

### **1. Declaration of intent**

1.1 Ocean Youth Connexions is committed to taking positive action to fight unlawful discrimination in every respect of its work.

1.2 Ocean Youth Connexions is an equal opportunities employer. The aim of its equal opportunities policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment based on the 9 protected characteristics as set out in the Equalities Act 2010:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Gender Reassignment**
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**
- **Pregnancy and Maternity**
- **Race**
- **Religion or Belief**
- **Sex**
- **Sexual Orientation**

1.3 In addition to this Ocean Youth Connexions is committed to not only promote equalities in the work place but to also adhere to the public sector equality duty of 'due regard' which looks at fighting all forms of discrimination in the work place.

1.4 Ocean Youth Connexions will endeavour to establish a broad base for consultation to identify priorities and needs as reflected by all communities at large and in all campaign work will maintain the objectives stated above.

1.5 The executive committee shall review the content and effectiveness of the policy whenever a new staff appointment is to be made, and at other times as may be necessary. The Director's are responsible for the policies day to day implementation.

1.6 Ocean Youth Connexions will monitor and review the composition of its executive committee with the aim of promoting a broad-based representation.

### **2. Recruitment of staff**

2.1 A written job description and person specification shall be prepared in respect of every vacancy that arises and every new post that is created. It shall be checked and agreed by the staff and honorary officers for direct and indirect discrimination, including culture-bound assumptions and ageism before the recruitment procedures commence. Applicants should be made aware that general life experience and voluntary as well as paid work are valued.

2.2 All jobs must be advertised externally and as widely as possible. In addition to whatever channels the organisation may choose to utilise, the vacant post must also be advertised in minority press. Adverts should clearly state the minimum requirements for the post.

2.3 At both the short-listing and the appointment stage, brief notes shall be made on each application indicating clearly why the applicant has or has not been short-listed or appointed.

2.4. No interview, for any post should be conducted by a panel of fewer than three representatives or more than five members of the executive committee. All interviewing panels must have an understanding of the organisations goals and vision and be competent, impartial and unbiased in asking questions in relation to the job description and be able to give feedback to applicants when requested. Members of staff will be involved at all stages of the selection process in an advisory role. Whenever possible, an external assessor shall be invited to join the panel in a non-voting capacity.

2.5 An open invitation will be given to short-listed applicants with a disability to discuss their specific needs and requirements. Ocean Youth Connexions will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the specific needs of disabled employees are met.

2.6 During each interview, notes should be taken and at the end of the interview a form should be completed for each candidate, assessing their response to the topics and themes raised. These should be reviewed at the end of the interview process by the panel to see that each candidate has been treated fairly.

2.7 Questions on the following topics are forbidden in an interview. Any candidate who is asked these questions has the right to refuse to answer. It is the responsibility of the Chair, or any other member of the panel to stop such questions being asked:

- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Occupation of partner
- Number of children/domestic arrangements

(It should be made clear that the organisation aims to be flexible to individual requirements)

2.8 An equal opportunity section should be included on the application form. The equal opportunities policy and the purpose of monitoring should be clearly explained.

### **3. Training**

3.1 New staff should be inducted into the staff development and training policy and made aware of training opportunities available to them, and be positively encouraged to take them up. All reasonable facilities will be offered to staff to take study leave.

### **4. Support**

4.1 All workers should have access to support. If a worker feels isolated, provision should be made for support from other parts of Ocean Youth Connexions or outside the organisation. If groups of women, black or minority ethnic workers, or lesbian or gay workers, for example want to set up a support group, this should be encouraged.

### **5. Discipline and grievance procedures**

5. 1 It will be made clear to all employees that discrimination, abuse or harassment on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexuality-if proven-is a dismissible offence.

## **6. The scope of this policy**

6.1 This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by [organisation] irrespective of funding agent.
- All aspects of promotional, educational, and campaigning functions of Ocean Youth Connexions.
- Members and affiliate organisations. Ocean Youth Connexions would expect its membership to concur with and actively promote these objectives.

## **7. Implementation**

7.1 Employment procedures and practices will be undertaken strictly in accordance with the following and all other relevant legislation:

- **Race Relations Act 1976**
- **Sex Discrimination Acts 1975-85**
- **Equal Pay Act 1970 & 1983**
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**
- **Human rights Act 1998**
- **Equalities Act 2010**

7.2 In order to implement this equal opportunities policy, Ocean Youth Connexions accepts that it needs to ensure that all members and staff involved in selection and recruitment within the organisation are given adequate and appropriate training in:

- Interview techniques
- Codes of practice
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures as contained in the Ocean Youth connexions staff manual.

## **8. Equal opportunity in service delivery**

8.1 Ocean Youth Connexions is committed to ensuring equality of access to all its services. The executive committee will take action to provide genuine equality of opportunity to counter past discrimination and to monitor the outcome. The executive committee will aim to ensure that no sector of the community shall be denied access or receive a poor service on the grounds of age, race, gender, disability, being a lesbian or gay man, marital status, ethnicity or religious belief. The executive committee will aim to ensure that all its services will be provided in line with this anti discrimination policy. In order to promote equality of access the executive will aim to ensure the following:

- That service's are based on consultation with those who receive the services and positive steps are taken to include excluded groups in decision making.
- That all services are flexible and responsive to the changing needs in the community.
- That information on services is widely available and where necessary targeted to ensure maximum awareness of provisions.
- That system's are developed to audit and monitor service delivery and consumer satisfaction.

- That an accessible complaints procedure will be developed to ensure against discrimination in service allocation and delivery.
- That positive action programmes will be developed to target the needs usually excluded groups.
- That in advertising and publicity materials will be presented as an organisation committed to promoting equality of access to employment and services.

## 8.2 Corporate Organisational Arrangement

- All executive committee members and chairs of Ocean Youth connexions executive sub-committee will be responsible for the overall implementation of the equal opportunities policy their respective services.
- All staff have a duty to implement Ocean Youth Connexions equal opportunities document
- The Director shall be the secretary of the equal opportunities policy committee that will be the corporate mechanism for achieving greater equality by:
  - i. Devising and advising on corporate priorities.
  - ii. Receiving and monitoring organisational work programmes.
  - iii. Overseeing the work and pursuing the recommendations of executive subcommittee.
  - iv. Overseeing priorities and performance of the organisation as a whole

The Chair and the Director will manage and oversee the development and implementation of equal opportunities work corporately and with the appropriate executive sub-committee chairs.

## 8.3 Key tasks in developing and implementing policy

Sub-committees may be set up to develop action plans based on this statement. This should include short or long term objectives such as:

- Establishing guidelines for service monitoring and developing and producing mechanisms for consumer consultation.
- Design training packages for the organisation which ensure that staff feel confident to promote the policy progressing and updating the corporate equal opportunities work programme.

## 9. Review

9.1 Ocean Youth Connexions will monitor and review the effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy on an annual basis.

## 10. Information

10.1 This document shall be circulated to all employees and job applicants.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_