ensure that each employee feels safe, valued and part of a team, regardless of the aforementioned differences.

2. Example of Relevant Legislation:

- EU Anti-Discrimination Directives (which currently include the Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Religion and Belief Regulation 2003 and Sexual Orientation Regulation 2003)
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970 and Amendment 1983

3. Policy Guidance:

Kingfisher Treasure Seekers believes that regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, employment hours, disability, cultural, ethnical or religious beliefs; every employee should have the opportunity to develop, and work in a safe and supportive working environment. Kingfisher

Treasure Seekers is committed to being an equal opportunities employer, and to ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to be part of a team and to feel included.

Throughout the services the company provides, Kingfisher Treasure Seekers intends to ensure equal opportunities for all. At each stage of employment whether paid or voluntary, staff will be included in the provision of a non-discriminatory service, which will seek to make each individual employee and service user aware of diversity.

During the recruitment and selection process, procedures and practices are reviewed regularly to ensure that neither direct nor indirect discrimination should occur. All staff involved in interviewing and selection will be given training to avoid discriminatory practices. To further ensure this, every effort will be made to ensure there is more than one member of the management team present; where this is not possible video may be used, or alternatively a sequence of meetings with various members of management. Kingfisher Treasure Seekers will endeavour to treat applicants equally regardless of the characteristics stated in paragraph 1. This non-discriminatory approach will continue throughout employment.

Individuals wishing to use the service will not be discriminated against or receive less favourable consideration on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, language ability, literacy, cultural or religious beliefs or any other protected characteristic.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples of bullying or harassing behaviour include:

- spreading malicious rumours
- unfair treatment
- picking on or regularly undermining someone
- denying someone's training or promotion opportunities

Bullying and harassment can happen:

- face-to-face

- by letter
- by email
- by phone

Every employee has the right to work in an environment that is free from intimidation, harassment and threat. There are many forms of harassment including sexual and racial. Sexual harassment can take many forms. It may not be intentional, and what one person perceives to be harassment, another may not. However, the person undertaking actions which may be defined as harassment must acknowledge the views of the other person involved.

Examples of sexual harassment may include:

- Inappropriate or unnecessary bodily contact;
- Sexual violence, either actual or threatened;
- Displaying of sexual material (eg. Films, literature, posters, pin-ups);
- Requests for sexual behaviours;
- Lewd comments, jokes, or pranks of a sexual nature or with reference to a person's appearance;
- Speculation about a person's private life or sexual preferences;

Examples of racial harassment may include:

- Comments, threats, insults, jokes, or pranks with racial references;
- Exclusion from conversations, activities or work roles due to race;
- Abusive words, writings, or drawings;

Other forms of harassment include personal harassment based upon personal circumstances or appearance, psychological and/or physical harassment.

Where possible, Kingfisher Treasure Seekers advocates a relational approach. The employee should make the harasser aware that their behaviour is inappropriate, and inform them of how they are feeling. If an employee requires support they may seek it from any of the following people:

- Gill Parkinson
- Jan Burn
- Craig Tucker
- Andy Davis

If the employee does not feel comfortable taking the above step verbally, they may put it in writing to the harasser.

Where these steps do not work, or where the harassment is considered severe, the employee should make a formal complaint. The employee should put in writing the nature of the harassment with any relevant details including dates and times, the name of the harasser and any witnesses. The employee should also state any steps they have already taken to prevent harassment. The complaint should then be given to Andy Davis or, if the complaint is against Andy, to Craig Tucker or Gill Parkinson. This is specific to colleague to colleague bullying and harassment and as such varies in process to usual complaints, which go straight to Craig Tucker.

All complaints will be treated in the strictest of confidence, and dealt with as promptly as possible in line with our complaints policy. As soon as possible after receiving a complaint, the member of management consulted should seek to separate the accused harasser and the victim. This may involve transfer, or suspension with pay until the matter is resolved. In order to resolve the complaint, it will be necessary for an investigation to be undertaken. This may involve gaining statements from witnesses, the accused harasser, and the harassed. Any statements received from witnesses will be able to be viewed by the accused harasser and the victim.

Once statements have been received, it may be necessary to undertake a complaint hearing. During this meeting, the harassed employee will be entitled to have a colleague of their choice present. The accused harasser will also be entitled to have a colleague of their choice present. Both parties will be able to call witnesses. Any employees involved at any stage in the process are expected to maintain confidentiality. In instances where this confidentiality is not maintained, the employee may face disciplinary action. If the witness does not wish to attend the complaint hearing, it may be necessary for the management member involved to postpone the meeting and undertake separate meetings with the witnesses to ask any further necessary questions.

If, following the complaint hearing, it is established that the harassment did

indeed take place; the disciplinary procedure should be adhered to. The result of any meetings should be given in writing to each party. If the disciplinary process is required, and a minor sanction is determined, the harassed employee should be supported to continue working with the harasser if necessary.

If either party is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint hearing, they are able to appeal to an alternative member of management. This appeal should be put in writing within seven working days of the first hearing. If a second hearing is undertaken, this decision will be final and will be put in writing to both parties involved.

No witnesses or complainants will be at risk of repercussions within the workplace. However, should it be established that false witness is given purposefully, disciplinary action may be pursued.

Company commitment to anti-discriminatory practice

The organisation maintains records with regard to ethnic origin, gender and disability of both staff and service users, as a means to identify and monitor possible areas of inequality. If discrimination is suspected, it is each staff members' responsibility to tackle this, by informing the company manager immediately. (In these instances staff should also be aware of the organisation's 'Whistleblowing Policy'.)

During induction, staff will be trained to avoid discrimination, under the Gloucestershire Hate Crime Strategy, all staff will partake in a two hour session outlining Hate Crime. This will ensure each employee is aware of their responsibilities and are equipped to deal with the diverse needs of individuals using the service, their significant others and fellow staff members.

Anti-discriminatory practice aims to counteract the negative effects of discrimination on service users and staff and to combat discrimination in all its forms. Employees must not be involved in any actions that could be seen as discriminatory or potentially insulting to any individual or group, including colleagues. The organisation will provide access to training on anti-discriminatory practice.

The Social model of disability

Instead of seeing the person with disability as ‘having something wrong’ that needs to be ‘fixed’, the social model sees society and the barriers it places to the aspirations and progress of people with disabilities as being at fault. These barriers tend to be of three kinds:

- **Environmental** – buildings, transport and other public places and services being developed without thought for the needs of people with disabilities
- **Attitudinal** – people and communities being quick to draw stereotypical conclusions that limit the potential of people with disabilities and the tendency of some people (knowingly or unknowingly) to be discriminatory or prejudicial
- **Organisational** – showing lack of flexibility and empathy in the way they develop their policies, practices and procedures .

At Kingfisher Treasure Seekers we base our practice on the social model, focusing on reducing or removing the barriers people with disabilities face. It’s not about ‘fixing’ people – it’s about working with them to help them achieve their goals, aspirations and full potential. It recognises people with disabilities as full, valued and included members of our communities with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else.

Any member of staff may use the grievance procedure to complain about perceived discriminatory conduct. If discriminatory practice should occur, whether intentional or not, the management of the organisation will seek to bring about reconciliation and develop understanding in order to prevent reoccurrence.