

Lowe & Oliver

Electrical & Mechanical Contractors

Equality and Diversity Policy

Date Adopted: November 2011

Date of next review: November 2016

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Lowe & Oliver promotes the well being of all staff and works to make life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. We recognise that every person is an individual with different needs, preferences and abilities. We aim to reflect this diversity in everything we do, including making our services inclusive and accessible to people from all sections of the community, and attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. Lowe & Oliver believes that discrimination denies human dignity and should be actively opposed.

Diversity means difference, variety and multiplicity. It implies an approach to tackling inequality stemming from discrimination based on age, disability, domestic circumstances, ethnic or national origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, religion or belief, responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation or trade union membership.

A diversity approach implies not simple toleration but respect for, and celebration of, how and what we are because of all our differences.

Lowe & Oliver aims to treat people fairly, with respect and with dignity. We will not tolerate discrimination, victimisation or harassment. We aim to value differences positively. Lowe & Oliver believes that harnessing different life experiences, attributes and contributions will make Lowe & Oliver a more effective organisation and a better place to work.

Lowe & Oliver will make equality a mainstream part of our work. This means making sure that all aspects of what we do such as policies, plans, practices and procedures, reflect and incorporate equality objectives and targets where appropriate.

Our organisation is publicly committed to doing something practical and visible about Equality and Diversity. Responsibility for promoting, implementing and reviewing our policy rests first with the Board of Directors who have delegated day-to-day responsibility to the Managing Director. All directors and staff, contractors and suppliers will be expected to play their part in seeking to ensure that the policy is promoted and adhered to in their appropriate areas of responsibility and influence.

In pursuance of our policy we will:


1. Increase awareness within the organisation of the needs of diverse groups.
2. Work towards having a workforce that positively represents the local community.
3. Work towards removing all barriers (including physical, organisational, procedural) obstructing or preventing minority groups from fully participating in or benefiting from the work of Lowe & Oliver.
4. Periodically review our policy and procedures to ensure they adequately reflect all relevant legislation (see appendix 2).

5. Keep under review our recruitment procedures and employment terms and conditions to ensure that they fully reflect our policy.
6. Examine whether there is a need to encourage recruitment of staff from diverse groups.
7. Examine our services and activities to ensure that they reflect the needs of people facing disadvantage.
8. Ensure that no member of staff or the users of our services are exposed to or experience any form of discrimination from Lowe & Oliver.

We have used a Programme of Action as a guide to staff and users of our services as to how our policy will be implemented.

We will annually review how our policy has been working and make public the results in our Annual Review. Where necessary we will make alterations or additions to our policy as a result of experience. We will produce a Diversity Action Plan that will detail the specific measures that Lowe & Oliver will take to implement and monitor our policy, which will also be reviewed annually.

Lowe & Oliver will provide sufficient resources to plan, carry out, monitor and review this policy.

Signed:  _____

Date: 1-11-15

Name: PAUL TUSON

Position within Lowe &
Oliver:

MANAGING DIRECTOR

On behalf of Lowe & Oliver

PROGRAMME OF ACTION

A PROVISION OF SERVICES

Lowe & Oliver aims to deliver services to our client base without discriminating against them. Our aim is that every service user will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy and respect.

Service users and those who take part in our activities will be informed that Lowe & Oliver is committed to an Equality and Diversity policy so that:

- They will know that a policy exists and how to access it.
- All who come into contact with Lowe & Oliver will know the standards that we are trying to achieve and have the opportunity to assist us in trying to achieve them.
- They will know they have the right to complain if they feel these standards are not being adhered to or are dissatisfied with the service provision to them.

Lowe & Oliver will work to ensure that our services meet the needs of our diverse client base.

B WORKING FOR LOWE & OLIVER

Lowe & Oliver recognises that the community consists of a diverse population of people. This diversity consists of visible and non-visible differences. We believe that harnessing the differences will create a productive environment in which everyone feels valued, where their talents are being fully utilised and in which organisational goals are met.

Lowe & Oliver will ensure that recruitment practices fulfil the legal framework for employment and the requirement of its Equality and Diversity policy.

All posts will have a job description and person specification, which will contain the essential and desirable skills, qualifications and experience required for each post. Person specifications will contain only details relevant to specific positions.

All applicants for posts will be treated strictly on merit.

As an exception posts targeted at specific groups of people will be exempted, as allowed by legislation.

Every effort will be made to make provision for staff and volunteers with a disability through reasonable adaptations.

The format for interview will be agreed before it takes place and will remain constant for all interviews for the position.

All application forms will include a section for equality and diversity monitoring, the information will be individually confidential but used for assessing recruitment and advertising practice after each post is advertised by individual managers or the Personnel department.

The Managing Director, or appointed person, will be responsible for vetting, in confidence, applicants for sensitive posts; this may include criminal records bureau checks.

