

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- a. HAVCO recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions and seeks to value and harness this diversity to make its services relevant and approachable for everyone.
- b. HAVCO believes in equality of opportunity and values all individuals regardless of any collective and individual identity.
- c. HAVCO believes that all people have a right to employment and to services which are free from direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of race, colour, caste, national or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, political beliefs, social class, employment status, financial status, responsibility for dependants, gender, ill health, disability (sensory impairment and learning disability), marital status, HIV/AIDS status, language (including the language of deaf people), gender identity, sexual orientation, age, trade union activity, height, non-relevant criminal conviction or any other condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- d. HAVCO seeks to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner.
- e. HAVCO will work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate such practices within the organisation.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- a. All potential or actual service users, Management Board members, volunteers and employees will be treated with equal respect.
- b. HAVCO's activities and services will be open and accessible to all people within its area of benefit.
- c. HAVCO will ensure as far as is practicable that all sections of the community are represented in its membership and on its Management Board and other constituent bodies.
- d. All HAVCO staff will be recruited and where appropriate promoted on merit regardless of background and other discriminatory factors unless the needs of users justify a more balanced representation.
- e. Management Board members and staff will be provided with training in the application of equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination practices and HAVCO will seek to ensure that all people involved in the service understand the issues surrounding discrimination.
- f. HAVCO will seek to ensure its premises are accessible and welcoming to all sections of the community within the aims and resources of the service.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Management Board as the employer has overall and final responsibility for ensuring that HAVCO meets its responsibilities in relation to the Race Relations Act (1976), Sex Discrimination Act (1975-85), Equal Pay Act (1970), Disability Discrimination Act (1995), Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and all other relevant or subsequent legislation.
- b. The Management Board will ensure the development of a strategic commitment to diversity which goes beyond adherence to any legal responsibilities.

- c. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice and in particular will ensure that:
- staff receive sufficient information and training to enable them to implement this policy in their everyday work.
 - line managers are aware of their responsibilities to their staff in relation to equal opportunities and diversity.
 - there are arrangements in place to properly monitor this policy.
 - managing diversity is internally driven, from a sense of commitment by the organisation and its employees wherever they are based.
 - those responsible for equality and diversity issues have the resources to carry out their work effectively.

4. EMPLOYMENT

- a. Employment will be undertaken in accordance with the HAVCO recruitment policy and the equal opportunities principles outlined therein.
- b. All elements of the job description, person specification and shortlisting and interview process for each post will be non-discriminatory in nature and will be applied equally to all candidates.

5. TRAINING

- a. Relevant training opportunities will be published widely to all employees.
- b. Training will be made available to Management Board members and staff without discrimination and with regard to individual circumstances.

6. ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

- a. HAVCO will follow equal opportunities principles in engaging consultants or contractors.
- b. HAVCO will draw its equal opportunities principles to the attention of all consultants and contractors it engages who will each be expected to work within the spirit and practice of this policy.

7. RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL NEEDS

- a. HAVCO will endeavour to ensure that its work requirements are consistent with both the needs of the organisation and the religious and cultural needs of staff and consult with outside experts if necessary in order to achieve this.
- b. Where staff have particular religious or cultural needs which conflict with work requirements managers will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met.

8. DISABILITY

- a. HAVCO will endeavour to support and encourage employees who are disabled or become disabled to work within the organisation and wherever possible will assist with their rehabilitation and retraining.
- b. HAVCO will endeavour to maintain disabled staff in employment wherever practicable by adjusting working conditions and practices and redeploying to alternative work where necessary.
- c. HAVCO will operate a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled candidates under the terms of its recruitment policy.

9. PERSONAL CONDUCT

- a. Each staff member should respect all others with whom they come into contact on HAVCO business and realise that behaviour which they find acceptable may not be so regarded by others.
- b. Harassment at work in any form is entirely unacceptable and each member of staff carries responsibility for their own behaviour under the policy.
- c. Should any harassment or unacceptable abuse of staff members occur the person or persons responsible will be liable for disciplinary action under the HAVCO disciplinary procedure and possible legal action.
- d. HAVCO will provide support for employees who allege harassment and a proper investigation of complaints will take place under the HAVCO complaints procedure.

10. CONSULTATION

- a. HAVCO will monitor the usage of and enquiries concerning its services and actively encourage the views of groups which experience discrimination in order to improve its service delivery.
- b. HAVCO will ensure that such monitoring covers all aspects of its service including management practice, recruitment, employment, volunteer involvement, training and development, publicity/publications and access to resources.

11. ACCESS TO MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

- a. HAVCO will endeavour to ensure that its membership, goods and services are accessible to all subject to its membership criteria and reflect the needs of the various communities of people who may need them and particularly under-represented groups.
- b. HAVCO will positively discriminate in favour of less-resourced organisations in accordance with the provisions of its policy on promoting equality.

12. ACCESS TO POSITIONS

- a. HAVCO will ensure that all officer and representative positions and places on its Management Board, committees and thematic forums are open to any full member of HAVCO subject to the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles and any regulations made thereunder and will take action to encourage participation from under-represented groups.
- b. All HAVCO committees and thematic forums will adhere to the HAVCO equal opportunities policy.

13. MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- a. HAVCO will ensure that its services are well publicised to ensure equality of access.
- b. HAVCO publicity will include statements about our commitment to diversity and equal opportunities.
- c. HAVCO marketing will strive to provide information and resource materials which are jargon free and free from racist, ageist, disabling, homophobic or sexist images, language or attitudes or any other discriminatory practices.

14. COMMUNICATION

- a. HAVCO will endeavour to create a climate of communication which reflects the needs of different linguistic and cultural groups by providing interpreters and signers as appropriate.
- b. HAVCO will endeavour to provide information in a variety of formats such as audio tape or large print on request and will seek to use information communication and other technologies to improve the way in which it communicates.

15. WORKING PRACTICES

- a. HAVCO will seek to actively engage all communities in its work and to respect all cultural differences and expectations with regard to catering, times and dates of meetings, modes of dress and conduct, language, translation policy and forms of address.