

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Policy Statement: McSence Group is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to encouraging diversity and inclusion by eliminating discrimination in both its role as an employer and as a provider of services. McSence aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality, inclusion and diversity and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential. We are committed wherever practicable to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local communities in which we operate. McSence Group is as a Disability Confident Committed Employer (DCS010233) where we have committed to:

- ✚ Ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- ✚ Communicating and promoting vacancies
- ✚ Offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job
- ✚ Anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required
- ✚ Supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long term health condition, enabling them to stay in work at least one activity that will make a difference for disabled people

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment and in the provision of services and not to discriminate on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origins, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership, nationality, political opinion, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, trade union membership status or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified. McSence Group opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All employees, trustees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time, permanent or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training, volunteering or any other benefit will be based on skills and ability.

All Employees: This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies which includes the subsidiary companies - *McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd* in any capacity including but not limited to:

- ✚ All employees at all levels, prospective employees, agency workers, seconded workers, temporary workers, contractors/sub-contractors, clients, agents, external consultants, volunteers, members of the public, group's supply chain, third-party representatives and/or business partners who will be referred to in our Group policies as "all employees".

The Workplace: This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies in any capacity at the workplace(s) as defined below which includes but not limited to:

- ✚ McSence Premises, Offices, Units, Business Park, Client's Premises, External Meeting Places, Customers' Homes, Gardens, Sheltered Housing, Whilst On-Call, On-Duty, Emergency Cover, Working from Home including On-Line Meetings, Whilst Driving in Company Time, Working Public Areas (café's, trains, coffee shops, buses etc) and will be referred to throughout this policy as "the workplace".

Principles: McSence Group commitment to Equality and Diversity is:

- ✚ To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees, trustees and volunteers are recognised and valued
- ✚ To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all where no form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- ✚ To ensure training, development and progression opportunities are available to all
- ✚ To promote equality in the workplace, which it believes is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- ✚ To regularly review all employment and volunteering practices and procedures to ensure that no job applicants, staff, trustees or volunteers are treated less favourably than others
- ✚ To regularly review services to ensure they are accessible and appropriate to all groups within society and the communities in which we operate
- ✚ To treat breaches of the equality policy seriously and to take disciplinary action when required

- ✚ To provide information and training to all employees, trustees and volunteers so that they are fully aware of the issues relating to Equality and Diversity and their responsibilities relating to it
- ✚ To develop an Equality Action plan, to ensure our Equality and Diversity policy is fully implemented
- ✚ To ensure the policy is fully supported by the McSence Senior Management Team and our Board of Trustees and Directors
- ✚ To monitor and review the policy annually

PROCEDURES:

Positive Action: McSence will act positively in using the Equality and Diversity Policy as a means of making public its commitment to provide equal opportunities to all present and future employees, trustees and volunteers. McSence encourages all employees to apply for suitable opportunities and to seek training for promotion or skills.

The Equality and Diversity Policy forms part of the Employee Handbook and Contract of Employment. Training in Equality and Diversity is provided as part of the Induction Programme. Any form of discrimination by an employee, trustee or volunteer is treated very seriously and where appropriate will be dealt with using the Disciplinary Procedure. McSence aims to ensure that the Executive Committee reflects the diversity of the member organisations and the population of the communities in which we operate.

Positive Discrimination: Positive discrimination is illegal and the recruitment of 'quotas' of groups is also illegal. Discrimination in selection to achieve or secure a balance of persons of different racial groups is also not allowed under the Race Relations Act 1976. There is an exception, however, which may be appropriate for certain posts in McSence i.e. when a genuine occupational qualification (GOQ) is necessary or desirable for a Particular group or sex. Both the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 allow these exceptions.

RECRUITMENT:

Job Descriptions & Person Specifications: Job descriptions are prepared for all posts where the job description indicates the responsibilities and tasks to be undertaken by the job holder plus the qualifications, skills and abilities required. A list of preferred criteria may also be prepared. Care will be taken to ensure that neither the description nor the specification are discriminatory on the grounds quoted in the Policy Statement.

