

# EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 “Active Organisation trading as Ooba Creative” (Active) is committed to promoting equality and celebrating diversity. It has adopted the strategy of a whole organisational approach to equality and diversity. This strategy is known as “mainstreaming” which means that equality and diversity issues will be addressed within our corporate planning processes, setting of policy objectives, service delivery and reviewing our performance.

1.2 Active believes that no person should suffer disadvantage by reason of their race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), or because of their religion or faith, gender, sexuality, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, age, or disability. These are Protected Characteristics which are protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 The Equality Act 2010 includes an Equality Duty requiring public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2.2 Having due regard means consciously thinking about the above three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. Although Active is not a “public body” within the meaning of the legislation, we have adopted these aims in our policy.

## 3. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Equality is about an understanding that:

- Certain groups within society experience common forms of discrimination;
- We have a duty to help change that situation as an employer, landlord, service provider, partner and through contractors and procurement; and
- We need to systematically monitor our service delivery and employment practices to ensure equality of opportunity and eliminate any discriminatory behaviours, policies and practices.

3.2 Diversity is about the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organisations with which they interact and emphasises the value to business in:

- Respecting and understanding individual differences and individuality; and
- Maximising the unique contributions of individuals in Active’s activities.

3.3 Mainstreaming is Active's aim to ensure that equality objectives are incorporated and become an integral part of governance, management and duties of every stakeholder, board member and employee.

3.4 Discrimination can take many forms including:

- Direct discrimination- treating one person less favourably than others;
- Indirect discrimination- creating a condition, term of employment, or requirement of service delivery, which cannot be justified, and which in practice prevents people from certain groups from receiving a service;
- Institutional Discrimination- the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service or employment condition to people from certain groups;
- Harassment – individuals or groups of individuals are harassed or abused because they are from certain groups; and
- Victimisation – where a person is treated less favourably because they have or it is suspected that they will pursue their rights to equality in service or employment condition via the grievance/complaints procedure or legal proceedings; or they are a witness involved in a discrimination case and may also be victimised by others and treated less favourably.z

## **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

4.1 Active:

- has provided structures, ways of working, communication and management which are designed to ensure that no customer, employee or potential customer or employee experiences unfair discrimination or harassment;
- takes action to ensure equality of opportunity in the provision of its services, in the recruitment of Board Members, and in the employment of employees who provide these services; and
- has set clear standards against which its performance can be measured in an open and accountable manner.

## **5. VALUING AND MANAGING DIVERSITY**

5.1 Active recognises the need for diversity in its approach to employment. Employing individuals from a wide range of backgrounds should enable Active to have a greater focus to meet customer needs over a broader area of issues and provide the range of skills necessary to meet changing needs and agendas.

5.2 We will ensure that we canvas as widely as possible for applications for Board members and jobs in order to establish a workforce that is genuinely diverse.

## 6. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 In order to fully implement the policy, all employees need to be aware of their responsibility to integrate equality and diversity in their day-to-day activities. Employees must be aware of and responsible for equality and diversity in their behaviour with colleagues, customers and stakeholders and in identifying equality objectives through the appraisal process, projects, plans and initiatives, and progressing those objectives in their day-to-day work..

## 7. EQUALITY FRAMEWORK

7.1 Active has established an Equality Framework with the aim of achieving the highest standards of equality in the following areas:

- Corporate Culture
- Our customers
- Our employees
- The Board and Governance
- Contractor services
- New homes/development

7.2 The goals for each area of the Equality Framework are:

7.2.1 Corporate Culture: To have a corporate Equality and Diversity framework and action plans that are understood by and fully engage staff.

7.2.2 Our Customers: To have an understanding of and ensure that services are tailored to meet the diverse needs of all communities in the areas in which we work and to ensure that members from all sections of the community are engaged in the various means of resident involvement.

7.2.3 Our employees: The profile of staff reflects diversity in the clearest definition of the word. The culture of the organisation is such that all staff are treated fairly regardless of their individual status.

7.2.4 The Board and Governance: Membership of the Board and issues considered reflects and is influenced by the widest range of ideas, backgrounds, beliefs etc.

7.2.5 Contractor Services: Ensure that the equality and diversity policy and any objectives are incorporated in partnership and contractual arrangements where enforceable.

## 8. COMPLAINTS

8.1 An employee or customer who feels they have not been fairly treated within the scope of this policy should raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure (for employees) and Complaints Procedure (for customers).

## 9. RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 All employees have a general responsibility to promote and comply with this policy. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all employees of Active. Employees should also ensure non-discriminatory conduct at work and in their relations with Active's customers.

9.2 Managers at Active have additional responsibilities for communicating this policy to all employees and contractors and ensuring that all employees are fully aware of their individual responsibilities and legal responsibilities. In addition managers will ensure that adequate resources are provided for developing, promoting and monitoring this equality policy.

9.3 If an employee/contractor is undertaking duties and responsibilities on Active's behalf and witnesses a discriminatory incident, they have a duty of care to other employees and members of the public to challenge discriminatory behaviour/practice and in the case of racist and other discriminatory incidents a duty to report and record the incident to the Managing Director.

## 10. CONSULTATION

10.1 All key stakeholders have been consulted before final approval of this policy and will be consulted and participate in all subsequent policy reviews.

## 11. REVIEW

11.1 Active acknowledges that this policy is not a static document and that it will require ongoing review. Changes to the document may be required for a number of reasons including new legislation or through lessons learned as the policy becomes operational. A review of this policy will therefore be undertaken annually.

## 12. POLICY INFORMATION

- Owner: Managing Director - Adam Clark
- Last review date: June 2019
- Next review date: June 2020
- First Approved: January 2012