



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide diversity, equality & inclusion in employment and services, irrespective of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status and social class. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

CONTENTS

1. Policy Statement.....	1
2. Recruitment and selection	3
4. Training.....	4
5. Conditions	5
6. Employees Responsibilities.....	5
7. Monitoring and Evaluation	5
8. Service Provision	5
9. Developing Good Practice	5

1. Policy Statement

We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable. Equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion have been long-standing features of our employment practices and procedures. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

1. We recognise that discrimination runs through all aspects of life and aims to

challenge it, not ignore or condone it. The aim of the policy is to ensure that no board member, job applicant, employee, service user or volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, marital status, gender reassignment, sexuality, social status, religious belief, disability regardless of impairment/condition or mental health issue or age.

It is an accepted fact that many of the issues which relate to and impact upon the progress and advancement of diversity are related to employment practice and service provision.

Depe Gear Company Ltd will use its position and authority to assist in trying to overcome any structural, technical or perceived obstacles to diversity such as open access to services, advice and guidance, signposting, promoting opportunities and support to increase opportunities from those currently under-represented groups.

A copy of this policy will be made available for all board members/trustees, employees, volunteers and service users and made known to all applicants for employment

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account and consideration will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice which support best practice.

The organisation will challenge discrimination and discriminatory practices within its own organisation, member groups and the community.

Strive to create conditions that make it impossible for discrimination to operate.

At all times, examine, criticise and change any structure that perpetuates discrimination. Take disciplinary action against anyone in the organisation or member organisations that make discriminatory statements, remarks or jokes.

We will seek to maintain a neutral working environment in which no service users, employee, worker or volunteer feels under threat or intimidated.

Acceptance of this policy is a condition of employment by the organisation and a condition of membership of the Management Committee.

Support to volunteers

We endeavour to offer individual person-centred flexible support to our volunteers to enable them to be part of Disability Equality North West and fulfil the duties of their allocated role.

If a volunteer needs specific support to carry out their duties he/she will be allocated another volunteer mentor until they feel comfortable and appropriate access support is in place.

Volunteers will be allocated their preferred role, if appropriate and if all access needs can be met. If this is not possible, they will be offered another role within DENW. Support is offered through supervisors and the Buddy Scheme to ensure the placement is appropriate and accessible.

We endeavour to support volunteers with their transport requirements; support to travel independently, enabling them to get a Now card, access to accessible transport and in certain circumstances taxis.

The information centre is fully accessible on ground level with accessible toilet facilities and loop system.

Meetings and Public Events

All our meetings are held in accessible venues and we endeavour to meet everyone's access needs.

All our meetings and events will be held in an accessible venue with level access or a ramp with clear signage, accessible toilet facilities and with a hearing loop.

We will ask people to inform us of their access requirements before an event or meeting. If they do not respond we may not be able to put everything in place.

Events will have appropriate signage in large print and easy read (picture supported). We will endeavour to make sure that the information, i.e. agendas, minutes or reports are understood by all. (large print, picture supported, easy read if appropriate, on tape) Volunteers can help to take notes for those that may be unable to take their own notes and need help
For consultation events a range of creative methods, such as graphic facilitation, will also be used.

2. Recruitment and Selection

1. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities and diversity policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
2. We will have a clear and transparent competence-based system for defining job roles.
3. All job descriptions will be in line with, and support our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any person specifications.
4. We will strive by recruitment and selection, to redress any imbalances in its' staffing in terms of gender, disability, ethnic origin, age and sexuality in so far as is possible within the law and within the community that we operate.
5. The organisation will be able to show that neither direct nor indirect discrimination takes place during the recruitment of staff. If the organisation has members of staff that are being made redundant, or if there is a likelihood of redundancy, those staff will be considered for any new positions, which match their skills if available at that time.
6. If the internal applicant/s is not successful in obtaining the post, the vacancy will be advertised publicly at the second stage of recruitment.
7. Before advertising any job vacancy a full job description and personal specification will be drawn up. These will identify the requirements of the job and the qualities and skills that are essential and those, which are desirable. The specification, the application form, and the job advertisement will be reviewed to ensure that they do not include nonessential qualifications or experience.
8. Advertisements and details sent out to job applicants will include the following statement:
"..... We welcome applications from disabled people from all sections of the community"
9. All job applicants will be asked to complete a monitoring form. The form will include the following explanation of the need for monitoring:
"Any organisation can simply state that it does not discriminate – this does not make it a reality. Monitoring is essential if we are to discover and eliminate discrimination in our services."

10. Members of the shortlisting/interview panel will be drawn from the organisation's Board/Management Committee. They will have the power to co-opt other appropriate members. Panel members must have undertaken training in equality and diversity and recruitment practices.
11. Anyone who considers that they have been discriminated against in the selection procedure will have the right of appeal to the Board/Management Committee.
12. We will make a reasonable adjustment to the various stages of the recruitment and selection process as well as within employment.
13. On request we will offer recruitment information in alternative formats, i.e. large prints, audio, Braille, CD Rom. We will also receive application forms via alternative methods.
14. Shortlisted candidates will be offered a reasonable adjustment to the interviewing procedure to ensure that they have an equal chance during the interviewing procedure, i.e. communication support, large print, accessible interview room, support or personal assistance.
15. New employees will be encouraged to apply for 'Access to Work' scheme if needed to enable them to fulfil the duties on their role.