Advertising: McSence Group use a range of advertising methods to attract the widest pool of appropriate applicants. Vacancies for new and existing jobs will normally be advertised internally and externally where our advertising will:

- ✚ Contain the statement *'McSence Group is committed to providing employment and equal opportunities'*
- ✚ Ensure that we do not exclude, discriminate against, or discourage any group from applying nor make it difficult for anyone from such a group to apply
- ✚ Refer to the job description and person specification in order give information about the requirements of the job
- ✚ Give clear instructions about obtaining the application pack

Applications: All applicants will be asked to fill out a job application form which contains only information essential and relevant to the appointment and different formats will be made available.

Short Listing: Applications will be short listed by at least two people. Short listing will be performed based on objective criteria and the extent to which candidates have shown, in the application form, that they meet the required Person Specification, and can carry out tasks and responsibilities required of the post-holder. Short listed candidates will be invited to an interview. Staff and Line Managers responsible for short-listing, interviewing and selection of candidates will be:

- ✚ Clearly informed of selection criteria and the need for their consistent application
- ✚ Given guidance on the effects which generalised assumptions about people from groups quoted in the Policy Statement can have on selection decisions
- ✚ Made aware of the possible misunderstandings that can occur between persons from different cultural backgrounds
- ✚ Formal qualifications and standards of literacy and numeracy will only be considered when they are recognised as necessary for a job

Interviewing: All interviews will be carried out by a minimum of two individuals, the names and gender of interviewees will be made available in advance. The questions asked will seek to gather objective evidence in support of the

job description and person specification. The same questions will be asked of all candidates applying for the job. Candidates will be asked at the application stage and on the form to provide any additional information, details of any requirements and/or reasonable adjustments that are required for attending an interview:

Selection: All candidates will be scored against the job description and person specification. The highest scoring applicants will be offered the position. Offers will be made to successful candidates, subject to satisfactory references and PVG check (where required). All unsuccessful candidates will be informed of the result of their application and offered brief feedback.

PVG Policy/Disclosure Scotland: For certain positions we will request PVG for all employees, trustees and volunteers. This requirement will be clearly stated in the application pack.

Ex-Offenders: McSence will not discriminate against ex-offenders with unspent convictions, unless required to do so because of the nature of the post. All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

Right to Work: All candidates will be asked about their eligibility and right to work where sight of original documents and certificated copies of acceptable documents are required including as outlined in the Home Office Right to Work Checklist.

Induction Training: All employees, trustees and volunteers will be required to follow an appropriate induction process to ensure they are equipped to do the job. All employees, trustees and volunteers will receive training on the Equality and Diversity policy, procedures and action plan as part of their induction.

Recruitment Monitoring: All applicants will be asked to complete an anonymous monitoring form as part of the application pack (to be returned in a separate envelope). The 2001 Census categories will be used to monitor ethnicity of staff (as recommended by the Commission for Racial Equality). An additional category for Gypsy and Travelling People will be included. The monitoring form will monitor age, disability, ethnic or national origins, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership, nationality, political opinion, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, colour, sex, sexual orientation. Recruitment statistics will be produced on an annual basis and presented to the Executive Committee.

Flexible Working: McSence will consider all requests for flexible working arrangements constructively and creatively, taking account of balancing the needs of the organisation with the needs of the individual employee. McSence will offer a range of flexible working arrangements and will work collaboratively to identify solutions that suit both the individual and the organisation. For further details see the Flexible Working Policy.

Promotion: Where appropriate vacancies will be advertised internally via Staff Zone, Friends & Family Coms and externally on job sites and McSence Website.

