

Equal Opportunities Policy

Naturallythinking is committed to an effective Equal Opportunities Policy.

Our Commitment

We are committed to the achievement of equal opportunities; this is central to our mission.

We recognise and accept our responsibilities under the law. We believe discrimination, either direct or indirect as defined in law, is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it. In the same way, victimisation, as defined in law, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

However, our policy is not limited to the minimum standards imposed by the law. We are committed to achieve best practice in the area of equal opportunities. Everyone who is or who seeks to be a member of staff or volunteer Naturallythinking is entitled to receive equality of opportunity and treatment that is appropriate and fair irrespective of:

- age
- colour
- disablement
- marital status
- race/ethnicity
- religion
- sex
- gender
- employment status
- sexual orientation
- nationality
- caring responsibility
- socio-economic status
- other unjustifiable factors

This list is not exhaustive.

We will be proactive in all matters relating to equality of opportunity and diversity. We value and will celebrate the richness brought to our organisation by a diverse population, both of staff and clients. We recognise and will seek to reflect the positive contributions brought to Naturallythinking by the variety of its staff and volunteers.

We are committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management.

We also recognise that the behaviours through which diversity is evident must be consistent with the values that underpin this policy document.

Additionally, we recognise that despite our best intentions circumstances may arise where we fail to provide an appropriate and professional service to people, consistent with the aims of this policy. We are committed to take action in such circumstances.

Purpose of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to ensure

- fair recruitment and selection
- equal access to training opportunities
- equitable terms and conditions of employment
- appropriate provision of services for different sections of the community

Scope of the Policy

Naturallythinking seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in relation to all of its activities, both as an employer and as a service provider.

As an employer we will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in the recruitment, selection, retention, training and promotion of staff at all levels, and the adoption of flexible patterns of working. To this end we will develop personnel policies and practices that will demonstrate and further our commitment to Equal Opportunities.

Selection criteria and procedures will be designed, and outcomes monitored and reviewed, to ensure that staff are recruited and selected on the basis of their assessed merits and abilities when compared with the needs of Naturallythinking. We will take care to ensure that applicants or potential applicants are not discouraged or disadvantaged by the adoption of any conditions or criteria which cannot be justified in terms of specific job requirements. Additionally we will seek to attract, encourage and welcome applications from a wide range of people to enhance the diversity of our staff.

These commitments to staff will be reflected in the policies we produce.

Additionally, we will continue to develop and implement best practice through the establishment of and support for guidance notes on best practice. The development of these guidance notes will take account of relevant statutory Codes of Practice.

Implementation

Naturallythinking will have policies and procedures that support and uphold this equal opportunities policy. As a result, everyone can expect to be treated with fairness and for judgements to be made that respect their human rights and ensure natural justice. Decisions will be made with integrity following a process based upon transparent criteria.

Naturallythinking will take action to communicate this policy to all staff, volunteers and others e.g. visitors, clients, contractors and suppliers of goods and services involved in its activities. We will continue to develop and implement programmes to ensure that all staff have received appropriate training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

Consultation with and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders will be essential for ensuring that our equal opportunities policy and practice is effective. We also need to ensure that we gain feedback to ensure that the practical impact of our policy and practice does not result in unintended or unfair discrimination or in consequences that are contrary to the aims of this policy.

Naturallythinking will develop policies, codes of practice and guidance to deal with specific aspects of the implementation of this Policy. These developments will take place against a clear and published action plan.

Employment

Naturallythinking believes it must recruit the best person for the job and that discrimination prevents this from happening.

Because of past and existing discrimination, some people have missed out on chances to obtain qualifications or gain experience. This in turn can lead to restricted job and training opportunities, and further disadvantage groups already affected by discrimination. This means that some people are not able to compete for jobs on equal terms. Likewise, organisations may have inadvertently developed systems and styles of working which can prevent some people from achieving their full potential.

Naturallythinking's Equal Opportunities Policy is there to assist in the elimination of discrimination and ensure fair treatment for all employees by:

- advertising all jobs in appropriate ways to ensure the widest possible response from all sections of the community;
- examining recruitment procedures regularly to ensure people are selected on their abilities and merits;
- offering fair terms and conditions of employment to employees;
- ensuring facilities and practices are supportive of employees with family responsibilities;
- providing equipment and facilities to enable people with a disability to obtain a job or continue working with Naturallythinking;
- Ensuring all employees are valued and respected, and are not harassed in the workplace.

Responding to feedback

Naturallythinking is committed to respond positively to constructive criticism and complaint in relation to equal opportunities. We recognise that making complaints and expressing concerns in relation to equal opportunities can be challenging. We will therefore develop specific advice and support to enable staff and volunteers to put forward their concerns effectively.

We will take appropriate action to protect volunteers and staff from discriminatory behaviour by any individual or groups within the organisation, or in the course of their duties. Allegations of discriminatory behaviour on the part of staff will be dealt with under the appropriate disciplinary or grievance procedure.

Dignity at work and harassment

At Naturallythinking we endeavour to create a happy workplace where people feel accepted and comfortable. We therefore require that all our staff to behave professionally at work, and give due respect for other people's right to be treated with dignity. If any member of staff is found to be breaching this through harassment or other behaviour likely to threaten others' dignity at work then the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures as set out in the Employment Contracts will apply.