

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy statement is to proclaim and emphasise the commitment of SLNRA to equal opportunity for all staff. It affirms that SLNRA management will rigorously observe the principles and actively pursue the objectives set out in the discharge of its responsibilities so that the policy is fully implemented. The policy will ensure that unlawful discrimination of any kind is not shown towards any job applicant or employee.

- 1 SLNRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. This means that SLNRA does not permit unlawful discrimination of any kind against any person on grounds that include age, gender, sexual discrimination, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or political opinion, race, nationality or disability. Unlawful discrimination is defined as treating a person less favourably than others are, or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances. To this end SLNRA will:
 - (i) fulfil its responsibility towards its employees and the communities in which it operates;
 - (ii) recognise and to the best of its ability, fulfils its legal obligations under the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998; the Equal Pay Acts (Northern Ireland) 1970 and 1984; the Sex Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Orders 1976 and 1988; the Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Employment Acts 1945 and 1960; the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; the Employee Relations (Northern Ireland) order 1996; the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997; the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 and other relevant legislation. It is noted that the existence of law cannot of itself ensure that any policy of non-discrimination will work effectively. This will be achieved only if staff at all levels examines critically their attitudes towards other individuals and to ensure that no trace of discrimination is allowed to affect their judgment. Staff should be aware of the forms which unfair discrimination can take, guard against them and avoid any action that might influence others to discriminate unfairly.
 - (iii) There must be no direct discrimination against any eligible person, whether in recruitment, training, promotion or in any other way. Direct discrimination means treating a person less favourably in such areas as gender, marital status, religion etc.

Similarly, there must be no indirect discrimination which occurs where a requirement or condition is applied equally, but is of such a nature to lack sufficient relevance to the job and may be perceived to be unfavorable for particular groups, in that a considerably smaller proportion of the group can comply with it.

- (v) It is the policy of SLNRA that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment on the basis of their merits and abilities that are appropriate to the job. SLNRA will review periodically its selection criteria and procedures to fulfill this aim.
- (vi) SLNRA will implement the measures for monitoring perceived religious affiliation of job applicants and employees and further monitor the gender, marital status and disability status of these persons.
- (vii) This policy will be clearly communicated to all management and staff, and it should be made known to potential applicants. All existing members of staff will receive a copy of this statement, and its contents will be reflected as appropriate. It will also be made clear to potential applicants through job advertisements that SLNRA is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 SLNRA will ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on grounds that include age, gender, sexual discrimination, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or political opinion, race, nationality or disability. SLNRA will ensure that sources of job applicants, such as advertisements, are non-discriminatory.
- 2 Vacancies will be advertised in as wide a variety of ways as is practicable, in order to ensure that all potential applicants are informed. Short-term temporary positions will normally be advertised throughout the Training and Employment Agency. Permanent positions will be advertised in the press.
- 3 Specific responsibility for the practical application of this policy falls upon staff professionally involved in management, recruitment, training and employment administration.
- 4 Specific responsibility for ensuring the introduction and implementation of an action programme designed to consolidate and where necessary improve SLNRA's procedures in the interests of Equal Opportunity and Fair Employment rests by Management Committee decision with the Human Resources Officer.
- 5 All SLNRA employees have a responsibility to accept their personal involvement in the practical application of this policy.
- 6 SLNRA will take all appropriate disciplinary action (including dismissal) against any employee who is found to have contravened SLNRA's Policy on Equality of Opportunity.