



Equal Opportunities Statement

FOCUS is committed to providing equality of opportunity in access to its programmes and services, to paid employment and to volunteer involvement. This includes providing an environment free from stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices, so that the rights of all individuals are respected, their needs are met in a fair and equitable manner and everyone involved with the organisation is able to develop their own skills and abilities and pursue their own personal development.

FOCUS believes that all people have a right to employment and services which are free from discrimination on the grounds of age, culture, disability, employment status, financial status, gender, HIV and AIDS status, language, marital status, race, caste, religion, sexual orientation, social class and political affiliation. FOCUS is committed to bringing together people from all walks of life to learn with and from each other.

This statement is supported by two separate policies:

- Equal Opportunities Policy – Employment
- Equal Opportunities Policy – Access to Activities



Equal Opportunities Policy – Employment

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that FOCUS is able to fulfil its aims and obligations as an equal opportunity employer. This policy covers all aspects of employment, from vacancy advertising, selection recruitment and training, to conditions of service and reasons for termination of employment.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and for no other purpose, FOCUS maintains records of employees' and applicants' racial origins, gender and disability.

Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

FOCUS' long-term aim is that the composition of our workforce should reflect that of the local communities in which it operates. Where necessary, special steps, as permitted by the relevant Acts of Parliament, will be taken to help disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups to compete for jobs on a genuine basis of equality.

FOCUS' Equal Opportunities Policy - Employment, and the measures to implement it, have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant bodies, notably the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Director of FOCUS is responsible for the effective operation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The policy

General

The objectives of this Equal Opportunities Policy - Employment are to:

- Ensure that FOCUS has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees for its needs.
- Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential to the benefit of the FOCUS and themselves.
- Achieve an ability-based workforce, which is in line with the working population mix in FOCUS' areas of operation.

The cooperation of all employees and volunteers is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives, and for ensuring compliance with the relevant Acts of Parliament as well as the various Codes of Practice, lies with FOCUS. Behaviour or actions against the spirit and/or the letter of the laws on which this policy is based will be considered serious disciplinary matters, and may, in some cases, lead to dismissal.

Vacancy advertising

Wherever possible, all vacancies will be advertised simultaneously internally, by which we mean amongst our existing staff and volunteers, and externally.

Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches underrepresented groups internally and externally.

Wherever possible, vacancies will be notified to job centres, careers offices, schools, colleges, etc, with significant minority group rolls, as well as to minority press/media and organisations.

All vacancy advertisements will include an appropriate short statement on equal opportunity.

Selection and recruitment

Selection criteria (job descriptions and employee specifications) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds as being essential for the effective performance of the job.

Wherever possible, more than one person will be involved in the selection interview and recruitment process, and all should have received training in equal opportunities.

Reasons for selection and rejection of applicants for vacancies will be recorded.

Positive action

Currently underrepresented groups will be encouraged to apply for employment opportunities with FOCUS. Wherever possible, special training will be provided for such groups to prepare them to compete on genuinely equal terms for jobs and promotion. However, actual recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service to meet the special needs of disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups.

Personnel records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the equal opportunity policy, and for no other purpose, a record will be kept of all employees' and job applicants' gender, racial origins and disability.

Where necessary, employees will be able to check and correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted.

Such records will be analysed regularly, and appropriate follow-up action taken.



Equal Opportunities Policy – Access to Activities

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that FOCUS is able to fulfil its aims and obligations as an equal opportunity service provider. This policy covers all aspects of service provision, from project advertising, selection of project participants, to expectations of behaviour and reasons for exclusion from projects.

To ensure that this policy is operating effectively, and for no other purpose, FOCUS maintains records of participants' racial origins, gender and disability.

Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

FOCUS' long-term aim is that the attendance of young people on our projects should reflect that of the local communities in which it operates. Where necessary, special steps will be taken to help disadvantaged and/or underrepresented groups to take part.

FOCUS' Equal Opportunities Policy – Access to Activities, and the measures to implement it, have been devised on the basis of advice from the relevant bodies, notably the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Director of FOCUS is responsible for the effective operation of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The policy

General

The objectives of this Equal Opportunities Policy – Access to Activities are to:

- Ensure that FOCUS has access to the widest range of young people, as described in FOCUS' Memorandum and Articles of Association, and benefits from the diversity that they bring to our projects.
- Ensure that no project participant receives less favourable treatment, and that, wherever possible, they are given the help they need to attain their full potential and gain maximum benefit from FOCUS projects.

The cooperation of all FOCUS employees and volunteers is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy's objectives, and for ensuring compliance with it, lies with FOCUS. Behaviour or actions against the spirit of this policy will be considered serious disciplinary matters, and may, in some cases, lead to dismissal.

Project advertising

Wherever possible, all projects will be advertised to a broad range of referral agencies, representing young people from across the community.

Steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of projects reaches underrepresented groups.

Wherever possible, project dates will be notified particularly to schools, colleges, youth groups,

and other potential referral agencies and organisations, with significant minority group rolls.

Selection and recruitment of young people

Selection criteria (referral forms and guidelines) will be kept under constant review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds.

Wherever possible, and in circumstances in which individuals are selected by FOCUS, more than one person will be involved in the initial meeting and recruitment process, and all should have received training in equal opportunities.

Reasons for selection and rejection of participants for projects will be recorded.

Positive action

Currently underrepresented groups will be encouraged to attend projects with FOCUS. However, actual recruitment to all projects will be strictly on adherence to our referral guidelines and on a first come, first served basis.

Wherever possible, efforts will be made to identify and remove unnecessary or unjustifiable barriers and provide appropriate facilities and conditions to meet the special needs of disadvantaged, disabled and/or underrepresented groups.

Participant records

In order to ensure the effective operation of the equal opportunity policy, and for no other purpose, a record will be kept of all participants' gender, racial origins and disability.

Where necessary, participants and their referral agencies will be able to check and correct their own record of these details. Otherwise, access to this information will be strictly restricted.

Such records will be analysed regularly, and appropriate follow-up action taken.