

Teff & Associates

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Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

UPDATED June 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION This policy sets out Teff & Associate's (T&A) commitment to equality and diversity. We will put equality and fairness at the centre of everything we do and promote equal opportunities for our customers and staff, value the diversity of our communities by setting the highest service standards and seeking to continuously improve as both an employer and service provider. We will celebrate people's differences and help our communities to understand and respect each other's backgrounds. We want T&A to be a strong diverse firm that is built on fairness.

2. BACKGROUND TO THIS POLICY

Equality means ensuring people are treated fairly, giving them equal access to services and employment. Diversity is about valuing differences, whatever an individual's background. We will consider equality and diversity across the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation, and will give protection from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We will go beyond these protected characteristics and include socio economic status (poverty), as we recognise that there are disparities within our communities, and care leavers, carers, armed force veterans and people with an offending history. Our policies and procedures are intended to promote fairness for all and reinforce our commitment to tackling inequalities wherever they exist and to eradicating the unacceptable treatment of any person.

Equal Opportunity Act 1988 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to: 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act. 2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. 3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The general equality duty covers the following

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protected characteristics: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

3. OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

T&A is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, celebrating and valuing diversity, eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, including cyber or e-bullying and harassment, and promoting good relations. We are committed to achieving equality for all by reducing discrimination in employment and service delivery on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. Furthermore, we will also strive to ensure that people are not discriminated against due to their socio economic status (poverty) or because they are care leavers, carers, armed force veterans and/or people with an offending history. Through service delivery, the procurement of goods and services, our workforce and our relationships with partners and stakeholders we will strive to:

- Meet all legal equality duties, exceeding them where we can.
- Carry out equality analysis of all new or changing policies, plans, practices and procedures.
- Set, publish and monitor our equality objectives and review them at least every four years.
- Monitor and evaluate the impacts and outcomes of this policy and take action on findings accordingly.
- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the equality duty at least annually including information relating to employees and others affected by our policies and practices.
- Ensure that the allocation of financial resources takes into account equality and diversity considerations.
- Reflect equality of opportunity in our commissioning, purchasing policies and procedures and make sure others providing services on our behalf comply with our equality and diversity commitments.

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- Ensure that our jobs are accessible to all people and that our workforce is diverse and representative of the local community.
- Treat our staff equitably in all areas of employment, including career development, pay, training and promotion, and continually review human resource policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by this policy, including monitoring recruitment, promotion, retention, training opportunities and take-up, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit from employment.
- Tackle harassment and bullying in the workplace.
- Improve consultation with staff.
- Engage people/groups from all communities to help shape our services and develop our equality objectives.
- Make our services inclusive and accessible, delivered appropriately and sensitively in order to ensure equality of treatment and improve the monitoring of service take up and use.
- Offer information about services in appropriate formats and languages.
- Improve community relations and promote diversity through events, publicity, educational programmes and other initiatives and continue encouraging participation in local democracy and representation on public and voluntary bodies that can link in and feed in information or suggestions as it relates to the equality policy.
- Tackle all forms of hate crime and harassment and promote safety and security.
- Uphold the right of all staff and service users to be treated with dignity and respect by fostering an environment free from ridicule, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.
- Train staff and Elected Members so they are aware of this policy and related good practice and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

4. PUTTING POLICY INTO PRACTICE

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We will use a number of methods to progress our commitment to equality and diversity including: **Equality Information**

We will gather a range of equality information and this will be used to inform our policies, decisions and work.

Setting Equality Objectives

We will set equality objectives every four years. We will ensure our objectives are specific, measureable and attainable and progress will be measured through annual action plans. The equality objectives for 2016-2020 are:

One of the stated aims of our Licensing Policy is to promote fairness and equal treatment. In order to achieve this, it is our expectation that our partners, including local people and businesses, will work with us and will adopt those same principles.

We will continue to use the impact assessment process and equality analysis to support the development of inclusive and responsive policies, procedures and service provision. These will be carried out when a new policy, procedure or service is being developed or significantly changed, where a service review is taking place or where a potential inequality has been identified and assessment includes an analysis of impacts on protected characteristics and socio economic status.

All staff are responsible for tackling equality and diversity issues in their daily working environment, for behaving appropriately and for fostering a culture which promotes dignity and respect.

Equality and diversity will be the foundation of our organisational culture and will support our staff to recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds of colleagues and customers.

T&A is committed to undertaking robust evaluation of service provision generally and specifically for its impact on equalities. Understanding the needs of our customers and service users are key to delivering services that meet their outcomes and expectations. We need to know where current or past provision has been effective in promoting equality and where changes are needed. Impact Assessments are an effective way of

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doing this and the first important step to ensuring that equality is considered fully in the procurement process.

