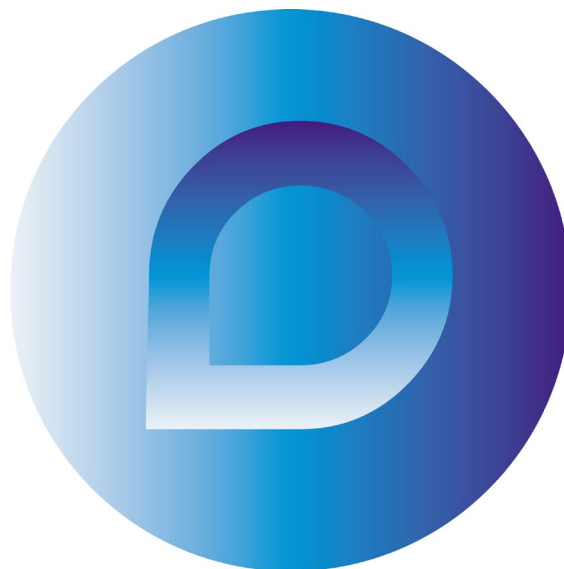


Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Policy & Implementation Plan



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Equal Opportunities Policy & Action Plan

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Equal Opportunities Policy & Action Plan

1.0 Policy Statement

The By Design Group and all associated companies is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment. It is committed to ensuring that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, HIV status or unrelated criminal convictions and without arbitrary restrictions in respect of age, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

The Group is also committed to embed due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Act 2010 into ESF funded programmes and help meet EU structural fund regulations to promote gender equality and equal opportunities (this requirement is specifically in relation to ESIF YEI funded project).

2.0 Policy Context

The By Design Group Ltd and associated companies (BDG for future reference in this document) adopt and adhere to the following policy.

The Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Policy & Implementation Plan refers to all BDG education and working activities.

The BDG will review its Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Policy & Implementation Plan on an annual basis and check that it and its staff and associates, where appropriate, are adhering to the policy and will undertake to act wherever possible to meet best practices.

3.0 Process

This commitment includes:

- The elimination of discrimination of any sort, including harassment.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and project delivery.
- To make the policy fully effective and available to all staff, volunteers, and participants.
- Promotion of fostering good relations between all staff, volunteers, and participants.
- Employment policies which are fair and equitable, and which ensure that entry into and progression within the company are predetermined solely by application of job criteria and personal ability and competence.
- Regular reviews of practices to ensure they provide equality of opportunity in recruitment, selection, promotion and training and project delivery.
- Monitoring the composition of the workforce, and its policies and procedures, to ensure the Equal Opportunities Policy is being properly implemented. Both staff and job applicants are expected to co-operate in this process.
- Monitoring of the composition of projects to ensure the Policy is being properly implemented. This will include staff, volunteers, and participants.

BDG and its employees understand that it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of the following types or 'protected characteristics':

- Age.
- Gender reassignment.
- Being married or in a civil partnership.
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave.
- Disability.
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

People are protected from discrimination:

- At work.
- In education.
- As a consumer.
- When using public services.
- When buying or renting property.
- As a member or guest of a private club or association.

The BDG believe that everyone benefits from a working environment where respect for the individual is encouraged, and if employees feel they have been treated in a way which is contrary to this policy the issue should be dealt with by the Directors of the company.

The overall responsibility for ensuring effective implementation of the Company's policy rests with the Directors of the Company.

All employees of the BDG, both permanent and temporary, have a responsibility to observe this policy and to ensure that equality of opportunity is continuously provided for in every area of the Company's activities. In addition, all managers and supervisors have a particular responsibility for ensuring that the policy is fairly and consistently applied in all areas under their control.

The BDG will make every effort to secure a satisfactory resolution, either by informal means, or formally through its Grievance Procedures.

The BDG will ensure the above processes are adhered to through the following:

3.1 Management Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all BDG managers from directors to team leaders to:

- Ensure that this policy and the procedures set out within are adhered to within their own area of responsibility.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy and its contents.
- Not instruct employees to act in a discriminatory manner.
- Not put pressure on other employees to discriminate.
- Bring the details of the policy and procedure documents to the attention of all staff through the issue of the staff handbook presented to all new staff, both permanent and temporary, upon the commencement of work for the BDG.

3.2 Staff Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of BDG employees at all levels to:

- Follow this policy and its procedures.
- Report any discriminatory acts or practices.
- Not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination.
- Not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination.
- Not harass, abuse, bully or intimidate others.

3.3 Legal Responsibilities

Over and above the provisions set out in this policy, the BDG is also bound by the Equality Act 2010 and in relation to externally funded programmes the Public Sector Equality Duty and EU structural fund regulations to promote gender equality and equal opportunities.

4.0 The BDG Codes of Practice and Action Plan

The following are the specific areas which everyone should be aware of:

4.1 Attracting suitable applicants

The BDG will:

- Ensure that job descriptions do not contain any potentially discriminatory criteria that are not essential for the role being advertised.
- Advertise vacancies so that they are likely to reach all potential applicants where possible.
- Ensure that recruitment literature and advertisements make it clear that applications are welcome from all suitably qualified candidates.
- Ensure that agencies assisting in recruitment operate appropriate diversity policies and procedures when acting on behalf of the BDG.
- Ensure that copies of the BDG equal opportunities statement are available to all prospective job applicants.
- Monitor returns of applications to ensure a wide range of applicants apply and look to address any barriers should they arise and be identified.

4.2 Recruitment and Selection (including promotion)

The BDG will:

- Ensure that entry into and progression within the company are predetermined solely by application of job criteria and personal ability and competence.
- Invite applicants to identify any special arrangements they may need at interview.
- Ensure that all those involved in recruitment and selection are fully aware of and adhere to the BDG equal opportunities policy and have had appropriate training on recruitment or receive the appropriate guidance.
- Ensure that selection decisions for any post are taken by at least two persons and where possible with input from other management team members or/and the directors.
- Ensure that selection criteria and reasons for the selection or rejection of individual candidates are recorded.

4.3 Participants (all programmes)

The BDG will:

- Ensure that all projects are promoted using wide gender, race, and ability profiles.
- Monitor and produce reports detailing demographics of participants.

- Actively promote the projects to marginalised groups of society.
- Ensure full compliance of the commitments and obligations of this policy of any project partners and subcontractors. Monitored through training and quality audits.

5.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All areas of business practice, both specified above and non-specified, such as training for staff, will be subject to the same criteria as set out in this equal opportunity policy. Any and all areas of concern for staff, including with relation to equal opportunities and discrimination in any form, can be raised with the directors as set out in the staff handbook guidelines, issued to all staff on commencement of employment.

5.1 Monitoring and evaluation

A report will be produced annually by the Head of Corporate Services for the Board's consideration of equality statistics including participants of all projects delivered by the Group, profile versus actual. Points of action will be highlighted for the Board's consideration and a narrative of action taken to meet targets. The report will include performance of partners and subcontractors as applicable.

