



Protecting Orkney's marine mammals through research and education

## Equality Policy

Implementation Date: February 2021

### 1. General statement

- 1.1 Orkney Marine Mammal Research Initiative (OMMRI) is committed to equality in its provision of services and in all its employment practices, policies and procedures. This includes recruitment, training, remuneration and promotion and equal terms and conditions of employment. It is committed to the creation of a non-discriminatory working environment.
- 1.2 This policy applies to employees, whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary, contractors, volunteers and Trustees (team members).
- 1.3 ORRMI aims to protect marine mammals in Orkney through research and education . We are committed to social justice and working with those who are most excluded and disadvantaged.
- 1.4 OMMRI celebrates our society as diverse in race, culture, faith and other beliefs, sexuality, ability, gender and age.
- 1.5 OMMRI is committed to challenging disadvantage and inequality, and aims to promote diversity and equality in all areas of its work and structures.
- 1.6 OMMRI believes:
  - In working towards a just and participatory society
  - That all people have equal rights to work towards social justice and to participate in decision-making processes and local action
  - That priority should be given to working with communities and groups whose full participation in society is limited by economic disadvantage or discrimination
  - That the role of OMMRI is to affirm and enable all people to learn and engage in citizen science.

### 2. Discrimination

- 2.1 Direct discrimination is when you treat someone less favourably than others for unlawful means, for example not employing someone because of their gender or disability. OMMRI will treat direct discrimination as a disciplinary matter.
- 2.2 Indirect discrimination is when a policy, practice or procedure that applies to everyone might disadvantage a particular group, and which cannot be justified in relation to the job. OMMRI will monitor and regularly review its policies, practices and procedures in order to ensure that they do not disadvantage any particular group.
- 2.3 Discrimination by association is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses one of the applicable protected characteristics (age,

disability, gender reassignment, sex, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation). It is unlawful and OMMRI will treat it as a disciplinary manner.

- 2.4 Perception discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not possess that characteristic. It is unlawful and OMMRI will treat it as a disciplinary matter in relation to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and sex.
- 2.5 Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. OMMRI will treat harassment as a disciplinary matter.
- 2.6 Victimization is when you treat someone less favourably or discriminate against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination. OMMRI will treat victimization as a disciplinary matter.
- 2.7 Positive discrimination is unlawful.
- 2.8 Positive action to address imbalances in the workforce is allowed in particular circumstances. Examples would include setting equality targets (but not quotas which are unlawful); encouraging people from particular groups to apply where they are under-represented; training for promotion or skill training for team members from under-represented groups who show potential. OMMRI will use positive action to address imbalances that are apparent from monitoring data.

### **3. Statement of intent**

- 3.1 Our intention is to ensure that no user of OMMRI services, job applicant or team member receives less favourable treatment due to a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), unrelated criminal convictions, or membership or non-membership of a trade union. All team members have a responsibility to co-operate with measures to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- 3.2 We aim to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences, that promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.
- 3.3 We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevent individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to OMMRI's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.
- 3.4 We are committed wherever practicable, to achieving and maintaining a workforce that broadly reflects the local community in which we operate.
- 3.5 Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated fairly as users of OMMRI services and in all aspects of their employment at OMMRI.

### **4. Legislation**

- 4.1 You should be aware that whilst an employer can be held liable in law for acts of discrimination committed by employees, individual team members can also be held personally liable in law for acts of discrimination that they commit, authorise, contribute to or condone.

- 4.2 Team members should therefore be aware that the following acts are unlawful and would constitute misconduct or gross misconduct liable to disciplinary action, which may include summary dismissal:
- Discriminating in the course of employment or prospective employment against fellow or future employees in job, transfer or promotion applications on the grounds established in this Equality Policy
  - Inducing or attempting to induce team members to practise unlawful discrimination
  - Indulging in verbal or physical, sexual or racial harassment of a nature that is known, or should be known, to be offensive to the victim
  - Victimising individuals who have made allegations or complaints of any discrimination or harassment or provided information about such discrimination or harassment
- 4.3 Every team member is responsible for ensuring OMMRI's Equality Policy is applied to our dealings with our clients and suppliers and should, in addition, be aware that it is unlawful to commit, authorise, contribute to or condone acts of discrimination on the grounds of a protected characteristic (i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), in the provision of goods and services. Breaches of the policy by suppliers could result in termination of contracts for services.
- 4.4 Full details of relevant legislation and guidance that OMMRI will apply can be found online: [www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance)

## 5. Implementation

- 5.1 The Chair is responsible for the policy's day-to-day implementation. Consultation will take place with all team members about the implementation and development of this policy. OMMRI will collect appropriate levels of monitoring information about the implementation of this policy and from this information will produce an action plan detailing how it will promote equality through its work.
- 5.2 To achieve a workforce that is truly representative of all sections of society selection for employment or volunteer position or promotion or any other benefit will be on the basis of merit and ability only. Selection for training will be on the basis of role requirements only. Intimidation, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 5.3 If a team member perceives a problem in recruitment, selection, training, promotion or the application of terms and conditions of employment this should raise it in the first instance with the Chair.
- 5.4 All cases of such behaviour will be investigated and we will treat all complaints fairly, quickly and with confidentiality. Any grievance arising from the Equality Policy will be dealt with using the existing Grievance Procedure.
- 5.5 Any team member who has taken action, in good faith, over allegations of discrimination or harassment, will not be victimised by being treated any less favourably than any other team member as a consequence of taking such action. OMMRI will monitor the practical effects of the policy by regularly collecting and reviewing relevant information. You are expected to co-operate in work being undertaken to monitor, review and implement this policy.
- 5.6 OMMRI will use induction, supervision, appraisal and development opportunities to ensure that staff and trustees have the skills to support good practice on equality and diversity.

- 5.7 OMMRI will use the supervision and appraisal process to encourage staff to make suggestions and contribute to the ways in which we promote equality as an organisation and with the users of our services.
- 5.8 OMMRI will ensure that venues that we use for meetings, workshops and training events are accessible and will make reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- 5.9 OMMRI will aim to ensure that our communications are accessible, including our web site. When necessary we will make specific provision, such as the engaging a British Sign Language interpreter, to ensure that our communication is accessible.
- 5.10 OMMRI will bring this policy to the attention of all team members, suppliers and service users when they join OMMRI.
- 5.11 OMMRI will monitor the use of our services and make use of this monitoring information when planning future developments.

## **6. Review of the policy**

- 6.1 It will be the responsibility of the board of Trustees to review this policy to ensure that it is in accordance with all other policies.
- 6.2 This policy will be reviewed by the board of Trustees 12 months after implementation and then routinely every three years. Interim reviews may be carried out if a need is identified.

Review date:

Next review date:

Signed:

Position:

Date: