



Equality And Diversity Policy

Introduction

NECA is committed to promoting, creating and maintaining a culture of equality of opportunity and diversity both in its employment practices and in the accessibility of and delivery of services offered to service users and clients; whereby equality of opportunity between men and women is promoted and unlawful harassment and discrimination is not tolerated. Our aim is to maintain a workforce that is representative of and provides services to the communities within NECA's area of operation. Our intention is that each employee and volunteer feels respected and is able to give of their best.

Equality of opportunity refers to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination against particular or under represented groups. Diversity refers to the broad range of visible and non-visible differences that characterise people. By understanding, respecting and eliminating these differences, we recognise that we can maximise our success as a leading provider of addiction services.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the following Policies

HR 11 Dignity At Work Policy

HR 15 Recruitment And Appointment Policy

HR 19 Staff Training And Development Policy

Protected Characteristics

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the following characteristics are protected characteristics:

Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. See Appendix A

The Policy

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers. Service Users will be made aware of this Policy, and of their right to fair and equal treatment.

NECA believes in the principles of social justice, acknowledges that discrimination affects people in complex ways, and is committed to challenge all forms of inequality. To this end, NECA will aim to ensure that:

- In the recruitment, training and development, promotion, dismissal and application of terms and conditions of service, individuals are treated fairly, with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, social / economical background, offending background that does not create risk to young persons and vulnerable adults, or any other inappropriate distinction.



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- it affords staff, volunteers and service users the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- it promotes an inclusive and supportive working environment that promotes dignity and respect for staff, volunteers and service users.
- it recognises the varied contributions to the achievement of NECA's mission, made by individuals from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of experiences.

The aims and underpinning principles of this Policy are to ensure that in carrying out its activities NECA will have due regard to:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers should have equal access to opportunities for personal development, career progression and training opportunities based on aptitude, ability and relevance to their role within the organisation.
- promoting good relations between people of diverse backgrounds.
- eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- ensuring that all staff, volunteers and service users are treated fairly and with respect in a safe environment free from unlawful and unfair harassment or discrimination.
- implementing positive action initiatives and redressing inequalities and discriminatory practice.
- ensuring that all relevant stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and service users, have the right to be consulted about NECA policy, procedures and practices and are encouraged to contribute to the decision making processes of NECA.
- ensuring that service users have equal access to quality services that are made available by NECA and its partners.
- ensuring equality and diversity in the workplace as good management practice which makes sound business sense.

To ensure NECA's commitment to equality and diversity work processes, NECA will undertake the following:

Recruitment

- We will ensure that the Job Description / Person specification reflects the vacant position and is free from bias.



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- All advertisements will state that NECA aims to be an equality and diversity employer and that it welcomes applications from relevant qualified people from all sections of the community regardless of their protected characteristic.
- We will take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure that vacancies for staff, and volunteers are advertised as widely as possible where all members of the community have access to them.
- Staff on maternity leave will be notified of all vacancies
- Application for Employment Forms will seek to enable people to emphasise the positive aspects of their applications. They will also be available in alternative formats to suit individual needs (on request).
- Short listing procedures and interviews are designed not to discriminate directly or indirectly, and are based on objective criteria.
- NECA is a Disability Symbol user. Applicants with disabilities who satisfy the minimum criteria and qualifications contained in the Person Specification will be guaranteed an interview.
- Where possible NECA will meet the special needs of disabled staff by providing equipment adaptations and other reasonable adjustments. Every effort will be made to retain staff who become disabled during their employment.
- Reference to the Equality and Diversity Policy will appear on the organisation's website.
- Recruitment Monitoring. The organisation will seek information from all job applicants seeking employment and from potential volunteers. All information will be treated as confidential and will be separated from all processes concerned with the appointment of staff or placement of volunteers.

Training and Development

- Subject to the requirements relevant to undertake their duties and personal development, all employees and volunteers will be required to attend mandatory training and other optional training courses. Training and development opportunities will be jointly agreed between the member of staff and their line manager during the Induction, monthly Staff Supervision and Annual Appraisal meetings.
- Every effort will be made to mutually agree the timing of training courses in order to accommodate those with family responsibilities and to take account of the special needs of people with disabilities.



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See also HR 6 Induction Policy and HR 9 Annual Appraisal Scheme Policy

Equal Pay

- an annual equal pay audit to examine our practices for all our employees, including those on maternity leave or temporary fixed term contracts.

See also HR 27 Equal Pay Policy

Equality And Diversity Monitoring

- To ensure the effective application and compliance of this Policy, NECA will seek information on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation from all job and volunteer applicants. Applicants will be informed that the information is required only for monitoring purposes in order to verify that NECA's Policies and Procedures are being consistently applied.

Human Resources will be responsible for collecting this information and producing statistical information covering recruitment, promotion, disciplinary, unsatisfactory attendance, unsatisfactory performance, grievance, and leavers.

NECA Training Ltd will be responsible for the collection and producing statistical information covering training and development of staff.

Bi-annually, the Human Resources and Training Manager will evaluate this information and report to the Business Meeting.

Working Practices

- HR18 Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Flexible Working, Parental Leave Policy. NECA recognise that women and carers may need to change their working hours. All staff regardless of their statutory status may submit requests to reduce or vary their working hours which will be considered having due regard to the organisation's operational requirements.

Retirement

- NECA does not have a fixed retirement age. NECA recognise the knowledge, skills and experience people gain through their working life and welcome the opportunity to retain staff beyond the statutory default retirement age.

Communication

- This policy will be communicated to all staff and volunteers at induction, will appear in the Staff Handbook, Intranet and NECA's website.



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- An Equality Statement signed by the Chief Executive and Chairman will appear on each Notice Board. Appendix B.

Equality Impact Assessments

NECA will undertake equality impact assessments of service delivery and its policies. This will assist in serving the following purposes:

- To help services focus on the needs and requirements for our stakeholders, service users, customers and communities.
- To ensure that no discriminatory or disadvantageous consequences for service users, customers and communities may occur
- To promote further within NECA its Equality And Diversity and Dignity At Work Policies.
- To further improve services delivery
- To promote and share best practice

Monitoring And Review

The effectiveness of this Policy will be constantly monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Employment Legislation

NECA will implement its Equality and Diversity Policy in accordance with current legislation, in particular the Equality Act 2010.

In addition NECA will have due regard to guidance given by / in

- ACAS
- The Government Equalities Office
- The various Codes Of Practice as listed on the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) website, and the EHRC's own guidance on the Equality Act.
- the Immigration And Nationality Directorate's Code of Practice for the Avoidance of Race Discrimination in Recruitment Practices while seeking to Prevent Illegal working
- the Criminal Records Bureau's Code of Practice on the recruitment of ex-offenders.
- NHS National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse



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Responsibilities

NECA's Executive Committee and Chief Executive have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that NECA operates within a framework of equality of opportunity. (Appendix B).

The Human Resources Manager is responsible for ensuring that NECA meets its legal obligations in respect of employment legislation relating to equal opportunities and diversity and will ensure that this Policy, its implications and obligations which fall on all staff and volunteers are understood and implemented at all levels within NECA.

The Training Manager will provide a range of equality and diversity training to meet the strategic needs of NECA.

The Deputy Chief Executive, Regional Treatment Service Manager, Area Managers, Regional Supported Housing Manager, Quality Assurance Manager and Business Support Manager are responsible for promoting, creating and maintaining a culture of equality of opportunity and diversity in the accessibility and delivery of services offered to service users and clients.

The Quality Assurance Manager also has responsibility for undertaking Equality Impact Assessments.

All managers are responsible for:

- fostering a culture in which compliance with this policy is regarded as integral to NECA's mission and in which equality and diversity issues are actively promoted.
- ensuring staff, volunteers and service users are encouraged, supported and enabled to reach their full potential.
- identifying appropriate staff development for themselves and their staff to meet NECA's operational needs in their respective areas.

All staff and volunteers have a duty to support and uphold the principles contained in this Policy. Staff and volunteers will be trained on the policy; on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties. Equality and diversity will be a standing agenda item in team meetings.

No one will be in any doubt about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in the organisation.



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Third Party Organisations – Appendix C

Third parties who supply goods / services to the Company or who act on the organisation's behalf will be made aware of our Policy.

When tenders are issued to invite suppliers / providers for the supply of goods / services, the tender document will include an Equality And Diversity Questionnaire.

Where goods / services are obtained without tendering, the Office Manager - Headquarters will be responsible for issuing Appendix C to suppliers / providers. The Office Manager will maintain a register of letters issued / successful organisations who have been awarded an order / contract following the tendering process.

Where goods / services providers who are invited to tender fail to complete their declaration in support of NECA's Policy, they will not be awarded an order / contract.

Where no tendering process occurs, goods / services providers who fail to complete their declaration in support of NECA's Policy, the Office Manager will inform the provider that, as appropriate, NECA will not seek to renew the current contract on its cessation / place further orders.

Complaint Procedure

Any member of staff or volunteer who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against, in accordance with the Grievance Procedure in the first instance should discuss the matter with his or her immediate line manager. If the complaint relates to unacceptable behaviour of harassment or bullying, the complaint procedure as set out in the Dignity At Work Procedure should be followed. (Service Users should follow the protocols as set out in the Client Services Operational Manual).

Breach Of This Policy

NECA will regard seriously any instances of non-adherence of this Policy. If there are any instances of non-adherence, NECA will invoke the Disciplinary Procedure and take whatever action it deems appropriate up to and including dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. (Any breach by Service Users will be as set out in the Client Services Operational Manual).