Where appropriate, Lowe & Oliver will permit staff to adopt flexible working practices. These include part-time working, job share, temporary reductions in hours, home based working and any other working patterns available (as long as these do not interfere with the effective working of Lowe & Oliver).

C TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Board of Directors and staff need to recognise and fulfil their personal role in making Lowe & Oliver a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation. Lowe & Oliver will ensure that all staff and volunteers know about the Equality and Diversity policy and their responsibilities within it, by providing continuing communications and training to achieve this.

D CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

All members of the Board of Directors and staff will be required to adhere to the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Allegations of instances of victimisation or harassment will be investigated fully.

Proven instances of victimisation or harassment by staff members will be regarded as instances of gross misconduct under Lowe & Oliver's Disciplinary Policy and may lead to disciplinary sanctions (up to and including dismissal).

E RECORDING AND MONITORING OF SERVICE PROVISION

In addition to Section B – Recording and Monitoring Recruitment and Selection process Lowe & Oliver will monitor and review the take up of the service where appropriate records are kept of actions and decisions by directors and staff.

F RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Directors has the ultimate responsibility to provide, implement and annually review the policy. It is the responsibility of directors and staff to promote the policy by ensuring that Lowe & Oliver's activities promote equality and diversity. Lowe & Oliver will take steps to ensure material is not displayed that offends against the principles of this policy.

G RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Managing Director or appointed representative, holds the day to day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented and, in the first instance, for dealing with or taking action on disciplinary offences.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms are legally defined in the Acts and Codes of Practice. For the purposes of this policy they are defined as follows:

DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

This is treating a person or group of people less favourably than other people in the same or similar circumstances. For example, refusing to employ people who meet the requirements for the job.

INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

This takes place when a requirement or condition has the effect of discriminating unfairly and unjustifiably between another group or individual. This can happen quite unintentionally. For example, asking for a degree as an essential criterion for a post. In many cases a degree may not actually be relevant to the specific needs of a post.

DISCRIMINATION

This also covers actions, both intentional and unintentional, which amount to abuse or harassment of a service user or group of service users, an employee or group of employees, a volunteer or group of volunteers as listed in the second paragraph of the Statement of Intent.

VICTIMISATION

This means treating a person less favourably because they may have asserted their rights under Lowe & Oliver's equal opportunities policy, or have helped somebody else to do so, or because they intend to take, or are suspected of having taken such action. However, victimisation provisions do not apply to anyone who has made false or malicious allegations.

HARASSMENT

This is unwanted conduct that is offensive to the recipient and is often discriminatory in nature. It should be noted that the Prevention of Harassment Act 1997 makes harassment a criminal offence.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

This applies to the steps that it is reasonable for an employer to have to take in all circumstances to prevent disadvantage to a disabled person. The reasonable adjustment refers to any physical feature of the premises occupied by the employer or any arrangements made by or on behalf of the employer, which cause a substantial disadvantage to a disabled person compared with non-disabled people.

Appendix 2

There are numerous relevant statutes, statutory instruments and EU Directives, which are relevant to discrimination. These are set out under the separate headings below:

MAIN STATUTES

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 – as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Equality Act 2006
- The Human Rights Act 1998

AGE DISCRIMINATION

- The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/1031)

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- The Disability Discrimination (Meaning of Disability) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/1455)
- The Disability Discrimination (Blind and Partially Sighted Persons) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/712)
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1673)

EQUAL PAY

- The Equal Pay (Question and Replies) Order 2003 (SI 2003/722)
- The Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1656)
- The Occupational Pension Schemes (Equal Treatment) (Amendment) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/1923)

RACE DISCRIMINATION

- The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 (SI 2001/3458)
- The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1626)

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1660)
- The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2828)

SEX DISCRIMINATION

- The Sex Discrimination (Question and Replies) Order 1975 (SI 1975/2048)
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1657)
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/1102)

SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION

- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/1661)
- The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Amendment) Regulations (SI 2003/2827)

ADDITIONAL STATUTES AND STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION

These include:

- The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/1551)
- The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/2034)
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (sections relating to maternity and dependant carer leave)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES

- Equal Treatment Framework Directive (2000/78/EC)
- Equal Treatment Amendment Directive (2002/73/EC)
- Race Directive (2000/43/EC)
- Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (2004/113/EC)

CODES OF PRACTICE

The Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality, Fair Employment Commission and Department of Education and Employment, have all produced codes of practice.

These codes give recommendations and guidance on how to avoid discrimination in employment. They contain advice on policies that are needed to prevent discrimination in such matters as the recruitment and treatment of employees. They also suggest positive steps to promote equal opportunities.

The codes do not have the force of law but they are approved by Parliament. Employment Tribunals in considering relevant cases will take their provisions into account. This policy will be revised in line with changes in Codes of Practice (for example Commission for Racial Equality Code of Practice 2006), where appropriate.