A critical aspect of procurement is how we will monitor and manage a contract once it has been awarded. Monitoring equality outcomes of the contractor's employment policies, practices and performance of the specification and conditions is important. T&A is committed to ensuring that the contractor's actions do not put us in breach of our statutory equality duties. Crucially, we want to ensure that the services or goods being purchased are being provided in the way that was specified, and that our contractors comply with T&A's own equality and diversity commitments and legal duties under the Act. The responsibility for monitoring equality outcomes may be divided between T&A and the contractor depending on which party is best placed to assume that responsibility. Monitoring arrangements will be robust and effective but at the same time will not be disproportionately burdensome for either party. Good equality practice makes better employers, it improves their ability to meet the needs of potential customers, and it can help them to be better placed to deliver services.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS POLICY

The Chief Executive and the Management Team have responsibility for overseeing implementation of the policy and the monitoring process and managers are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their services comply with this Policy.

All staff are expected to be fair in their dealing with colleagues, service users and other members of the community when carrying out their duties and in all aspects of service delivery. Working towards the elimination of discrimination, they are asked to report instances of discrimination to their manager at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate action can be taken.

T&A requires that all those who provide services on its behalf ensure that their service provision and employment practices are consistent with this Policy.

6. MONITOR AND REVIEW

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This policy will be monitored alongside the equality objectives and will be reviewed at least biannually. Officers will monitor its impact and take action on findings and the team will ensure that the policy is consistent with current legislation and guidance.

7. INDIVIDUAL STATEMENTS

T&A recognises that people will have multiple characteristics and may face increased disadvantage and discrimination because of this. We will work to meet the needs of all people by:

- Carrying out our duties under the law, including the Act , and ensuring our service users and staff are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- Challenging all forms of discrimination by our colleagues, Elected Members, contractors, partners, services users and others and ensuring that all people have equal access to the highest quality services.
- Fostering an environment free from ridicule, bullying, intimidation and victimisation.
- Redressing any imbalances that exist in our workforce and striving to remove any barriers to services and employment opportunities.
- Ensuring transparency and communication which is accessible to all people and producing communications in plain language.
- Consulting with, and monitoring, the needs of staff, service users and non service users and giving them more power over decisions which affect them.
- Constantly reviewing and adapting our policies and procedures and carrying out our duties under the law as it develops to stop discrimination and support equality and diversity.

T&A acknowledges that people can face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, which is related to their age. Ageism can particularly affect people seeking employment or services and we recognise that people can also face lack of respect, ridicule and harassment due to their age. Children and young people's voices must be heard and taken seriously. They can give much needed insight and help

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to bring fresh perspectives and ideas. Older people have a wealth of valuable skills, expertise, knowledge and experience, all of which are essential to ensure a balanced workforce. Issues of age can vary when combined with disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will work to meet the specific needs of people of any age by:

- Promoting the recognition of the fact that ageism is harmful as it undervalues the contribution that all people can make.
- Seeking to recruit and retain younger and older people to ensure a workforce age balance and to ensure we retain the valuable range of skills and experience that a balanced workforce brings.
- Regularly reviewing (and adapting where necessary) our policies and procedures to ensure they are not ageist and carrying out our duties under the law to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity.

T&A knows that disabled people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, and that disabled people can face greater barriers related to their age, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Disabled people include people with learning difficulties, Deaf people and people who are hard of hearing, people with visual or physical impairments and people with mental health needs. Disabled people often face ridicule, harassment, hatred and violence. Furthermore, we know that physical barriers can result in disabled people being physically excluded, marginalised or set apart. We will make sure our policies tackle these issues and will use the 'Social Model of Disability' as the basis for our understanding of disability and our work to improve equality and tackle discrimination against disabled people. This model shows that it is the culture, societal systems and practices as well as individual attitudes that create barriers that limit or prevent disabled people from enjoying the same opportunities as other people. We will work to meet the specific needs of disabled people by:

- Ensuring that disabled people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery. We have set a high level

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priority to develop services to improve choice and provide support to enable people to live independent and inclusive lives.