3. Training

1. The organisation acknowledges the importance of diversity training as a key factor in the implementation of an effective Equal Opportunities Policy.
2. Provision will be made for all staff and Management Committee members to receive equality and diversity training.
3. Attendance at training on social model and diversity issues is compulsory. It is a condition of employment and membership of the Management Committee.

4. Conditions of Service

1. The Board/Management Committee will review and develop the conditions of service annually to ensure that they are not discriminatory.
2. It is a condition of service that trustees/management committee members and employees adhere to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. Failure to do so may result in complaints and disciplinary measures being taken.

5. Employee's Responsibilities

1. Co-operation between staff and Management is essential to a successful Equal Opportunities Policy and staff will be consulted on all aspects of the policy and its implementation annually.

Employees will:

Not knowingly discriminate against colleagues or services users.

Abide by the organisation's Diversity Statement of Intent.

Challenge discrimination from all other staff, volunteers and service users and provide an account of all incidents to the Management Committee.

Attend diversity training, disability equality and other equal opportunities training as and when required.

Work to identify ways in which this policy can be made increasingly effective and to identify areas of service delivery based on need.

Participate in monitoring of service delivery and employment practice

Keep up-to-date on disability and discrimination legislation

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The organisation recognises that acceptance of an Equal Opportunity Policy is not an end in itself. It is the effective implementation and development of the policy that matters.

This cannot be achieved without monitoring.

The Organisation through the trustees/manager and other staff is responsible for carrying out monitoring and evaluation of all functions of the organisation including recruitment policy and service delivery.

Service Provision

The organisation recognises that a statement saying that any individual regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age or disability are welcome to use the service is not enough. In order for services to be relevant and accessible to all groups, positive measures need to be taken to counter institutional discrimination. These measures include the following:

Resources:

The organisation will endeavour to ensure that its premises are accessible to everyone regardless of impairment/condition (see Disability Equality and Access statement)

Communication support, readers will be made available, by arrangement, to those who need them. Efforts will be made to ensure that no one is excluded from participating in meetings and talks.

8. Developing Good Practice:

Training will be provided on issues relating to equal opportunities for staff, committee members and volunteers

Support mechanisms will be established to help staff, committee members and

volunteers to confront prejudice if or when it arises in work situations.
The organisation will encourage all its member groups to adopt an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and procedures of their own and challenge all forms of discrimination.

9. Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Please tick or circle the following. You are not obliged to fill this in but it helps us to ensure that we are reaching all communities.

Ethnic Origin:

How would you describe yourself

White British Yes/No

White other European Yes/No

Irish Yes/No

Black British Yes/No

African Caribbean Yes/No

African Yes/No

Asian Indian Yes/No

Asian |Pakistani Yes/No

Asian Bangladeshi Yes/No

Chinese Yes/No

Polish Yes/No

Other (please state)

Gender:

Male Yes/No

Female Yes/No

Sexuality:

Heterosexual Yes/No

Lesbian Yes/No

Gay Yes/No

Bisexual Yes/No

Transgender Yes/No

Asexual Yes/No

Prefer not to say

Disability:

Do you identify as Disabled Yes/No

Age:

18-21 Yes/No

21-28 Yes/No

28-35 Yes/No

35-45 Yes/No

45-55 Yes/No

55-65 Yes/No

65 + Yes/No

The damage, tension and conflict which harassment and bullying creates not only results in poor morale, but also divisions within teams and lower productivity. Employees and workers may suffer from fear, stress and anxiety, which not only affects their contribution to our business but can also put strain on their personal and family lives,

leading to illness, increased absence and staff turnover.

Therefore, all complaints of bullying or harassment will be treated very seriously.

7. Procedure for dealing with bullying or harassment

Making a complaint of bullying or harassment can be embarrassing and stressful for the individual concerned, and therefore we encourage employees and workers to discuss any problems in confidence with someone they trust and feel comfortable talking to. They may simply want to stop the conduct or behaviour but sometimes they want stronger action to be taken.

Anyone who believes they have been the subject of bullying or harassment in the course of their work may either initially address the matter informally with their supervisor/manager or may make a formal complaint using this procedure. If they prefer, one of the following designated people may be contacted as an alternative: The Support Services Manager, any Director. No judgements will be made about the course of action the employee or worker chooses to adopt. All complaints will be treated as strictly confidential and we will aim to handle them with impartiality and sensitivity.

Informal action

It is often most effective to try and sort things out quickly and as close to the problem as possible. An employee or worker who, at any time, feels that they are a victim of minor bullying or harassment should make it clear to the perpetrator as soon as possible that they find the behaviour unacceptable or unwelcome, explain the effect that it is having on them and ask them to stop. If they feel unable or unwilling to do this verbally, particularly if they feel threatened or embarrassed, then they make a written request or, alternatively, may ask a colleague to approach the person on their behalf or to help them in taking such action. The latter approach may be more effective if the perpetrator is a customer or senior business contact.

If the employee or worker feels able to address their concerns directly with the person concerned, they should be clear and assertive so that there is no confusion as to what is concerning them. A written record of the details of any incidents of perceived bullying (including date; time; place; name of person allegedly harassing the individual; what happened including verbatim quotes of relevant comments where possible; how the individual felt at the time; names of any witnesses and any action taken) is helpful, as are copies of any texts, emails, voice messages or other evidence that may support their allegations.

Formal procedure

Where an informal approach fails, or where the bullying or harassment is more serious, a formal written complaint should be made without unreasonable delay. If necessary, the employee should seek assistance from a colleague or manager.

The complaint may be sent to either the employee or worker's supervisor manager or to any Director. It should outline the reasons for the complaint and all relevant facts surrounding the matter, including relevant dates, names and witnesses.

The person receiving the complaint will carry out a thorough investigation as quickly as possible to establish the facts and decide upon the appropriate course of action. Whilst recognising that these are often sensitive situations, the employee or worker will be asked to provide full details of the allegations, i.e.:

- what happened?
- where did it occur?
- who was involved?
- was this the first incident?
- when did it occur?
- were there any witnesses?
- whether any action has been taken to prevent further repetition of the behaviour.

The employee or worker will also be asked how they feel the situation should be resolved and whether they have any other suggestions or information that will assist in resolving the issue.

Managers/supervisors should take care to ask questions in a sensitive way and not to phrase these in a way that implies that the bullying/harassment may in some way have been directly or indirectly invited, or that appear to trivialise the experience or suggest that it was imaginary. The intention of the alleged bully/harasser is irrelevant; it is the effect on the recipient that is important.

The employee or worker may, if they wish, be supported throughout the procedure and at any meetings by a colleague of their choice.

As any formal complaint may be regarded as serious, we will consider whether the alleged bully or harasser should be redeployed temporarily or suspended on full pay or whether reporting lines or other managerial arrangements should be altered until the investigation has been completed.

All employees and workers and also any external parties involved in the investigation will be asked to respect the need for confidentiality. Failure on the part of employees (whether recipient, perpetrator or witnesses) to do so will be considered a disciplinary offence. Copies of statements made by witnesses will be made available to both the person making the complaint and the alleged bully/harasser, but the names of the witnesses may be withheld if they request to remain anonymous, and particularly if they have a genuine belief or fear of reprisal.

Where the manager dealing with a complaint considers, after investigation, that bullying or harassment may have taken place, if the alleged bully/harasser is an employee, the disciplinary procedure will be followed to ensure that the accused employee has a fair opportunity to defend or explain their actions. Common responses to allegations of bullying/harassment include denial or disbelief that the behaviour was offensive or was not welcome. This does not alter the fact that a complaint has been made which may lead to disciplinary action.

The severity of the penalty imposed on an employee believed to be guilty of bullying/harassment will be consistent with other disciplinary offences. Where a warning is given, discussions will take place with the person making the complaint, and, where necessary, we will take any reasonable steps to alter working practices to minimise contact between the affected employees.

An employee who receives a warning or is dismissed for bullying or harassment may appeal against the penalty in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, for example rape or assault, it may be necessary to refer the case to the police.

Whilst it is the employee's choice to make a complaint or not, we still have a duty to protect all employees and workers and we may pursue a complaint independently if we consider it is appropriate to do so.

Protection from victimisation

We seek to ensure that anyone who brings a complaint of bullying or harassment will not suffer any form of victimisation or detriment for having raised a complaint. However, if an employee raises a complaint that is found to be untrue and has been brought in bad faith (e.g. spite, deliberate maliciousness) disciplinary action will be taken against the employee, which may lead to their dismissal.

Following the investigation

Full consideration will be given to how to best maintain the ongoing working relationship between the parties going forwards. This may involve some form of mediation or counselling or a change in the duties or reporting lines of either party. This will apply even where a complaint is not upheld (for example, where evidence is inconclusive).

Once the relationships have had time to stabilise and return to normal, informal contact should be made with the affected employees. If further problems of bullying, harassment or victimisation are encountered, or the employee or worker continues to suffer stress or anxiety, immediate action should be taken.

8. Third party harassment

Where the complaint is made against a customer, supplier or other business contact, this will be investigated, and we will take all reasonably practicable steps to protect the employee or worker and to prevent any recurrence.

If an employee harasses and/or discriminates against a customer, supplier or an independent contractor or consultant, that employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Grievance procedure

Our bullying and harassment policy is intended to give guidance and support, taking into account the sensitivity and serious nature of such issues. However, an employee or worker who is not happy with the outcome of a complaint raised under this policy (or who feels that the situation has either not improved or has deteriorated again), may use the grievance procedure as an alternative (but not as an additional) procedure.

10. Related policies and documents

We also have the following related policies and documents: disciplinary procedure; equal opportunity policy; grievance procedure; whistleblowing policy.

11. Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to the Support Services Manager.

