

Alcohol Education and Research Council

Equal Opportunities Policy

The AERC wishes to secure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities. This applies to trustees, job applicants, employees, volunteer workers and users of the AERC's services.

1. Policy

The AERC recognises that in our society groups and individuals have been and continue to be discriminated against.

The AERC is committed to achieving Equal Opportunities in all aspects of its work. It, therefore, opposes discrimination on grounds of age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status or other health related reasons and all forms of discrimination direct or indirect which restricts or hinders the promotion of equal opportunities.

The AERC is committed to becoming an Equal Opportunities employer. Our aim is to ensure that no trustee, job applicant, volunteer or employee –

- receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, sex or membership of any minority group, or is otherwise discriminated against
- is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable

2. Action Plan

The AERC will prepare an "Equal Opportunities and Diversity Action Plan". This will be in the form of a matrix and provide an assessment of the organisation's approach to equal opportunities across all of its activities, proposing remedial actions for those areas that are identified as being weak. The Plan will extend over a three-year timeframe and be reviewed annually. The Plan will consider activities under the following headings:

- governance (inc. recruitment of trustees and advisory panel members)
- recruitment, employment and development of staff
- accessibility of services (inc. grant making)
- accessibility of information (inc. websites, events, literature)
- accessibility of premises
- awareness of diversity issues amongst trustees and staff

3. Specific Policies Relating to Employees

Employees should particularly refer to the section of this handbook called "Equal Employment and Non-Discrimination"

4. Training

The AERC will provide Equal Opportunities and Diversity training for all of its trustees, advisory panel members and staff.

5. Responsibilities

Any job applicant, employee, volunteer or user of the AERC's services who feels that they have been unfairly treated can raise the matter through the 'Complaints and Grievance Procedure'. The use of this internal procedure does not take away the individual's right under the Law to take a case to an Industrial Tribunal.

All employees, volunteers and users of the AERC's services are expected to accept their personal responsibility for the practical application of the Policy. They must ensure that they do not discriminate in any way against other employees, volunteers or members of the public with whom they work may bring into contact.

Specific responsibility falls upon the AERC's Board of Trustees, its senior managers, volunteers, personnel involved in recruitment, employee administration, training and all other personnel working in contact with the general public. The AERC as an employer may be held responsible for the actions of their employees if they act in a discriminatory way.

No-one who brings a complaint or grievance in good faith under the Policy will be subject to victimisation or any other detriment as a result of their action.

If an employee or a member of the public has reason to believe that someone has discriminated against them, then that person has the right to make a complaint to an Industrial Tribunal/Court about the way they have been treated. If there is evidence to show that discrimination has taken place as a result of someone's actions that are contrary to laid down procedures, they will be personally responsible for that action and the AERC may decide not to assist them in their defence.

Policy reviewed February 2010