

# WAYLAND

## Chamber of Commerce

### **Equal Opportunity POLICY**

The Wayland Chamber of Commerce is committed to ensuring all members have equality of opportunity open to them. We are committed to ensure that your membership with us is free from discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion or belief, marital status, disability, age, or union status.

#### **Types of discrimination**

Discriminatory action falls into four main headings: -

**Direct Discrimination:** this would take place when an existing or potential member is treated less favourably than others because of gender, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion or belief, marital status, disability, age, or union status. Examples of such direct discrimination may include restrictive access to membership activities and sexual or racial harassment.

**Indirect Discrimination:** this is less obvious, but equally unacceptable. It occurs when a criteria provision or practice is imposed which disadvantages an individual in one group of members compared with another group or individuals and is not justified. An example may be an age restriction on Chamber activities.

**Victimisation:** this is where an individual who has made or intends to make a complaint, or has given evidence supporting a complaint of discrimination against us, is treated less favourably because of their action or intention.

**Harassment:** this is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard for all circumstances in the perception of the victim.

These actions are discriminatory and whether intentional or not they could make individuals personally liable for a substantial financial penalty.

A person bringing a discrimination claim in Court can be awarded unlimited financial compensation from both the organisation and the person responsible for the discriminatory act.

In addition, intentional harassment may constitute a criminal act. This means that it is very important that our standards of behaviour are clearly set out and that everyone follows them.

## **Responsibility for equality**

How effective we are in creating an environment offering equal opportunities depends on the cooperation of all of us.

All Committee members have a responsibility: -

- (a) To make themselves familiar with this policy and behave in a manner which reflects the equality culture;
- (b) To ensure the principles of equality of treatment and opportunity are applied in all Chamber related situations;
- (c) To ensure that all Committee members are aware of this equality policy and the obligations this creates for them;
- (d) To ensure that all Committee members who are involved with Committee related decisions are fully trained in equality issues.

All Committee members have a responsibility to adhere to this policy when carrying out both internal and external activities relating to activities of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce and behave in a manner that reflects their equality responsibilities.

The Committee members have a responsibility: -

- (a) To develop policies and practice with support and advance an equality culture;
- (b) To administer the equality policy affectively and provide training to ensure that all Committee members are aware of their responsibilities under the policy; and
- (c) To monitor progress towards equal opportunities, identify issues and drive actions to overcome obstacles in conjunction with other Committee members and members of the Wayland Chamber of Commerce.

Monitoring of Chamber membership and Committee membership should be regularly reviewed to ensure adherence to the policy. Monitoring should be taking place to ensure that equality principles are adhered to and reported at each AGM meeting.

Any person feeling there has been a breach of this policy by a Committee member or member business should firstly write to the Secretary of the Chamber giving full details of the complaint. The matter will then be fully investigated by the Chair or Vice Chair (if the complaint is about the Chair or Vice Chair, then the Secretary will forward the complaint to committee member to investigate). Once an investigation has been concluded then the investigator will write to the complainant. If the Complaint is upheld the Committee member or business may face expulsion from the Chamber by resolution of the majority of members. Appeals against such an expulsion may be heard by a special meeting of the Chamber.

Agreed 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010