



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, and that does not tolerate harassment and bullying, 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 (including gender reassignment), HIV and AIDS status, language, marital status (including civil partnerships), race, caste, religion or belief, 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 Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Chief Executive 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 Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Chief Executive 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.

Anti- Oppression Policy

Statement of Policy:

FOCUS recognises the pervasive forces of institutionalised oppression and it seeks to challenge these forms of oppression by creating a safe space for community members and by means of community engagement. FOCUS strives to promote the values of inclusion respecting differences of ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical capacity, age, religion, economic or social status, or political ideology and identity.

Implementation Strategies

FOCUS recognises that the implementation of an anti-oppression policy needs to happen on three levels; (A) at the Organisational level by applying the values of the policy to Organisational structures and practices; (B) personally through a commitment by staff, Board members and participants to further their own appreciation, analysis and commitment to the issues of anti-oppression and the goals of this policy and (C) through a conscious use of power in a way that empowers all stakeholders of the organisation.

A. Organisational strategies:

1. Commit time for Organisational discussions on discrimination and oppression;
2. Continually evaluate whether or not the goals of the policy are being met by the Organisation;
3. Promote an anti-oppression message and analysis in everything we do.
4. Commit to creating opportunities for staff, Board members and participants to improve their understanding of institutionalised oppression and to develop the skills to speak out about these issues;
5. Apply the principles of anti-oppression to programs activities and community events – by being aware of who tends to do what work, whose work gets recognised and whose work is supported;
6. Respect diversity in leadership and communication styles;
7. Make a collective commitment to hold people accountable for their behaviour so that the organisation can be a safe and nurturing place for all;
8. Be conscious of how use of language may perpetuate oppression;
9. Respect different views and opinions.
10. Respect the individual's vision of their own identity.

B. Personal strategies:

11. Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address different forms of oppression head on;
12. When witnessing or experiencing an abuse of power or oppression, interrupt the behaviour and address it on the spot or later, either one on one, or with colleagues. In order to encourage change, oppressive behaviour needs to be addressed and not ignored;
13. Challenge the behaviour, not the person. Be sensitive and promote open dialogue;
14. Be aware of the tendency to generalise feelings, thoughts, behaviours, etc to a whole group;
15. Encourage people to take the responsibility for their behaviour;
16. Understand that confronting oppression, particularly internalised oppression, is difficult and demands work;
17. Acknowledge feelings of guilt, but feel responsible. Being part of the problem doesn't mean you can't be an active part of the solution;
18. Maintain these practices and contribute equal time and energy to building healthy relationships, both personal and political;

C. Use of Power

We strive to operate from a model of power-sharing and appropriate use of authority, and are mindful of using power in a way that empowers others and fulfils our mission.

Glossary (for terminology used within this policy to help learning and understanding for reader).

Discrimination - The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex. E.g. "victims of racial discrimination"

Oppression- Prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority.

Institutionalised Oppression- Institutional Oppression is the systematic mistreatment of people within a social identity group, supported and enforced by the society and its institutions, solely based on the person's membership in the social identity group.

Ethnicity- The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. Commonalities such as racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin may be used to describe someone's ethnicity. For example, while someone may say their race is "Black," their ethnicity might be Italian, or someone may say their race is "White," and their ethnicity is Irish.

Anti-Oppressive Practice – Is an approach to practice which seeks to reduce, undermine or eliminate discrimination and oppression, specifically in terms of challenging (racism, sexism, age-ism and disablism) encountered in practice (*N. Thompson 1992*)