

	Equality and Diversity policy		Reviewed	Jan 2025
			Revised	March 2021
	Adopted	August 2014	Next review	Jan 2027

Staff Equality and Diversity Policy

Kingston GP Chambers (KGPC) strives to ensure that all those working for its services are treated in an equitable way, regardless of gender, age, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership status or any other characteristic.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All employees are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion.

All employees, workers or self-employed contractors whether part time, full time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect.

This policy sets out the ways in which KGPC will achieve this.

This policy applies to all KGPC staff and all students placed with us via Kingston Education Centre.

Reasonable Adjustments

KGPC aims to remove barriers to access to its services and to employment, and will provide specific support to disabled people by making reasonable adjustments, where it is necessary and reasonably possible to do so.

The aim of this action is to ensure that a disabled member of staff or student has access to everything that they need to carry out their work.

Prior to a disabled member of staff beginning employment or a disabled student beginning their placement, KGPC will undertake an assessment, in collaboration with the individual concerned, in order to establish what their access requirements are and to put in place a plan to address them; this process may also include support from an Occupational Health advisor or other such expert. Where an existing member of staff develops a disability (either permanent or temporary) during the course of their employment, this assessment and planning process will also be conducted.

Positive Action

KGPC seeks to overcome or minimise disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic may experience. KGPC may take 'positive action' to encourage people from groups with different needs, or with a past track record of disadvantage or low participation, to apply for jobs, particularly in service areas where certain groups are underrepresented.

Equalities monitoring

To monitor the effectiveness of this policy and to gather information on areas where further work may be required, KGPC may from time to time carry out surveys of staff and students, where respondents will be given the option to declare information about protected characteristics relating to them for the purpose of data analysis.

Recruitment and Selection

KGPC endeavours to have a representative workforce and ensure fair treatment through the recruitment and selection process, this includes:

- Checking that job descriptions and person specifications are non-discriminatory.
- Shortlisting based on the requirements of the job.
- Ensuring at least two employees on an interview panel.
- Keeping records of the recruitment and selection process, such as interview notes.
- Monitoring recruitment and selection activities against protected characteristics.

Our commitment as a service provider

KGPC is committed to:

- Providing services to which all clients are entitled regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, offending past, caring responsibilities or social class
- Making sure our services are delivered equally and meet the diverse needs of our service users and clients by assessing and meeting the diverse needs of our clients

Promotion

Promotion decisions must be made on the basis of the individual's ability, and skills in line with the person specification and job description, rather than assumptions based on age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation. Clear and transparent records should be kept to evidence all decision-making processes.

Training

Training must be accessible to all employees and reasonable adjustments will be made, where necessary and possible, to enable the employee to perform their role to the best of their abilities. A range of training methods will be used, such as e-learning and face to face training sessions to ensure that everyone has equal access to training irrespective of disability, location or hours of work.

All staff undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training at induction and periodically thereafter.

Data protection and confidentiality

The use of personal information will be treated with appropriate levels of confidentiality and will be fair and lawful. KGPC will ensure that personal information is accurate; not kept for longer than is necessary; secure; and adequate, relevant and not excessive. All information will be processed in accordance with the data protection rights of the individual. Inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Complaints and concerns regarding Equality and Diversity issues

Where a staff member feels that their manager or other member of staff has failed to follow the principles outlined in this policy and that they have experienced discrimination as a result, they should pursue the matter via KGPC's Grievance procedure.

Where a staff member feels that they have been subjected to bullying or harassment, they should pursue the matter via KGPC's Bullying and Harassment procedure.

Equal opportunity policy statements

Age

We will:

- Ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- Ensure that people of working age are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities and
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

Disability

We will:

- Provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people and
- Seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation.

Race

We will:

- Challenge racism wherever it occurs
- Respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents and
- Actively promote race equality in the Company.

Sex

We will:

- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about women and men
- Take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against women and men
- Offer equal access for women and men to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

Gender reassignment

We will:

- Provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment
- Prohibit and respond to all instances of discrimination, both from colleagues and externally.

Sexual orientation

We will:

- Ensure that we take account of the needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and
- Promote positive images of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

Religion or belief

We will:

- Ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible and
- Respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

Pregnancy or maternity

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of pregnancy or maternity
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the pregnancy or maternity of our employees and
- Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account of the needs of our employees' pregnancy or maternity.

Marriage or civil partnership

We will:

- Ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity and that a positive image is promoted regardless of marriage or civil partnership;
- Challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees and
- Ensure that no individual is disadvantaged and that we take account the needs of our employees' marriage or civil partnership.

Ex-offenders

We will prevent discrimination against our employees regardless of their offending background (except where there is a known risk to children or vulnerable adults).

Equal pay

We will ensure that all employees, male or female, have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

Unconscious bias

KGPC recognises the dangers of unconscious bias arising at work, which is where an opinion is formed on an individual by a manager or colleague without them necessarily being aware they have formed it.

There are many different forms of unconscious bias, ranging from an affinity towards those of a similar background to placing too much significance on what has been identified as a negative trait.

The organisation will work against forms of unconscious bias in all decisions taken for employment, including recruitment, promotion and training opportunities, with a focus on promoting diversity and inclusion.