

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

*This policy extends to RSCDS employees, contractors working on behalf of the RSCDS and voluntary workers, and to any place or venue where work is carried out which is deemed to be a work environment.*

Discrimination is unacceptable, the RSCDS (Society) has made the decision, therefore, to adopt a formal Equal Opportunities Policy (EOP) and ensure this is built into the culture of the Society. Alleged breaches of the EOP by employees, relevant contractors and voluntary workers will be subject to a full investigation and, for employees could lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.

### **Aim of Policy**

The aim of our policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee, service user or worker is discriminated against directly or indirectly.

To this aim the Society's policy is to:

- promote equality of opportunity for all persons;
- eliminate, as far as is reasonably possible, discrimination and harassment from the workplace;
- encourage all employees/voluntary workers to take an active role against all forms of discrimination and harassment;
- deter all employees/voluntary workers from participating in discriminatory behaviour or harassment;
- demonstrate to all employees/voluntary workers that they can rely upon the Society's support in cases of discrimination or harassment at work.

To create conditions in which the aim can be achieved, the Society is committed to identifying and eliminating unlawful discriminatory practices and developing procedures to support this commitment and assist in its realisation in all possible ways.

### **Legal Responsibilities**

Over and above the provisions set out in its own policy and procedures, the Society is bound by legal responsibilities in the field of equal opportunities.

These legal responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities also extend to RSCDS Branches and Affiliated Groups. As licenced Branches and as Affiliated Groups, the Society would expect that they also adhere to the requirements of these legal responsibilities outlined below if they are in the UK or any equivalent legal responsibilities as required in the territory in which the Branch or Affiliated Group is located and operating.

These legal responsibilities in the UK are listed in:

Equality Act 2010 – details can be found at  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone.

It therefore covers areas which were previously covered by earlier legislation relating to discrimination on gender, race, human rights, civil partnerships and disability.

### **Who is protected against discrimination under this Act?**

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of the following 'protected characteristics':

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

### **Where are people protected from discrimination?**

- at work;
- in education;
- as a consumer;
- when using public services;
- when buying or renting property;
- as a member or guest of a private club or association.

As well as the legal protection for the person being discriminated against someone is also protected from discrimination if:

- they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, eg a family member or friend;
- they have complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim.

### **Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:**

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others;
- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage;
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them;

- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they have complained about discrimination or harassment.

## **Employment, Recruitment and Selection**

The Society undertakes to ensure this policy is circulated to any agency responsible for its recruitment, a copy is available to all employees, relevant contractors, voluntary workers and any other persons involved in RSCDS recruitment and selection and the content is made known to all applicants for employment.

The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any EOP. The Society will endeavour through appropriate training, provision of key documents such as job descriptions and person specifications, short listing and other selection materials and procedures to ensure employees and any other persons engaged in RSCDS selection and recruitment do not discriminate, consciously or unconsciously in the decision-making processes.

In line with the policy, the following statements will be adhered to in practice.

- Job descriptions and person specifications accurately reflect job requirements and comply with our EOP and best practice.
- The Society employs a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies, ensuring wide and appropriate coverage.
- All applicants applying for jobs with us receive fair treatment and are considered solely on their ability to do the job.
- All employees/other persons involved in RSCDS recruitment select on the agreed criteria to comply with job requirements and avoid unlawful discrimination
- Short listing and interviewing are carried out by more than one person where possible.
- Interview questions relate to the job requirements and are not of a discriminatory nature.
- The Society does not disqualify any applicant because they are unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
- Internal promotion and advancement are based on merit, with all relevant decisions taken within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
- Selection for redundancy is based upon a clear statement of policy, with all relevant decisions taken within the overall framework and principles of the EOP.

## **Monitoring**

The Society reviews job applications and maintain the employment records of all employees, contractors and voluntary workers to monitor the progress of this policy. Monitoring may involve:

- the collection and classification of information regarding race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;

- examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the success rate of applicants and the distribution of employees; and
- recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, decisions reached and the reason(s) for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunity to all applicants and staff.

### **Application of the Equal Opportunities Policy**

The Equal Opportunities policy applies to all aspects of employment including:

- recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, person specifications, short listing, interview and selection procedures;
- training;
- promotion and career development opportunities;
- terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment related benefits and facilities;
- grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures;
- selection for redundancy.