

Equality and Diversity Policy

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Statement of Intent	3
3.	Aims	4
4.	Implementation	5
5.	Monitoring	5
5.5.1	Recruitment	5
5.5.2	Profile of Workforce	6
6.	Complaints	6
App. 1	Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities in Employment	7
App. 2	Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities in the Registration, Regulation and Development of the Social Service Workforce	9

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Scottish Social Services Council recognises that encouraging high standards of performance through the development of its employees is essential to be successful in raising the standards of social care services and promoting high standards of education and training within the social service workforce in Scotland.
- 1.2 The SSSC believes that valuing and managing the diversity of its employees makes good business sense and is a key component of effective management as well as being socially desirable, morally right and compatible with legislative requirements.
- 1.3 The SSSC aims to create an environment in which all employees from all backgrounds can work together harmoniously to meet organisational goals and contribute to the continuous improvement of standards in social care by giving of their best without fear of prejudice, stereotyping, harassment or undignified behaviour.
- 1.4 The SSSC is committed to ensuring that these principles become integrated into all its employment policies and working practices.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 2.1 The SSSC, its employees and members recognise and support the principle of valuing diversity in carrying out the SSSC's functions. The SSSC will not tolerate discrimination against any individual, either directly or indirectly, unlawfully or unjustifiably because of their personal status in relation to race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual or marital status or disability. The SSSC will take positive action to promote a culture where all employees can fully contribute to the work of the SSSC.
- 2.2 **Direct Discrimination** is where an individual is treated less favourably than another in similar circumstances because of their race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual or marital status or disability.

Indirect Discrimination is where a condition or requirement is applied equally to all individuals but on application it adversely affects one group more than another and is not genuinely necessary.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all employees of the SSSC both temporary and permanent.

3. AIMS

3.1 The Scottish Social Services Council aims to:

- Attract, develop and retain good quality staff, continuously improving employment practices where possible.
- Maintain constructive and effective communication and consultative links with all stakeholders.
- Ensure that in carrying out its functions the SSSC acts in a way which is not unfair or unlawful and which applies the regulation of education and training and the registration criteria consistently and fairly in all cases.
- Promote, as widely as possible, accessibility to information about learning and development within social work and social care services.
- Develop Equality Schemes which enable the SSSC to discharge specific duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and to comply fully with developing equality and diversity legislation, best practice guidelines and action plans.
- Include within its Equality Schemes positive measures which are reasonably practicable and, with due regard to direct and indirect discrimination, pursue and promote equality of opportunity.
- Review its Equality Schemes on a 3-yearly basis.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 The SSSC will pursue these aims by implementing the following Codes of Practice:

- Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity in Employment
- Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity in the Registration, Regulation and Development of the Social Services Workforce.

5. MONITORING

5.1 Introduction

The SSSC is committed to monitoring its service provision and employment practices to enable it to assess their effectiveness in managing diversity as a continuous process of improvement.

- 5.2 Implementation of the Codes of Practice will be audited on an ongoing basis to evaluate their effectiveness. Monitoring arrangements will be designed to analyse and collect data which will inform the evaluation and review process.
- 5.3 The SSSC will consult and communicate with its employees through its Partnership Agreement with the recognised trade union encouraging communication and feedback to ensure that both organisations are demonstrating an effective commitment to this policy.
- 5.4 Monitoring results will be published in the SSSC's annual report and the Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis.
- 5.5 Monitoring will be carried out in the following areas:

5.5.1 **Recruitment**

All applicants for posts within the SSSC are asked to provide information at the application stage for the categories of gender, race/ethnic origin, age and disability. This information will be used for monitoring purposes only and will not be used as part of the selection or employment process.

5.5.2 **Profile of the Workforce**

The composition of the existing workforce of the SSSC will be monitored using the same categories as for job applicants to ensure consistency in the information gathered. In addition, and to contribute to assessing organisational health, the following areas will also be monitored:

- Access to learning and development opportunities
- Results of staff performance assessments in relation to equality
- Staff involvement in grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Staff leaving the SSSC via the exit interview process.

6. COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 Any employee, registrant, education and training provider or member of the public who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against can raise their complaint through the appropriate complaints procedure.
- 6.2 Complaints relating to the SSSC's registration of social service workers should be made to the Registrar on 01382 207175.

Complaints relating to the registration and approval of education and training provision should be made to the Chief Executive on 01382 207251.

Complaints relating to recruitment or employment should be made to the Senior Human Resources Adviser on 01382 207169.

- 6.3 Complaints can also be made by writing to the relevant individual at Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY.

APPENDIX 1

CODE OF PRACTICE ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT

Aims

The Scottish Social Services Council aims to develop and pursue positive actions to promote equality in employment and ensure that no individual is discriminated against unlawfully or unjustifiably on the grounds of their personal status in relation to race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual or marital status or disability.

Objectives

- The sole valid criterion for employment will be merit; all job applicants will be considered equally on that basis.

All recruitment advertising will carry the statement:

'Valuing diversity, improving opportunity'

- The SSSC guarantees an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria for a job vacancy.
- Positive steps will be taken to provide increased employment opportunities within the SSSC for people with disabilities.
- No applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by a requirement or condition which has a disproportionately adverse effect because of their personal status.
- The SSSC will comply with the standard retirement age, otherwise age will play no part in employment decisions.
- Information provided at the application stage concerning an applicant's personal status will play no part in any decision to offer employment.
- All learning and development offered by the SSSC will be assessed to ensure that its content and delivery comply with the SSSC's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- All employees will have equal access to learning and development opportunities offered by the SSSC.
- The SSSC will raise awareness amongst its employees to ensure they recognise discrimination and harassment in the workplace by mainstreaming, where relevant, the principles of this Policy within all learning and development opportunities offered.

- The SSSC will take reasonable steps to ensure that employees with disabilities are provided with support and equipment to enable them to continue to carry out their duties and responsibilities efficiently in a safe working environment to ensure that they are not at a substantial disadvantage from employees without disabilities.
- Remuneration will be based on qualification, skill, competence and relevant experience.
- All employees will have the opportunity to raise issues with their line manager in relation to their working arrangements, learning and development needs and any other conditions of their employment through one-to-one supervision sessions regardless of their personal status.
- The SSSC will endeavour to ensure that their terms and conditions of employment are sensitive to, and do not indirectly discriminate against, any employee on the grounds of their personal status.
- Positive practices will be developed to assist employees in the balance of working and personal responsibilities.

Implementation

The overall responsibility for implementing this Code of Practice lies with the Senior Human Resources Adviser. Day-to-day responsibility lies with line managers.

APPENDIX 2

CODE OF PRACTICE ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE REGISTRATION, REGULATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE WORKFORCE

Aims

The SSSC aims to achieve a competent, confident workforce capable of delivering high quality care services by registering and regulating the social service workforce and raising the standards of training and education for all social service workers regardless of their personal status in relation to race, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual or marital status or disability.

To this end the SSSC recognises the need to continually develop and support actions to encourage all individuals and groups within our society who are stakeholders of the SSSC to be appropriately represented within the social service workforce and on the SSSC's reference and working groups regardless of their personal status.

Objectives

- The SSSC's Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and their Employers state that workers and their employers must not discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably or condone such discrimination.
- The SSSC will use information available from workforce intelligence gathering activities, annual surveys and censuses to inform and monitor how the organisation engages and proactively encourages involvement with stakeholders who are currently underrepresented within the sector.
- Access to the SSSC's register of social service workers will be based on the registration criteria. Registration practices will not be carried out in a way which discriminates unlawfully or unjustifiably.
- The SSSC's rules for dealing with admissions to the register and with any conduct matters will not discriminate against any registrant on the grounds of their personal status.
- Members of Admissions, Preliminary Proceedings and Conduct Committees, as well as SSSC officers who service those committees, will be trained to ensure they are aware of the necessity of carrying out their roles and responsibilities in a way which does not discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably.

- Access to information about learning and development in social work and social care will be made available to any individual on request regardless of their personal status.
- Facilities to interpret information issued by the SSSC will be made available wherever a need is identified e.g. translation into other languages, audio tapes, signing support facilities for deaf and hearing impaired people at SSSC conferences, public meetings etc.

Implementation

The overall responsibility for implementation of this Code of Practice lies with the Chief Executive. Day-to-day responsibility lies with line managers.