



Social Entrepreneurs Network Scotland

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

It is Senscot's aim to provide employment equality to all. In particular, Senscot is committed to promoting equal treatment irrespective of the nine "**protected characteristics**" in the Equality Act 2010. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Senscot recognises the legal obligation to act within the existing legislation, with particular reference to the Equality Act 2010.

Senscot recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of Senscot and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of Senscot to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).

Senscot also aims to:

- Ensure that the workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
- Oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in Senscot's employment.
- Treat all employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of Senscot.
- Train and encourage staff not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of Senscot's goods and services.

- Operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

Senscot's Commitment:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all staff is 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.
- To promote equality in the workplace which Senscot believes is good management practice and makes sound business sense.

Senscot will review all employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.

Breaches of the equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Responsibilities of Management

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Senscot's Board and Managers who will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. Senscot will ensure that:

- All their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- Grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- Proper records are maintained.

Responsibilities of staff

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff of Senscot and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- Comply with the policy and arrangements;
- Not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- Not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics;

- Ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- Inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

Third parties

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Senscot will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. Senscot will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

Identifying Discrimination

Senscot's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.
- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others such as clients or customers.
- Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act or it is thought that they have done so.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct of a physical, verbal or non verbal nature that has the effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment to the recipient(s). It may or may not be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any personal characteristic of an individual. It can be persistent behaviour or conduct over a period of time, but a one-off act, providing it is serious, may also amount to harassment.

Forms of Harassment

- Physical contact ranging from touching to assault

- Verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, inappropriate remarks, gossip, slander, sectarian songs, letters, emails, telephone calls or text messages
- Visual display or posters, graffiti, calendars, obscene gestures, flags, bunting and emblems
- Coercion, ranging from pressure for sexual favours, to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following or stalking
- Persistent undermining of someone's abilities
- Attempting to humiliate someone in public
- Constant changes in instructions or routine in order to unsettle someone in their work

This list is not exhaustive.

Bullying

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Forms of Bullying:

- Intimidation and aggression
- Violent gestures or actual physical violence
- Disparaging comments or remarks, made privately or in front of others
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Non co-operation at work, including withholding necessary information
- Isolating certain individuals
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading with work or unfairly criticising
- Setting impossible deadlines or tasks
- Taking credit for others achievements or initiatives

- Ridiculing or demeaning someone
- Picking on someone or setting them up to fail
- Blocking promotion or staff development opportunities
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation

This list is not exhaustive.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably because they have asserted their rights (or are believed to have done so) under this policy. This includes both those bringing claims under this policy and any others acting as witnesses in any investigation of a complaint. Employees will be protected from victimisation for either bringing a complaint or assisting in an investigation.

Disability Discrimination

Senscot appreciates that employees with a disability may require additional support. This is something which will be discussed with you at the commencement of your employment as part of the induction programme. If you suffer an injury whilst employed, you will be asked about any specific needs prior to your return to work. Senscot is committed to supporting disabled employees wherever possible.

Senscot is also aware of its legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to your work to accommodate your disability wherever this can be accommodated within resources. This includes providing equipment and considering re-deployment to a more suitable post, as appropriate.

Senscot may seek your permission to approach your doctor or specialist, or an independent doctor or specialist, for advice in the form of a report on your condition and any suggested reasonable adjustments. This medical report will be at Senscot's expense.

If you have a disability and feel that Senscot is not being as supportive as you would like, you should mention this to your Manager or the Director. If you feel that you do not receive an adequate response, you should raise this in writing.

Duties and Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to uphold the principles of this policy. Employees have a legal responsibility to be aware of, and avoid, conducting themselves in a way which unfairly discriminates against others. Should you have any concerns, you should report any discriminatory acts to the Director.

In the event that you personally experience any form of discrimination, you should immediately report this to the Director. In the event of your complaint being against the Director, you should raise it with the Chair of the Board who will make appropriate arrangements to progress your complaint