

# **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

WEL is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and valuing the diversity of both its staff and the communities and individuals it serves.

WEL aims to comply all relevant legislation, guidance and codes of practice and our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy is in accordance with current legislation and government guidelines, including the Human Rights Act 1998, the Age Discrimination Act 2006, Employment Relations Act 1999, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Codes of Practice on Age Diversity and of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is

- To provide WEL's staff, customers, Board members, partners, suppliers and stakeholders with a clear with a clear understanding of the Company's commitment to promoting equality and diversity in its role as an employer and service provider.
- To outline how WEL will achieve, maintain and measure compliance with its statutory and regulatory obligations
- To provide a framework for monitoring performance and achieving best practice across all business areas including employment, service provision and governance.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Board members and employees of WEL are responsible for upholding this policy. Managers have additional responsibilities in ensuring those they supervise are following WEL's equality objectives.

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy rests with the Managing Director and the Management Team, who are responsible for developing a culture in which the policy can be implemented and operated.

The Board is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the policy objectives and ensuring that WEL's equality objectives underpin all business activities.

## **POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

WEL aims to treat all people with whom it has contact fairly and with respect. We are fully committed to the promotion of equal opportunity and to addressing and resolving any form of unfair discrimination encountered in our service and employment provision.

WEL aims to provide accessible services in ways that are fair and accountable and in doing so welcomes and values the diversity of the individuals and communities that it serves.

WEL recognises that there are many forms of prejudice and unfair discrimination and that many groups and individuals may experience disadvantage because of their age, race, ethnic origin, gender, religion, family status, political belief, disability or sexual orientation. We believe that as an employer and a provider of care and support to vulnerable people we have a role to play in tackling such disadvantage.

### **Employment**

The Company welcomes diversity and is committed to achieving equality and fairness in all aspects of employment policy and practice.

We aim to ensure that:

- Individuals are treated with equity and fairness and decisions on recruitment, training, promotion and career management are based on objective criteria.
- There is equality of opportunity and treatment in recruitment and selection, appraisal, training, secondment, promotion, redeployment and redundancy processes.
- Individuals are treated with equity and fairness in the application of pay, benefits, conditions of employment and procedures.
- When recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities we will make use of the good practice information available and where necessary seek advice from disability agencies and the Employment Services
- All employees and Board members are trained in equality awareness in employment, the standards of behaviour expected and the consequences of unfair discriminatory or harassing behaviour
- All job applicants are made aware of our equal opportunities policy and the Complaints procedure as it relates to the recruitment process
- Harassment of any kind in the workplace is known to be unacceptable.

- Complaints about discrimination and harassment are thoroughly investigated and this is undertaken promptly, fairly and objectively in accordance with clear written procedures
- Monitoring is carried out to identify any areas of possible unfair discrimination in employment
- Employees receive appropriate support if they have experienced unfair discrimination

### **Provision of Services**

WEL will promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities

WEL works to recognise and understand the diversity of all the communities in which it currently operates. We believe that people from all sections of the community should have fair and equal access to our services.

WEL will retain overall responsibility for all services provided and will ensure that all partners uphold its equality and diversity objectives. We will require contractors and consultants to demonstrate that they share our commitment to equality and diversity.

In delivering services and dealing with individuals we will ensure that:

- Everyone using or seeking to use our services receives fair and equitable treatment
- Our services are flexible and responsive to the differing needs of individuals where reasonably practical
- Information about services is accessible and where necessary may be tailored to meet specific needs
- People are aware that they may complain if they feel they have experienced unfair discrimination or harassment by any director or officer of the Company or by the Company itself
- All employees and councilors receive awareness training on the importance of avoiding unfair discrimination or harassment and on how to respond appropriately to any complaints
- Systems for monitoring the Company's services in relation to equality and diversity are developed in line with current legislation and government guidelines
- The company aims to assist people with specific needs in an appropriate manner

## **Governance**

The promotion of equality and diversity is a central part of WEL's governance arrangements. Current and future members of the Board will receive appropriate advice, guidance and training to enable them to help deliver the Company's equality objectives.

WEL aspires to a governing body that broadly reflects the profile of the communities it serves. It will ensure that recruitment and selection of governing body members is fair and non discriminatory. Strategies will be put in place where necessary to address any imbalances in the Board.

## **Positive Action**

WEL will follow current UK law and EU directives and consider the adoption of positive action measures where appropriate to prevent or compensate for disadvantage

## **IMPLEMENTING POLICY**

The Company recognizes that the major challenge of having an equality and diversity policy is its effective implementation. We believe that this can only be achieved by working closely with individuals, groups and agencies.

We Will:

- Assess activity across all departments and produce a position statement
- Draw up action plans where necessary, in consultation with others. These plans will include targets and dates for work to be completed, taking account of any resources needed to carry out the work, and a timetable for review.
- Develop performance indicators and monitor, assess and report our progress on a regular basis
- Publicise our Equality and Diversity policy, action plans and achievements, through channels such as our annual report, customer newsletters and our website
- Mainstream equal opportunities into all service planning and delivery
- Where necessary other policies will have Equality and Diversity policies incorporated within them

## FEEDBACK

We welcome suggestions and complaints from people who use or provide our services. We believe that this can provide some important lessons to help us ensure that the service is improved for everyone.

If you have something to say about the Association's policies and procedures or the information that is provided about them, then please let us know. Please refer any comments to the author of this document as shown below.

<b>POLICY TITLE:</b>	EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	MANAGING DIRECTOR
<b>DATED REVISED</b>	NOV 2005
<b>DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW</b>	NOV 2007