- Supporting our disabled colleagues to fully develop their potential.
- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its workforce and citizens can feel confident in reporting incidents of disablist harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance.
- Promoting equality for disabled people and positive images of disabled people, avoiding stereotypes and challenging attitudes that patronise or discriminate against them.
- Valuing the importance and engaging fully with any organisation formed by disabled people when considering the interests of disabled people, recognising that disabled people are best placed to speak on behalf of disabled people.
- Progressively making T&A buildings accessible to all and encouraging partner organisations to do the same where this is possible.
- Promoting accessibility through statutory powers (i.e. planning, licensing, etc) to encourage compliance with the principles of inclusive design.
- Using the principles of Inclusive Design and good practice access standards.
- Work towards ensuring that its communication is accessible and usable to all people including increasing availability of loop systems, electronic versions, Braille, sign language interpretation, pictorial easy read and by providing access to services in community locations using our network of One Stop Shops, on street information kiosks and other electronic opportunities.

T&A acknowledges that trans people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, because of their trans identity. They often face ridicule, harassment, hatred and violence. Trans issues can vary when combined with age, disability, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or

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belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will work to meet the specific needs of trans or transgender people by:

- Providing appropriate advice and support to service users and staff undergoing gender reassignment.
- Treating trans people with respect and dignity including by ensuring staff are polite and respectful and use terms that acknowledge identity as a man or woman regardless of how far a trans person's transition has progressed. For example, a transsexual person who is transitioning from a former male role to a female one would usually wish to be referred to as 'she' or 'her' and for people to refer to her as a woman. The same applies in reverse to trans men (going from female to male).
- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its workforce and citizens can feel confident in reporting incidents of trans harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively.

T&A acknowledges that people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, because of their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins. These groups of people share the same experience of racism, discrimination and inequality in employment and service provision and as a result suffer inequality. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence. Issues of racism can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. We will work to meet the specific needs of all our personnel by:

- Encouraging and creating an environment in which its workforce can feel confident in reporting incidents of racial harassment and victimisation, in full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance with legislation.

T&A knows that to hold a religious or philosophical belief or no religion or belief is a basic human right that should be treated with respect. We acknowledge that people can experience harassment, discrimination or differential treatment because of religious beliefs that they may hold or because they do not have a religion or belief. Issues of religion or belief can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital

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status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, sex or sexual orientation. We recognise that a workforce with diverse beliefs will have a greater understanding of the needs of service users with similar diverse needs and welcome a workforce that reflects the communities it serves. We will respect the right of every citizen and colleague to hold or not to hold political or other beliefs. We will work to meet the specific needs of all religions and beliefs by:

- Providing scope for prayer and reflection within our flexible working practices and reasonable unpaid time off for festivals that are a part of a person's religion or belief.
- Not allowing religious harassment or discrimination and not permitting our staff to impose on others their religious, political or other views or philosophies whilst carrying out their employment.
- Ensuring sensitivity and respect to service users' religion or belief and avoid service delivery that is offensive to people's beliefs.
- Welcoming different forms of dress according to cultural and religious backgrounds balanced with the need to provide a safe and customer-focused place of work.
- Promoting an inclusive working culture where people can practice their religion or belief safely and without fear of harassment and discrimination.

T&A acknowledges that gender discrimination can lead to inequality in access to jobs, training, development and services. Women and men can experience disadvantage, discrimination and violence and be subject to negative stereotypes and attitudes, however, we recognise that women are more likely to experience discrimination on the basis of their gender. We will continue to promote and champion equality for all employees and users of our services. Issues of relating to sex can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation. The contribution of women and men at all levels is vital and we will endeavour to make full use of their skills, experience, knowledge and perspective. Women form a significant proportion of our staff and service users and we are committed to promoting good practice and removing barriers. Women can be under-represented in the workforce at

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senior levels and can tend to be concentrated in lower paid, part-time work. We will try to redress any imbalance and are committed to encouraging women as role models, particularly when we showcase our firm at internal and external events. The threat and use of gender based violence can limit choices and aspirations, reducing full participation in every day life and leading to a poor quality of life. Men and boys can experience interpersonal violence, however, it is disproportionately experienced by women and girls. In accepting our role as an employer and provider of services, we will promote public awareness and encourage programmes designed to reduce violence in all its forms, such as the Interpersonal Violence Action Plan and Domestic Violence Policy. We will work to meet the specific needs of women and men by:

- Working to create equal access to jobs, training, development and services and not allowing sexual harassment or discrimination.
- Supporting the fact that both women and men may need to work flexibly or part-time or take a break to meet their caring and domestic responsibilities and supporting employees, where we can, to care for others who depend on them in emergency and other situations whatever their gender.
- Challenge stereotypes of women and men that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities.
- Creating an environment where managers recognise the needs of employees in relation to workplace gender issues, for example, where employees may be isolated in single sex dominated workplaces. We will ensure the culture is not one of harassment and discrimination.
- Working in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment and gender based violence and to address gender based structural and economic inequalities. T&A knows that lesbians, gay men and bisexual people face discrimination and disadvantage, including institutional discrimination. Homophobia and biphobia are collections of negative attitudes and prejudices that lead to discrimination against bisexual people, lesbians and gay men. Action will be taken to prevent discrimination or harassment on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation, including heterosexual. Issues of homophobia and biphobia can vary when combined with age, disability, gender identity, marital

