

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **1. Statement**

GoConnect is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender (including gender reassignment), pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, age, marital status or civil partnership status, religious or other similar philosophical belief. These are known as the Protected Characteristics.

We aim to ensure that our employees and volunteers achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria. We have adopted this policy as a means of helping to achieve these aims.

At GoConnect we aim to provide greater equality of opportunity to all applicants and staff throughout the company's recruitment and retention practices. Monitoring equal opportunities is therefore an essential component used to confirm this area is being upheld.

### **2. What is discrimination?**

- 2.1 **Direct discrimination** – when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a Protected Characteristic.
- 2.2 **Associative discrimination or discrimination by association** – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic.
- 2.3 **Discrimination by perception** – direct discrimination against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular Protected Characteristic even if they do not actually possess it.
- 2.4 **Indirect discrimination** - occurs where an individual's employment is subject to an unjustified provision criterion or practice which e.g. one sex or race or nationality or age group finds more difficult to meet, although on the face of it the provision, criterion or practice is 'neutral'.
- 2.5 **Harassment** – unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Employees may complain of such offensive behaviour even if it is not directed towards them personally.
- 2.6 **Harassment by a third party** – harassment of employees by third parties such as customers or clients.
- 2.7 **Victimisation** – when an employee is treated less favourably because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or are suspected of doing so.

### **3. Commitment**

- 3.1 We are committed to ensuring that all of our employees and applicants for employment are protected from unlawful discrimination in employment.
- 3.2 Recruitment and employment decisions will be made on the basis of fair and objective criteria.
- 3.3 Person and job specifications shall be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job.
- 3.4 Interviews will be conducted on an objective basis and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary and relevant.
- 3.5 All employees have a right to equality of opportunity and a duty to implement this policy. Discrimination is a serious disciplinary matter which will normally be treated as gross misconduct.
- 3.6 Anyone who believes that he or she may have been disadvantaged on discriminatory grounds should raise the matter through GoConnect's grievance procedure.

### **4. Monitoring**

- 4.1 All applicants complete an equal opportunities form prior to shortlisting for equal opportunities monitoring purposes. This form is subsequently withheld from the shortlisting panel.
- 4.2 Monitoring may involve the collection and statistical classification of information regarding gender; transgender status, disability; age; religion; faith or belief; ethnicity; racial origins and sexual orientation of all applicants to assist GoConnect to promote and monitor their commitment to equal opportunities.
- 4.3 In order to monitor the progress of this area monitoring may also involve the examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of members of staff and the success rate of the applicants. We will endeavour to record recruitment, training and promotional records of all members of staff aside this, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.
- 4.4 The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals, currently this taking place on a yearly basis, in the last quarter of the financial year, to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting these practices to afford greater equality of opportunity to all applicants and staff.