

## Single Equality Policy

### Introduction

Health Services Laboratories (The Company) has adopted a Single Equality Scheme to provide the foundation for all equality, diversity and human rights work that takes place within the Company. The existing Equal Opportunities Policy has been reviewed to take account of the Equality Act that became law in October 2010 and is incorporated in this Policy.

The Equality Act 2010 covers the same equality strands that were protected by previous equality legislation, but extends some protection to groups not previously covered, and also strengthens particular aspects of equality law. It replaced previous legislation such as the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to ensure consistency in what employers need to do to make an organisation compliant with the law.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together nine separate pieces of legislation i.e.: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity and socio-economic disadvantage into one single Act simplifying the law and strengthening it in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

This Policy contains guidance for our staff covering age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity and socio-economic disadvantage. However, it is also important for us to continually be aware that everyone is individual and different. This can help us to maximize the support that we offer within the Company and will be continually reviewed to ensure our priorities are appropriate to a changing workforce.

### 1 Executive Summary

This Single Equality Policy covers the existing equality duties (race, gender and disability), as well as the new strands (sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and socio-economic disadvantage) introduced in the Equality Act 2010

Our aim is to ensure quality of opportunity for all, unlocking the talents of people from all backgrounds, through our policies and practices. We will introduce measures to identify and address the barriers and opportunities relating to equality and diversity, where these are relevant to our policy remit, our service delivery and our business function.

We will not only comply with the law, but also demonstrate best practice in all that we do and ultimately excel in the field of equality and diversity across the full range of our responsibilities, for all our staff, delivery partners and stakeholders.

We will meet our legal requirements by monitoring progress with regard to:

- Information gathering and analysis;
- Consultation and stakeholder involvement;
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs);

We will regularly review progress against these actions and will publish an annual progress report.

As an ongoing process, the Equality Policy will be reviewed annually. It will be necessary for the Company to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in such reviews. We are committed to publishing the results of our consultation and subsequent monitoring of actions arising to address the issues raised, as this will allow us to demonstrate our commitment to responding to these.

### 1.2 Conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIAS) on our Policies

An (EIA) is a way of systematically and thoroughly assessing the effects that a function or policy (actual or proposed) is likely to have on groups of individuals in respect to specific equality groups, that is, race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexuality and gender identity and age.

We will establish procedures for conducting EIAs and will ensure that policy leads consider equality-related issues and where the policy raises equality considerations, that there is a process for a full equality impact assessment. This will then be considered and approved by the Board. These will cover race, gender and disability and will take account of the new strands of sexual orientation, religion and belief, age, gender identity, pregnancy and maternity and socioeconomic disadvantage.

To improve on what is already in place, we will screen all policies, processes and functions to establish if they need a full impact assessment. All new policies will be accompanied by an equality impact assessment report for approval by the Board.

The Company is committed to gathering and monitoring data in order to assess the impact of our policies on our staff. We have developed systems to gather data and for monitoring, which include collecting and analysing information on our workforce.

1.3 Monitoring policies for impact on equality for employees The Company will monitor by equality group in accordance with statutory duties:

- Staff in post;
- Applications for employment;
- Applications for promotion;
- Applications for training and those that receive training;
- Those that benefit or suffer detriment as a result of performance assessment procedures;
- Those involved in grievance procedures;
- Those that are subject to disciplinary procedures;
- Those that cease employment.

We will also introduce systems to monitor by age, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Human Resources department will be responsible for monitoring relevant staff information and for producing an annual report on this data for the Board.

### Equality in Employment

The Company is committed to ensuring it is a model employer in terms of promoting equality, eliminating unlawful discrimination and addressing the specific needs of different equality groups.

We aim to be a flexible employer and seek to meet the individual needs of existing and new employees, whether that is in terms of providing access to flexible working hours, to make reasonable adjustment to accommodate disabled staff or any other arrangement that can improve the work/life balance of employees. We envisage further developments arising from the equality impact assessments undertaken on our employment policies.

#### Complaints and Feedback

Complaints or concerns from employees of the Company should generally be directly to their line manager. The Human Resources Policies outline the correct process to be followed.