

Document Name	Equality and Diversity Policy
Document Reference	OMG – POL - 013
Document Issue Number	4
Document Review Date	January 2023

Aim

- This policy sets out our commitment to the issues of equality and diversity. We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for all and recognise and value the diversity that exists.

Definition

- The dictionary definition of equality is 'the state of being equal'. The term 'equalities' originates from the equal opportunities policy and practice developed by the public sector in the 1970's.
- It is built upon the principles that:
 - Certain groups within society suffer common forms of discrimination.
 - Service delivery and employment practices should be systematically monitored, to eliminate discriminatory behaviours, policies and practices, and promote equality of opportunity; and
 - Combating discrimination has an intrinsic value, known as the 'social justice' case for equalities.
- The dictionary definition of diversity is 'the state or quality of being different or varied'. Diversity is a specific term that emerged in the late 1990's.
- The term rejects what is perceived as the narrow, law driven perspective of equal opportunities and replaces it with a new emphasis on individuality, difference and how this can enhance business.
- The strengths of the diversity position are that it:
 - Recognises the value of diversity at an individual and business level.
 - Does not 'pigeonhole' people as part of a certain group; and
 - Places a positive value on diversity within the business and the workforce.

Policy Statement

- Omega is committed to ensuring the equality of opportunity across all departments and in all our areas of operation. We also recognise, value, and encourage the need for diversity.
- We will remain up to date with statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to equality and diversity and will seek out and adopt current best practices.
- Omega believes that equality of opportunity and management of diversity is vital to the success of an efficient organisation. We are committed to taking positive steps to ensure that equality of opportunity and management of diversity are integral features of all our activities.
- Omega acknowledges that the experience of discrimination is a reality for people within our business environment. Because of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and other issues people are denied life opportunities, find access to services more difficult, and suffer inequalities as a result. This results in injustice which needs to be redressed.
- Omega recognises it has a responsibility to challenge all forms of discrimination. Our commitment extends to all our functions as a fair employer, provider of services.
- Promoting the principles of equality, valuing diversity, and inclusion are core to all our activities.
- Ensuring equality of opportunity and diversity requires action across the entire organisation, from front line staff to our Board of Directors. Our employees, managers and Board must ensure that the commitments within this policy are translated into action.
- We must ensure that our approaches to equality issues, and valuing diversity, are incorporated into service planning and delivery activities and so become part of the mainstream.
- We recognise that certain groups in society experience discrimination and disadvantage and we seek to combat less favourable treatment, prejudice and discrimination based on the following grounds:
 - Race, colour, ethnic origin or nationality;
 - Gender;
 - Disability whether mental or physical;
 - Religious or political beliefs.
 - Marital and family status;
 - Caring responsibilities;
 - Sexuality or sexual preference;
 - Age, physical appearance or another characteristic;
 - Illness such as HIV and Aids
 - Class.
 - Appearance;
 - Unrelated criminal activities;
 - Travelling Business; or
 - Any other matter that causes a person to be treated with injustice.
- We recognise that the list is not exhaustive, and it will be regularly reviewed.
- We also recognise that people from different backgrounds can bring diverse ideas and perceptions which can make the work we do more efficient, and our range of services better.
- Our service delivery will be grounded on a fair and objective assessment of the needs and aspirations of our service users with objectives to:
 - Promote equality of opportunity;
 - Embrace diversity; and
 - Redress the effects of any past discrimination in all aspects of our business.

Access to Services

- We will endeavour to ensure that the principles of equality and diversity are applied to the provision of services. We will work in partnership with other agencies, such as local authorities and health services, to assess and prioritise needs. Only through partnership will inequality be successfully tackled.
- We will seek to influence other agencies to research and prioritise the needs of minority communities and other groups experiencing discrimination or exclusion.
- We will review, as appropriate, our contribution to meeting the needs of all customers.
- We will endeavour to ensure, through policy, that our staff and customers feel secure and can live without the threat of harassment. We will always take appropriate action against the voicing of discriminatory views.

Management

- We will ensure that our Board Members receive appropriate training and information relating to equality and diversity issues.
- We will publicise our services to all our customers as required.
- We will endeavour to ensure that information is issued to customers in a format appropriate to their needs.
- We will ensure Omega's documentation stresses our commitment to equality of opportunity and the importance of diversity.

Purchasing and Procurement

- We will ensure that our contractors and consultants comply with our policy and do not discriminate in the execution of our contracts.
- We will ensure that the selection of contractors and consultants is fair and non-discriminatory.
- We will also endeavour to promote equality in our contractors'/consultants' own employment practices.

Marketing and Public Relations

- We will seek to ensure that Omega markets its services and promotes its values to all groups in a manner appropriate to each.

Recruitment/Employment/Training of Staff

- We will operate a separate "Equal Opportunities Recruitment Policy" (available as a separate document) dealing with the issue of equality of opportunity and the importance of diversity in employment.
- We acknowledge that the general principles of equality and diversity are of the utmost importance to the management of our workforce however, we believe that there are adequate specific conditions relating to employment to warrant a separate document.
- We will aspire to employ a diverse workforce. We will also seek to create a working environment where harassment and prejudice are known to be unacceptable.