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status, pregnancy, maternity, family or caring circumstances, race, religion or belief, or sex. We will work to meet the specific needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexual people by:

- Ensuring that wherever within our power, service conditions of employees offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, family friendly, special and parenting leave.
- Creating a climate of respect in the workplace where all people feel safe to be open about who they are.
- Challenge stereotypes of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities
- Working in partnership with other organisations to combat sexual harassment, homophobia and biphobia - taking preventative action where practical and prosecuting if necessary.

T&A Equality and Diversity Policy is not restricted to the protected characteristics above and includes socio economic status as this continues to be a major driver of disadvantage and inequality for many people. We acknowledge that there are huge disparities across our country and within our communities and that communities suffer as a result of living in areas of deprivation. Many of our citizens suffer the negative impacts of socio economic inequality, worklessness, poor health, in work and out of work poverty and low family incomes, and consequently their life chances are often reduced and they do not reach their full potential. Our policies and procedures are intended to promote fairness for all, and reinforce our commitment to tackling socio economic inequality wherever it exists and to eradicating the unacceptable treatment of any person. We will work to meet the specific needs of all our communities by:

- Ensuring equal treatment of all our employees and ensuring that people are not treated less favourably in any procedures, practices and service delivery.
- Supporting our colleagues to fully develop their potential and not allowing any form of harassment.

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- Challenge stereotypes of people in differing socio-economic classes that can contribute to limited choice and opportunities

T&A will:

- Ensure that wherever within its power, service conditions of employees offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, family friendly and parenting leave.

T&A offers a range of family friendly policies which are designed to give employees the chance, where possible, to take time off and to work hours that fit in with family responsibilities, in order to help employees achieve a work-life balance. These include: Adoption Leave is a scheme that allows employees to take time off prior to and after the placement of the child as part of a formal adoption. The scheme also allows employees who have taken adoption leave the right to return to work. This means that employees are guaranteed that their jobs will be available to them when they return to work.

Emergency Leave is a statutory right to take unpaid leave to deal with family emergencies. Maternity Leave is a scheme that allows female employees to take time off prior to and after the birth of their baby. The scheme also allows women who have taken maternity leave the right to return to work. This means that, in most cases, employees are guaranteed that their job or an equivalent job will be available to them on their return to work. Maternity Support Leave is a period of leave granted to employees who are nominated carers to expectant mothers. A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of birth.

Paternity Leave is a scheme that allows employees to take time off after becoming a parent or becoming an adoptive parent. Requested Flexible Working gives employees who have at least 26 weeks' service the right to request to work flexibly. Shared Parental Leave is a scheme that allows parents to share periods of maternity leave and pay following the birth or adoption of a child and use it in a more flexible way.

Special Leave is for urgent personal or domestic reasons, such as the death or life threatening illness of a close relation, and may be with or without pay. This includes foster carer leave. Voluntary Reduced Hours, **Policies** can be established or altered only by the Board: **Procedures** may be altered by the CEO.

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Job Share and Unpaid Leave schemes are also offered under the family-friendly umbrella.

We recognise that veterans of the armed forces can also experience discrimination. We will make all efforts to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against our staff or services users who are veterans of the armed forces.

We recognise that people with an offending history can also experience discrimination. We will make all efforts to prevent discrimination or other unfair treatment against our staff or services users regardless of their offending history so long as this does not create a risk to the organisation.

8. GLOSSARY

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Diversity

Where many different types of people are included.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology, such as mobiles and the internet, to bully other people.

Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment

Equality analysis is a way of considering the effect on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act. It involves using equality information, and the results of engagement with protected groups and others, to understand the actual effect or the potential effect

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of your functions, policies or decisions and it can help you to identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination, to advance equality and to foster good relations. The change in terminology from 'equality impact assessment' to 'analysis of the effects on equality' is intended to focus more attention on the quality of the analysis and how it is used in decision-making, and less on the production of a document, which some may have taken to be an end in itself.

Gender Reassignment

The process of changing or transitioning from one gender to another.

Protected Characteristics These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Race

Refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman.

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes

Socio Economic Status (Poverty)

Socio economic status includes factors such as changes in the labour market, the delivery of public services, such as education and health, and

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the immediate impact of how an economic downturn can negatively affect the life chances of individuals.



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