



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Context

As an employer and an organisation that has Board Members, independent contractors and volunteers, Compassion Ireland (CIRL) seeks to provide a working environment in which there is equality of opportunity and which is free from discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment) and bullying. CIRL has a separate '**Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy**', which deals with these issues.

CIRL is committed to ensuring that there is no unjustified discrimination in recruitment, retention, training and development; and that no individual receives less favourable treatment that is unlawful on the nine grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religious belief and membership of the traveller community or offending and conviction background.

Purpose

This Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy reflects both the purposes of CIRL and the spirit and intention of legislation which outlaws discrimination.

Scope

CIRL recognises that successful implementation of the Policy requires clear understanding and commitment throughout its community. In this context, the term "community" refers to all employees, Board members, volunteers and independent contractors.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Equal Opportunity	The development of practices that eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote fair and equal opportunity for all.
Diversity	The concept of recognition of differences. By understanding and respecting these differences, CIRL recognises that it can maximise its success.
Discrimination	To be treated less favourably than another is or has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds. Direct Discrimination - direct comparison must be made, for example, in the case of disability discrimination the comparison must be between a person who

	<p>has a disability and another who has not, or between persons with different disabilities.</p> <p>Indirect Discrimination - occurs when practices or policies that do not appear to discriminate against one group more than another actually have a discriminatory impact. It can also happen where a requirement that may appear non-discriminatory adversely affects a particular group or class of persons.</p>
Harassment including sexual harassment	<p>Any form of unwanted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal and non-verbal conduct which relates to the nine discriminatory grounds under the Employment, Equality Acts 1998-2015 i.e. gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religious belief and membership of the traveller community; or • physical conduct of a sexual nature; <p>which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.</p> <p>Unwanted conduct includes spoken words, gestures, production and display of written words, pictures and other material.</p> <p>Any harassment that is based on any of the nine grounds is a form of discrimination in relation to conditions of employment.</p>
Workplace Bullying	<p>"Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work". (Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001)</p> <p>This does not include appropriate feedback of an employee's behaviour or proper performance management;</p> <p>Any workplace bullying which is linked to one of the nine discriminatory grounds above comes under employment equality legislation.</p>
Nepotism	<p>The inappropriate hiring or promotion of household members, close relatives or other connected parties of existing employees, Board Members or volunteers</p>

Responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring the provision of equality of opportunity rests primarily with CIRL as an employer. The Board of Directors and the Executive Team have the responsibility to foster and reinforce a culture where people value each other and treat each other with dignity and respect.

It is the responsibility of every individual, both employee and volunteer, to eliminate discrimination by ensuring the practical application of this policy and reporting incidents of discrimination to an appropriate senior person, such as the Human Resources Director

Recruitment and Selection

CIRL has a separate **Recruitment and Selection Policy** which outlines that those suitable for employment are selected on the basis of personal merit and ability relevant to the purposes of CIRL.

CIRL recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and skills. It values diversity and welcomes interest from all sections of the community.

Household members, close relatives or other connected parties of employees will not be excluded from working for the organisation or becoming Board Members or volunteers. Nevertheless, nepotism will not be allowed. To operate with transparency and avoid both the existence and the appearance of nepotism to those within or outside the organisation, employment, volunteer service or board membership of household members, close relatives or other connected parties will be managed openly and properly.

Occupational Requirement

CIRL has made a covenant, together with members of the Compassion Global Partner Alliance to *"undertake holistic child development as an outworking of shared Christian faith."* CIRL's purpose (as expressed in the foundational documents), can be embodied in the phrase: *"Releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name"*.

Under Section 37 (1) (a) of the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015 ("the EEAs"), CIRL is under the direct control of a Board of Directors and is established for religious purposes with objectives which include provision of services in an environment which promotes the organisation's Christian ethos and enables people to experience, explore and express the faith-based motivation of Compassion's work. Accordingly, it is not discriminatory under the EEAs that certain employee roles have a genuine, legitimate and justified occupational requirement, for the post-holder to demonstrate an active personal commitment to the Christian faith; be in agreement with and committed to respect, uphold and commit to work within Compassion's Christian faith-based ethos, faith statements and values. Post-holders in all other roles are expected to respect, uphold and commit to work within Compassion's Christian faith-based ethos, faith statements and values. For these roles CIRL welcomes people of all faiths and none.

