

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

POLICY ON DIVERSITY IN EMPLOYMENT

Policy

The Authority is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment and in equal pay for work of the same or similar nature or work of equal value.

The Authority is opposed to any form of less favourable treatment (unless justifiable in law), whether through direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation accorded to employees or job applicants on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, age or disability.

The Authority recognises its obligations under the Sex Discrimination Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act and Regulations made to effect the European Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment. The Authority will be guided by the provisions of the Codes issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disability Rights Commission, and, once established, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Equality in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense. The Authority is therefore committed to:

- Creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all its staff are recognised and valued;
- Ensuring that every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all and in which unlawful discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated;
- Making training, development and progression opportunities available to all staff;
- Treating breaches of this policy as potential misconduct, which could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Equal opportunities in employment

The Authority will avoid unlawful discrimination and the possible use of discriminatory practices in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. This principle will also apply in the Authority's approach to others who are not directly managed by the

Authority (e.g. Constabulary personnel) but, in respect of whom, the Authority has employment responsibilities.

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions, except where necessary.

The Authority will keep under review whether there might be any possible indirectly discriminatory effects arising from its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done. When considering requests for variations to these standard working practices, the Authority will refuse requests only if it considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any prohibited ground of discrimination, for doing so. The Authority will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The Authority will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

The Authority will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems which may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The Authority cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but the Authority may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under representation of any group which the Authority identifies as being underrepresented in particular types of job.

Bullying and Harassment

The Authority has a separate policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

Employees should report any bullying, harassment or victimisation by Officers or staff of the Constabulary, Members of the Authority, the public or others to their manager or the Chief Executive who will initiate appropriate action.

Training

The Authority will underpin its commitment to the principles and practices of equal opportunities by ensuring that all employees and Members of the Authority attend training and awareness raising programmes about diversity and equality of opportunity, so that they are better equipped to understand and act appropriately on such matters not only within the Authority but also in dealing with the public and other organisations.

The Authority will provide specific training in diversity to Members of the Authority and to employees involved in recruitment or other decision making where diversity and equality issues are likely to arise.

The Authority will monitor all training activities undertaken by employees and Members so ensure that decisions as to who receives training does not discriminate against any group and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems which may be identified as a result of the monitoring process. Wherever reasonably practicable, training events organised directly by the Authority will be arranged at a time that meets the needs of employees and Members (e.g. to enable those with child care responsibilities to fulfill those responsibilities)

Employee Responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the Authority to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees are expected to accept personal responsibility for supporting and sustaining the Authority's commitment to diversity.

Employees and Members of the Authority can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Authority for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against other employees, employees of other organisations or the public are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Authority's disciplinary procedure. Such acts may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

Employees who consider that they may have been unlawfully discriminated against may use the Authority's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If the complaint involves bullying or harassment, the separate procedure as set out in the bullying and harassment at work policy apply.

The Authority will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance which it upholds. Employees will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if the grievance is not upheld, unless the complaint is untrue and/or made in bad faith.

Use of the Authority's grievance procedure does not affect an employee's right to make a complaint to an employment tribunal, although the procedures should be followed in the first instance.

Volunteers

The Authority organises and oversees the delivery of independent custody visiting. This is undertaken by volunteers who are not employees of the Authority.

The Authority is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity in its approach to such volunteers and will avoid unlawful discrimination and the possible use of discriminatory practices in the recruitment, selection, training, appraisal, organisation and termination of appointments of volunteers. In so doing the Authority will follow the precepts of this policy statement, recognising that volunteers do not have statutory employment rights.

The Authority also expects volunteers to assist it to meet its commitment to equality of opportunity and the avoidance of unlawful discrimination. Volunteers are expected to accept personal responsibility for supporting and sustaining the Authority's commitment to diversity.

Volunteers should report any bullying, harassment or victimisation by Officers or staff of the Constabulary, Members of the Authority, the public or others to the Chief Executive of the Authority who will initiate appropriate action.

Any volunteer who commits an act of bullying, harassment or victimisation while acting in support of the Authority's functions may have his or her appointment terminated in accordance with the provisions of the Authority's Custody Visiting Scheme.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored periodically by the Authority to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. In particular, the Authority will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the Authority will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Approved – HR/224 Human Resources Committee on 8/11/2006