

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

SCCUL Enterprises CLG is a registered charity set up by, but independent to, St. Columba's Credit Union, Galway in 2002. As a not for profit, social enterprise, SCCUL aims to champion societal change by promoting community, enterprise, wellbeing and social inclusion. This is achieved through a number of successful initiatives operating from the West of Ireland;

1. SCCUL Enterprise Centre, Ballybane
2. bizmentors®
3. Bizmentors International
4. SCCUL Sanctuary, Clarinbridge
5. Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre

Our **Vision** is: To alleviate poverty and disadvantage by empowering positive well-being and growth.

Our **Mission** is: To facilitate individual, community and economic growth in a sustainable manner, through socio economic development with the provision of supports and infrastructure.

### **Introduction**

SCCUL Enterprises CLG (hereafter referred to as our 'organisation') is committed to Equality of Opportunity for existing and potential employees and volunteers. The purpose of this Equal Opportunity / Diversity Policy is to create a workplace which provides for Equal Opportunities for all volunteers, staff and potential staff and where their dignity is protected and respected at all times. All persons regardless of Gender, Marital status, Family status, Race, Religious beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Age or Membership of the Travelling Community will be provided with equality of access to employment and volunteering opportunities and also encouraged and assisted to achieve their full potential. We will foster a genuine culture of Equality in our organisation.

### **Objectives**

The aim of the policy in terms of employment and volunteering is to ensure that no job applicant, volunteer applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on any grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. This applies to Recruitment and Selection, Training, Promotion, Pay and Employee Benefits, Employee and Volunteer Grievances and Discipline Procedures and all Terms and Conditions of Employment and Volunteering.

### **Responsibilities**

The responsibility for ensuring the provision of Equality of Opportunity rests primarily with our organisation. Managers and Supervisors have particular responsibility to engender respect for difference and to accommodate Diversity where appropriate. All staff and volunteers have an important role to play in ensuring Equality of Opportunity throughout

the organisation. It is also recognised that individual employees on behalf of our organisation have responsibilities in law and are:

- a) Required to co-operate with any measures introduced by the company to promote Equal Opportunities.
- b) Must not themselves, either directly or indirectly, discriminate against fellow employees or volunteers or harass or intimidate them in any way.

## **Structures**

Our organisation is committed to resourcing an Equality Officer who is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place for effective implementation, monitoring and review of the policy. This policy will be communicated at every level within the organisation in a range of formats through various media. We will undertake an Equality review and prepare an action plan on foot of this and maintain a monitoring system.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Our organisation will select those suitable for employment and volunteer positions solely on the basis of merit. It is SCCUL's policy to ensure that we put the most capable person in the position, regardless of personal circumstances, physical attributes or any other irrelevant factors. Job and volunteer advertisements, application forms and publicity material will encourage applications from all suitable candidates and will not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual on any unjustifiable grounds.

The objective is to target the widest possible pool of potential applicants and to ensure that all candidates have Equality of access to all job and volunteer vacancies. We will seek to ensure a creative approach to our advertising that affirms Diversity and attracts the widest pool of candidates. We aim to create and maintain an environment that values diversity, respects human dignity, and is equitable and tolerant.

Where possible and practicable efforts will be made to ensure that interview panels come from diverse backgrounds. We will ensure that interviewers are trained to conduct interviews in a non-discriminatory way and that questions will relate to the requirements of the job or volunteer position. Relevant questions will be asked of all candidates and evaluated in the same way and interviewers will be careful not to ask questions which might be taken as discriminatory.

Selection will be on merit and those who are successful shall demonstrate their suitability for employment (or volunteer position) according to pre-determined job-related selection criteria which will be consistently applied throughout the recruitment process.

Equality of Opportunity will also include accommodating where possible the special needs of individuals to facilitate their participation in the Recruitment & Selection process.

## **Career Development and Training**

Opportunities for Career Development and Training will be open to all and will not discriminate directly or indirectly on any of the grounds outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 -2015. All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of Training, Skills and experience necessary for their career development. Opportunities for training will be based on the requirements of the job (or volunteer position) and career development will be based on people's abilities and merit. Our organisation is committed to a relevant training and career development policy for all staff irrespective of background.

## **Promotion**

All categories of staff will be encouraged to prepare, plan and consider themselves for promotion. All eligible employees will be made aware of promotional opportunities and encouraged to compete. Conditions governing access to promotion competitions will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on any of the nine grounds. Unnecessary barriers to promotion will be removed and employees facilitated to compete by all means possible. Promotion and Re-grading will be decided on objective criteria to the requirements of the job and will not be influenced by any of the nine grounds.

## **Complaints and Redress**

All complaints from employees and volunteers in relation to Employment Equality or alleged discrimination will be handled in accordance with grievance procedures. Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting the Equality Officer. Our organisation is committed to ensuring that all issues concerning alleged breaches of this policy will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with appropriate regard for confidentiality.

## **Harassment and Bullying**

Our organisation is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment that is free of harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying and within which all members of staff and volunteers will be treated with dignity and respect. All employees and volunteers have an obligation to prevent and eliminate Bullying & Harassment.

## **Review and Monitoring**

Progress in the areas of Equal Opportunities and Diversity will be gauged through the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Equal Opportunities/Diversity strategy. All aspects of this Equality Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the Equality Officer.