

# Pulse Regeneration Limited

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Pulse Regeneration is committed to working with all in a fair and just manner. In doing so, Pulse acknowledges that there are groups of people who experience inequality, particularly: -

- black people and people from other minority groups
- disabled people
- lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people
- the youth
- the elderly
- women

Pulse also acknowledges that its own institutional structures, practices and procedures can be discriminatory to the above groups, although it is recognised that other people also experience discrimination and disadvantage.

Pulse will seek to promote equal opportunities in those organisations and agencies who receive direct benefits and will, whenever possible, encourage private contractors and suppliers to adopt similar policies and practices. Pulse also considers equal opportunities and diversity policies when making decisions on contracting suppliers, service providers and partners.

Equality of Opportunity is a key corporate priority of Pulse. The promotion of equality and the eradication of prejudice and discrimination is an integral part of its vision and values for the organisation. All staff need to accept their personal responsibility in the practical application of this Policy.

Pulse is committed to complying with all relevant United Kingdom and European Community anti-discrimination legislation. This Policy will be subject to detailed annual review, and includes specific policies on:

- 1 Race Equality Statement
- 2 Disability Equality Policy Statement
- 3 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Equality Policy Statement
- 4 Gender Equality Policy Statement
- 5 General Equal Opportunities Policy

All staff are requested to keep a copy of this policy, and to ensure that they have thoroughly familiarised themselves with its contents.

## 1 RACE EQUALITY STATEMENT

Throughout this statement, the term 'Black' is used to refer to all those groups who may be the victim of racism and discrimination, and as a result suffer significant inequality. "Other minority groups" include those groups who may not identify themselves as Black, but share the same experiences of racism, discrimination and inequality of employment and service provision.

Pulse recognises that Black people and people from other minority groups experience racial discrimination and that such discrimination has a powerful effect on the ability of Black people to gain equality of access to a variety of public and private sector services and facilities. Pulse also acknowledges that Black people and people from other minority groups are under-represented throughout its workforce and client groups. Furthermore, Pulse accepts the existence of institutional racism as a phenomenon separate from individual employees and/or directors, capable of creating additional layers of discrimination and inequality.

In recognition of such inequalities, Pulse makes a firm commitment to ensure that:

- our recruitment practices and procedures promote equal access for black and minority groups, with the aim of redressing current workforce representation imbalances.
- irrespective of racial background, everyone has the same level of access to high quality services;
- irrespective of racial background, all service users will be treated with equal dignity and respect.
- our institutional working culture is positively anti-racist in its practices, sentiments and policies.

Pulse views complaints of racial discrimination or harassment as extremely serious, and therefore seeks to create an environment in which its employees and clients can feel confident in reporting incidents of racial harassment and victimisation, in the full knowledge that any such incidents will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance with relevant Race Relations legislation and Pulse's internal disciplinary policies

Pulse complies with European Directives on race relations, Codes of Practice initiated by the Commission for Racial Equality, and with the statutory requirements placed upon it by the Race Relations Act 1976 and Human Rights Act.

## 2 DISABILITY EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Pulse recognises and operates within the social model of disability and uses the following definitions:

- disability is the disadvantage of restriction of activity caused by society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity
- impairment is the functional limitation of the body, sensory impairment, learning difficulty and/or people experiencing mental distress

Pulse works towards eliminating discrimination against disabled people. It recognises that disabled people are not all the same, but with different experiences relating to age, gender, sexual orientation, and/or racial background and other factors. Disabled people face greater oppression when they also identify with any combination of these factors.

Pulse is committed to ensuring equal treatment for disabled employees and clients and will also ensure that disabled people are not treated any less favourably in its procedures, practices and service delivery.

Pulse will develop a positive public profile of disabled people with a view to counteracting the common stereotype that wrongly portrays helplessness and dependency, leading to the exclusion of disabled people from decision-making processes.

Pulse will not tolerate harassment of disabled people based on outdated and unjustified views of 'normality', and recognises that disabled people may also be subject to other forms of harassment, for example sexual harassment and victimisation. Harassments on the grounds of disability will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter, and all complaints of such harassment will be fully investigated in accordance with Pulse's Disciplinary Procedures and with all relevant legislation.

Pulse will seek professional advice on the design criteria of buildings and areas leading to buildings to ensure maximum and easy access for disabled people, and will liaise with landlords with a view to adapting existing premises where funding allows. Pulse will also work towards ensuring that its communications are accessible to all, by increasing availability of loop systems, Braille, Sign language interpretation and other mechanisms.

Pulse complies with all relevant legislation on disability, such as the Disabled People Act 1986; the Disabled Persons Employment Act 1944 and 1958 and the Department of Employment Code of Practice. This is not intended as an exhaustive list of relevant legislation. Pulse is committed to developing clear policies and practices to ensure equality for disabled people in relation to employment and the delivery of services.

### **3 LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL & TRANSGENDER EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT**

Pulse recognises that same-sex relationships are a common feature in all cultures, and that there is a long history of disadvantage and discrimination towards lesbians and gay men. Pulse further recognises the specific types of discrimination that has historically been manifested against bisexual and transgender people, and seeks to respect the rights and needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

Pulse notes the important differences in the lives of LGBT people, and that many LGBT people are also disabled, unemployed, black, of working class background and/or parents, and therefore may face other forms of discrimination which combine with those relating to their sexual identity.

Pulse is committed to ensuring equal treatment of its LGBT clients and employees, and will ensure that its procedures and practices in delivering services are not based on the assumption that all service users are heterosexual. Pulse fully supports the rights of LGBT people to be open about their sexual identity if they so choose. Furthermore, it seeks to create an environment where LGBT clients and employees can be confident they will receive the same treatment in all aspects of their work as heterosexual colleagues.

