

digital:works

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of Intent

As a provider of services for local communities and as an employer and purchaser of goods and services, digital:works is committed to providing equal treatment to all regardless of race, skin colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or cultural beliefs, creed, class, gender, marital status, sexuality, age, health status, disability or offending history.

Digital:works is committed to working directly with community groups, youth clubs and state schools that represent local communities and particularly, marginalised groups within the community. All efforts will be made to seek out funding and opportunities to work with groups who normally would not have access to the services digital:works provides.

Digital:works recognises that inequality exists in society and that certain groups and individuals are disadvantaged and discriminated against. In this policy statement digital:works records its commitment to ensuring that it treats people fairly and aims to contribute towards a fairer and more just society. Digital:works further recognises that both direct and indirect discrimination exist and that this can take place on personal, institutional and cultural levels.

Digital:works recognises and values diversity. It aims to foster diversity through its work, to realise the potential of all and to benefit from collective experiences, cultural differences and community and individual identities. This awareness will enrich us by broadening our outlook and understanding. Digital:works aims to play an active role in creating a more inclusive and equal society by working together with individuals and groups that are marginalised and disadvantaged.

Digital:works seeks to reflect the communities in which it works and enhance its work through a diverse service user group, staff and volunteer team and Management Committee. In carrying out this policy digital:works will establish close working relationships with local community groups that represent its target groups.

This policy applies to all Management Committee, staff, and volunteers. It aims to encourage co-operation from contractors, suppliers and others engaged by digital:works as well as clients, applicants and other service users.

Digital:works will comply with all relevant national legislation and European directives affecting employment and the provision of goods and services. Digital:works will also follow guidance and good practice recommended by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Commission.

Definitions of the main types of discrimination covered by the Equality and Diversity Policy

It is important to define the main areas of possible discrimination covered by this policy so that all Management Committee, staff,volunteers and service users have a

common understanding of what discrimination is, what forms discrimination takes, how the different types of discrimination operate within society and the positive action we will be take to redress it.

Scope of the Policy

Digital:works is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities including:

- involvement and participation of staff, service users and volunteers in the work of the organisation
- recruitment, employment and training
- Management Committee membership
- use of external consultants, contractors, suppliers and agents
- development
- monitoring and review

2. Participation

Digital:works will seek to ensure that Management Committee , staff, volunteers, and service users have the opportunity to participate fully in the work of the organisation.

Policies will be important in facilitating staff and user development and participation opportunities. Staff, volunteers and service users will be consulted on the development of policies to achieve these aims and their participation in the organisation's decision-making will be facilitated through appropriate structures.

3. Employment and Staffing

Recruitment

Digital:works aims to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment. Staff will be recruited on merit and ability only. To ensure that only relevant qualifications, skills and experience are considered when recruitment takes place, each post will carry a job description and person specification that will detail the skills and experience requirements against which candidates will be assessed equally and fairly.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed when vacancies arise to ensure that they are still relevant. The designation of genuine occupational qualifications for posts involving personal services to clients will be made when relevant. Selection criteria and procedures will ensure that individuals are selected, transferred or promoted on the basis of their relevant skills, merit and abilities.

All staff, management committee members, volunteers and service users involved in interviews and selection will be trained to ensure that their judgements are made on an objective basis and meet the requirements of good employment practice and equal opportunities legislation.

Recruitment panels will reflect the race, gender, disability and lesbian and gay men composition of the staff and service users wherever possible.

Advertising

Digital:works will state its commitment to equal opportunities in advertisements and on application forms. Digital:works will actively encourage members of under represented group to apply for employment and volunteering opportunities. Vacancies will be advertised widely and advertisements will be placed in specialist newspapers in order to reach targeted groups.

Monitoring Recruitment

Monitoring on ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexuality and age will take place at various stages of the recruitment process to ensure equal treatment. Complaints about the recruitment procedures will also be monitored. An equal opportunities monitoring report will be presented to the Management Committee annually. This will include equalities monitoring information covering volunteers, staff, clients, and complaints.

The recruitment process will be reviewed regularly and action programmes will be devised to address any imbalances shown in the monitoring and review processes.

Training

Digital:works will not discriminate in the provision of training courses.

Employment

Digital:works will periodically review its terms and conditions of employment to ensure they reflect good equal opportunities practice.

All digital:works employees and volunteers must comply with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy. They have individual responsibility to ensure they do not discriminate against any staff member, volunteer, service user, Management Committee member, contractor or other persons involved with the work of the organisation.

4. Management Committee and Membership

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that digital:works' commitment to equality and diversity is clearly stated and demonstrated and that its membership is representative of the communities in which we work.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the composition of the Management Committee, staff, volunteers and service users, reflect the communities in which we work.

The Management Committee's procedures have been designed to be accessible to all groups wherever possible and all committee reports consider equality and diversity implications.

5. Use of External Contractors, Consultants Suppliers and Agents

Digital:works will ensure that individuals and organisations from all sections of society are given opportunities to apply for work as contractors, consultants, suppliers and agents. Digital:works will actively encourage the use of contractors, consultants,

suppliers and agents from its target groups. Where appropriate, female contractors, black contractors or those with understanding of vulnerable people's needs will be awarded work in sensitive locations.

Tendering and selection of consultants, contractors and others will be monitored to ensure that work is awarded fairly on the basis of service quality, cost, the organisations' commitment to equal opportunities (including awareness of their own responsibilities as equal opportunities employers) and respect for digital:works' service users.

6. Development

It is digital:works' aim to initiate and develop new services where there is unmet need. Needs are identified in consultation with service users and a wide range of partners including local community groups and local authorities.

Digital:works is committed to working in partnership with other organisations, in particular those within the voluntary and statutory sectors, both in ensuring fairness and consistency in implementing equal opportunities and in developing new services.

7. Review and Monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy

The Management Committee has primary responsibility for promoting the Equality and Diversity Policy, ensuring its implementation and for reviewing and monitoring it.

The Management Committee will monitor the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis.

The Management Committee will seek to identify gaps in service provision, take action to redress any gaps or imbalances and will develop action plans to fill these gaps.

Statutory Requirements

This Equality and Diversity Policy is underpinned by the following legislation and good practice guidance:

- the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- Equal Pay Act 1970;
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2005:
- Disabled Persons (Employment Act) 1944 & 1956;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- CRE Codes of Practice;
- The Clients Guarantee.

Digital:works fully endorses the legislation and good practice guidance and will work proactively to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good relations amongst different groups in society. Digital:works will review and update its Equality and Diversity Policy in line with changes in legislation and in codes of practice and guidance.