Reasonable Adjustments: McSence will make reasonable adjustments to ensure workers with disabilities, physical and/or mental health conditions aren't disadvantaged when doing their jobs. If you have a disability, physical or mental health condition which will require any reasonable adjustments in the workplace, you need to let us know before commencing employment. Additional requirements and/or adjustment will be considered whenever practicable and methods sought to help in taking up opportunities within the McSence Group.

Continuous Personal Development (CPD): All employees, trustees and volunteers have access to a wide range of training opportunities which are regularly circulated. Training opportunities will be discussed during supervision sessions and selection for training will be made based on both the needs of the business set out in the Business Plan and the continuous personal development of the individual. Staff with management, recruitment and selection responsibilities will be given guidance in the implementation of the Equal and Diversity Policy to ensure that they understand their position in law and under the Organisation's policy. Induction training will include an explanation of the Equal Opportunities Policy and a requirement to undertake formal training within the probationary period of employment.

TERMS & CONIDTIONS:

Religious Holidays: McSence will not ask about an employee's religion and will not discriminate against anyone wishing to celebrate their festivals.

Cultural & Religious Needs: Where employees, trustees or volunteers have cultural and religious needs, McSence will consider whether it is reasonably practicable to meet these needs while maintaining the efficiency of the business.

Annual Leave: Employees are required to use part of their annual holiday entitlement to cover time off for these and must follow the normal holiday booking procedure.

Disabilities, Physical and/or Mental Health Conditions: McSence will make genuine efforts to recruit people with disabilities, physical and/or mental health conditions and take reasonable steps to make the workplace and individual jobs accessible to people with disabilities, physical and/or mental health conditions. McSence will regularly review its facilities for employees, trustees and volunteers and will try to overcome any problems faced wherever practicable and within reasonable resources available. McSence will ensure that people have maximum access to employment opportunities and to meetings and events, regardless of any disability, physical and/or mental health condition.

Grievance & Disciplinary Procedures: McSence will take seriously any complaints of discrimination and will not victimise people who make such complaints. Staff will be made aware as part of the induction process of their responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity and that discriminatory behaviour will be fully investigated and dealt with using the Disciplinary Procedure.

Bullying & Harassment: McSence upholds the right of all employees and volunteers to be treated with respect and dignity and to work in an atmosphere free of bullying and harassment. All employees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour is sensitive to others and for ensuring that they do not condone or support the bullying or harassing behaviour of others. All complaints of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously and should be raised using the Grievance Procedure. All complaints will be investigated and where appropriate, the Disciplinary Procedures will be followed.

Recruitment & Workforce Monitoring: Employees, trustees and volunteers will be asked to fill out a monitoring form on appointment. The monitoring forms will be reviewed on an annual basis and statistics presented to the Senior Management Team.

Responsibility: McSence will endeavour to ensure that its services to and for the voluntary sector are sensitive and appropriate to respond to the needs of all groups, whenever practicable, i.e. taking account of the needs of minority groups. McSence will take care to avoid unintentionally discriminatory passages appearing in published, printed or spoken material. McSence will continue to take a leading role in combating any form of discrimination. McSence will work with others to ensure that the diversity of the population in the communities we operate is recognised and celebrated. It is the Chief Executive's responsibility with the support of the Business Unit Managers to ensure the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy. Appropriate funds will be sought to implement approved aspects of the Policy which require special and additional resources. All employees, trustees and volunteers have the individual responsibility to:

- ✚ Follow procedures introduced to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- ✚ To draw the attention of management to suspected or alleged discriminatory practices.
- ✚ To refrain from harassing or intimidating other employees, trustees or volunteers, clients or visitors of McSence on any of the grounds cited in the policy statement.

Certifications & Accreditations: The group currently hold Acclaim SIPP DTS, CHAS, Constructionline Gold, Constructionline Silver, Constructionline Bronze, Constructionline Social Value, Data Protection Registered/Certified, Living Wage Employer, Safe Contractor Accreditation, Safe Contractor Health & Safety Product Accredited, SEPA WCR.