Offending and Conviction Background

Compassion International is a child-focussed ministry that neither tolerates nor condones the abuse or maltreatment of children. Compassion's **'Child Protection Management Policy'** outlines that children experience an elevated vulnerability to the risk of abuse, exploitation and violence throughout childhood. There is a risk that children participating in programmatic activities may experience some form of abuse or maltreatment, resulting in harm to the child. Compassion has rigorous measures that form part of its obligation to take steps to ensure that every child is protected from persons who pose a risk of harm to a child through physical, sexual, emotional, harmful cultural practices, exploitation or neglect.

Accordingly, CIRL combines an inclusive and fair policy of recruiting people with a criminal record but with a blanket ban on cautions and convictions of sexual or violent offences against children as listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information on Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017. For all other offences, certain factors will be taken into consideration during the assessment of the criminal record to reach a fair and balanced decision.

CIRL undertakes to treat all applicants fairly; and not to discriminate unlawfully against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed. CIRL has a separate **“Policy on Engaging People with a Criminal Record”**, which deals with vetting policies and procedures.

Learning and Development

Opportunities for learning and development will be open to all.

All employees will be provided with every opportunity to acquire the range of training, skills and experience necessary for the requirements of their role. This will be reviewed in the quarterly Performance Development Reviews. No member of staff will be denied access to learning and development opportunities because of any of the nine grounds.

Promotion or Change of Post

All employees will be made aware of opportunities in the organisation for promotion or other roles and will be encouraged to apply for such roles as and when they become available. Decisions will be determined on criteria relevant to the objectives of the role and will not be influenced by any of the nine grounds.

Conditions of Employment

All employees will be offered the same terms of employment i.e. the same working conditions; and the same treatment, including treatment in relation to overtime where relevant, time off in lieu and disciplinary measures, etc.

Induction will be used as an opportunity to discuss with new employees any special needs that they may have arising from one of the nine grounds and to explore how these needs may be accommodated. Where practicable, reasonable measures will be taken to accommodate special needs arising from an employee's disability, race, family status or any other characteristic covered by the nine grounds. In addition, where someone develops special needs during their employment, every effort will be made, through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment as appropriate, to enable them to remain in the service of CIRL.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and/or bullying based on any of the nine grounds listed in Part 2 of the Employment Equality Act 1998 to 2015 is a form of discrimination. This and any other harassment and/or bullying are totally unacceptable to CIRL and any such behaviour is considered a disciplinary offence. All allegations of

harassment are treated seriously, and all practicable steps will be taken to prevent the behaviour continuing. CIRL has a separate '**Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy**'

Complaints and Redress

All allegations of discrimination will be treated seriously and handled in accordance with CIRL's **Grievance Procedures**. Any discrimination is totally unacceptable to CIRL and anyone found to be discriminating would face disciplinary action, in accordance with CIRL's **Disciplinary Procedure**.

Any person who wishes to raise issues concerning alleged discrimination or unfairness should do so in the first instance by contacting the HR Director. CIRL has a separate **Whistle-blowing Procedure** which sets out the whistleblowing channels and response procedures.

Positive Action

CIRL is committed to keeping requirements and practices under review and to take action, where necessary, in order to facilitate the recruitment, involvement and development from all sections of the community. It welcomes difference and recognises that action may be needed to give everyone a chance to contribute on equal terms within the aims and purposes of CIRL.

Associated Policies:

Access documents using CASCADE's Company Document Feature	
Anti-Harassment & Anti-Bullying Policy	Keyword search 'CIRL Anti-harassment'
Child Protection Management Policy	Keyword search 'CIRL Child Protection'
Disciplinary Procedures	Keyword search 'CIRL Discipline'
Ethos Statement	Keyword search 'CIRL Ethos'
Grievance Procedures	Keyword search 'CIRL Grievance'
Recruitment & Selection Policy	Keyword search 'CIRL Recruitment'
Policy on Engaging People with a Criminal Record	Keyword search 'CIRL Criminal Record'

This policy will be reviewed every three years. Review history:

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Details
One	April 2013	Board of Directors	Revised and superseded by version two
Two	4 December 2019	Board of Directors	

Compassion Ireland reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the contents of existing policies and procedures and to introduce new policies and procedures from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the organisation. In cases where policies and procedures or guidelines conflict with related legislation, current related legislation always takes precedence.

Please note: *Printing this document may make it obsolete. For the latest version always check CASCADE.*