34. We will ensure that all staff have received an appropriate level of training for them to develop an overall awareness of equality and diversity issues, and to enable the prevention of discrimination in all our areas of operation.
35. We will provide support to staff with special needs to allow them to undertake their work and participate as fully as possible in the organisations work and activities.

Age Equality

36. Omega is committed to eliminating age discrimination and will endeavour to improve the way in which we work to eliminate discrimination. We will seek to ensure that age does not become a social dividing line.
37. We will endeavour to promote greater social inclusion for people of all ages and will promote inclusive services.
38. We will encourage employees of all ages to develop and contribute.
39. We will provide services based on need, regardless of age. Age will not be used as a criterion to restrict access to services.
40. In relation to employment we will ensure compliance with the new Equalities Act 2010.

Sex Equality

41. Omega is committed to eliminating sex discrimination and enabling men and women to participate on an equal basis. We are also committed to the principles of individuality and diversity, and we acknowledge our duties under the Sex Discrimination act 1975 (amended 1986) the Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1984) and the Human Rights Act 1998.
42. We will endeavour to ensure, in all areas of our business operation, that both men and women are protected from unlawful discrimination and treated equally. To assist with the achievement of this objective we will:
- Encourage men and women to participate equally in decisions which affect their lives.
 - Ensure that female and male employees are paid the same for doing work of equal value and have the same service conditions.
 - Ensure that employees can work in an environment that values them as individuals and is free from sexual harassment.
 - Confront unlawful discrimination and promote sex equality through learning and development.
 - Sensitive handle any allegations of sexual discrimination and harassment by providing appropriate support to alleged victims; and
 - Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners are aware of our policy and the expectation that their own policies will include, as a minimum, a commitment to equal opportunities.

Equality for People with Disabilities

43. Omega is committed to eliminating discrimination against disabled people and ensuring that people with disabilities can participate fully as equal citizens. We acknowledge our duties under the Disability Rights Act 1995 and 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
44. We will endeavour to ensure that in carrying out our duties that those with disabilities are free from prejudice and discrimination. To assist in the achievement of this target we will:
- Consider, via consultation, the needs of individuals with disabilities when planning and delivering services.
 - Provide information to customers in a format appropriate to their needs.
 - Undertake all reasonable efforts to assist employees who are, or who become disabled to remain in Omega's employment.
 - Ensure staff, Board Members and Customer Representatives receive appropriate training in disability awareness and equality; and
 - Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners are aware of our policy and the expectation that their own policies will include, as a minimum a commitment to equal opportunities.

Race Equality

45. Omega is committed to the elimination of racial discrimination.
46. We acknowledge our duties to promote equal opportunities and good race relations under the Race Relations Act 1976, as reinforced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
47. We will endeavour to ensure that all our dealings either as an employer, service provider or business leader are free from racial discrimination.
48. We will afford equal access to employment and service provision and will not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, cultural background, or religion. To assist in the achievement of this target we will:
- Consider the needs of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities by direct consultation wherever possible.
 - Consider the use of the BME media when advertising and promoting services.
 - Ensure that service users are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from staff members on racial grounds.
 - Wherever possible, monitor by ethnicity, the use of services to ensure equality of access, and that the data collected will be further used to develop services that are appropriate to the needs of the whole business.
 - Ensure that recruitment and selection is carried out with reference to the appropriate codes of practice.
 - Ensure that staff and Board Members receive appropriate training and are made aware of their responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
 - Endeavour to ensure that customers, employees, consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners are able to go about their daily business free from racial harassment and discrimination.
 - Ensure that allegations of racial harassment or discrimination are handled with sensitivity, whilst giving the appropriate support to the alleged victim.
 - Manage staff fairly and appropriately, ensuring no discrimination on racial grounds in terms of work allocation, consultation and communication, development and training opportunities, staff appraisals, granting of leave, or grievance and disciplinary matters; and
 - Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners are aware of our policy and the expectation that their own policies will include, as a minimum, a commitment to equal opportunities, and a statement that racial discrimination and harassment are disciplinary offences.

Equality for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Trans-Gender People

49. Omega is committed to eliminating homophobic prejudice and discrimination. We acknowledge our duties under the Human rights Act 1998, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004.
50. We will endeavour to ensure that in carrying out our duties gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender people are given equal and unprejudiced treatment. To assist in the achievement of this target we will:
- Endeavour to ensure that policies, practices, and procedures are not based on the assumption that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual.
 - Confront unlawful discrimination and tackle prejudice through learning and development.
 - Encourage a culture of openness regarding sexual orientation and ensure that gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender employees have a safe environment in which to work.
 - Ensure that customers are aware that they do not have the right to refuse service from gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans-gender staff.
 - Sensitive handle allegations of discrimination and harassment and offer appropriate support to the alleged victim.
 - Manage staff fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion, or other conditions of employment; and
 - Ensure that consultants, contractors, suppliers, and partners are aware of our policy and the expectation that their own policies will include, as a minimum, a commitment to equal opportunities



Abdul Mukith – Managing Director