Pulse ensures that conditions of employment offer the same benefits to same-sex relationships as heterosexual relationships, including pensions, special and parenting leave and other issues. Harassment on the basis of sexuality or sexual orientation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter, and all complaints of such harassment will be fully investigated in accordance with Pulse's Disciplinary Procedures, and with all relevant legislation.

Pulse is committed to developing clear policy and practice for all employment and service areas to provide equality for LGBT people, and will comply with all relevant legislation relating to discrimination against LGBT people.

## 4 GENDER EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Pulse recognises that women experience disadvantage and discrimination. In the workplace, this manifests itself in lower wages and worse conditions than equivalent male employees, limited opportunities for career progression and advancement, confinement to positions within organisations that lack genuine authority or management responsibility, ignorance and dismissal of their needs as mothers, unwanted sexual “banter” or advances, and a dismissal of their professional abilities, experiences and skills. Therefore as an employer and provider of services, Pulse will promote equality for all female employees and users of its services.

Pulse further recognises that there are important differences between women, and particular attention must be given to the specific needs of black women, women from other minority groups, disabled women, lesbians, carers, older women and single parents. Pulse seeks to eliminate or adequately reform policies, practices and procedures that discriminate against female employees and service users.

Pulse will collaborate with appropriate negotiating bodies in order to remove any potentially discriminatory conditions of employment for female employees, and work towards the equal application of locally negotiated terms to both full and part time staff.

Pulse recognises the contributions of women at all levels, and endeavours to make full use of their skills, experience, knowledge and perspectives. To this end, Pulse seeks to ensure that childcare provision, career breaks, work arrangements and other factors that affect women’s ability to progress are given proper attention.

Changes in the law affecting the labour market may have an adverse effect on female employees, leading to greater insecurity, reduction in hours, pay, pensions, holidays and maternity leave and other negative factors. Pulse therefore takes all appropriate measures to protect women, their rights, their status as employees, and their terms and conditions of employment.

Pulse specifically notes the distressing, harmful and detrimental effects of sexual harassment in the workplace, defined as any instance of unwanted, rejected or unwarranted sexual conduct or advance of either a verbal or physical origin. While it is noted that female employees are capable of such behaviour, Pulse recognises that:

- the vast majority of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace are female.
- victims of sexual harassment are often threatened with dismissal or a stunted career path if they refuse to tolerate unwanted sexual advances.
- if left unchecked, sexual harassment can seriously affect female employees, their morale, performance and happiness in the workplace.

- women who make complaints about sexual harassment have historically not been taken seriously by management, often see their complaints dismissed un-investigated, and end up leaving a company as a result of their refusal to tolerate unwanted sexual advances.

Pulse takes sexual harassment very seriously, and will not tolerate it in relation to employment and/or service delivery: any complaints of sexual harassment will be addressed fully and effectively in accordance with Pulse's procedures, and relevant Sex Discrimination legislation and European codes.

Pulse is committed to complying with the statutory obligations set by the following legislation: Equal Pay Act 1970, Human Rights Act, Sex and European Community Legislation and Directives. This is not intended as an exhaustive list of relevant legislation.

## **5. GENERAL EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

### **Employment and Staffing**

All staff appointments are carried out in accordance with Pulse's Fair Recruitment and Selection Procedures.

Pulse adopts the principle that employees should be given every opportunity to progress within the company, and to develop their skills and knowledge bases. Where an employment position becomes vacant or is created, Pulse, where possible, will recruit internally in order to encourage such development of employees. Internal vacancies are open to all staff and are based on the Fair Recruitment and Selection Procedures. However, it may also be necessary to advertise employment positions on either a solely external basis, or both internally and externally. Pulse retains the right to advertise posts externally without consideration of internal candidates where it is felt that skills externally available will enhance its performance, output and success.

All relevant aspects affecting the composition of the workforce (including application, short-listing, interviews, appointments, promotions, departures or dismissals) will be monitored and the information obtained will be actively used to devise action plans, positive action training programmes, and other steps to promote greater equality throughout Pulse workforce. Equality targets will be set for the employment of those from disadvantaged groups.

Prejudicial language and/or behaviour that offends or threatens colleagues or customers will not be tolerated. Where necessary, action to deal with such behaviour is taken under the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and Code. Pulse will agree and adopt language that encourages respect for, and recognition of, groups who are discriminated against.

### **Training**

A wide variety of training programmes will be provided to support the changes required to carry out this policy. These include professional development training for relevant staff, regular Equal Opportunity training programmes to keep clients and staff aware of current issues and developments, and attention to ensure that equal opportunity dimensions are properly highlighted as part of other training programmes.

### **Relations with Outside Organisations/Contractors, and others**

Pulse will promote its work on equality of opportunity in its relations with outside organisations, contractors, suppliers and as part of any moves towards competitive tendering for local government services. In this way, Pulse demonstrates that the best strategy for eliminating discrimination, and creating genuine equality of opportunity for all, lies in the determination and actions of other public and private sector agencies together with voluntary organisations, central and local government to overcome barriers to achievement, progression and fulfilment.

## **Communication**

Pulse will make facilities available to enable clients and staff at all levels to communicate effectively with, for example, those people whose first language is not English, deaf and hearing-impaired people, blind and visually impaired people.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Equal Opportunities Policy is monitored and evaluated annually to ensure that it is kept up to date. This exercise will be conducted by the Managing Director, and a copy of his/her findings will be passed to the Pulse Board for consideration and positive action. The next such review will take place in August 2004.

Key information on important aspects of employment and service delivery will be collated and analysed to obtain a detailed understanding of how policies and practices are working towards creating equality of opportunity. Action will be taken to address any specific obstacles or difficulties identified.