

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Date: November 2023

Review Date: November 2026



Policy Information	
Policy Title	Equal Opportunities Policy
Policy Number:	POL_082
Version	1.0
Policy Sponsor	Director of Business Support
Policy Owner	Head of Human Resources
Committee and date recommended for approval	Business Support Committee 30 November 2023
Date approved by the Board	14 December 2023
Equality Screening Status	1. Screened: <i>17 November 2023</i>
Rural Needs Impact Assessment Status	1. Rural Needs Impact Assessed: <i>17 November 2023</i>
Date Set For Review	In line with legislative requirements and not later than 3years
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and Harassment Policy • Capability Policy • Code of Conduct for Staff Policy • Discipline Policy • Managing Attendance at Work Policy • Menopause Policy • Recruitment and Selection Policy • Staff Appraisal Policy

Libraries NI

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been developed within the framework of current employment legislation. Libraries NI is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity, fair participation and good relations and the prevention of unlawful discrimination. Libraries NI is opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination, direct or indirect, against any person in the recruitment and selection process, in training or in any other way.
- 1.2 However, the existence of law cannot itself ensure that any policy of non-discrimination will work effectively. This will be achieved only if management and staff at all levels examine critically their attitudes to people and ensure that no trace of discrimination is allowed to affect their judgement. All staff should be aware of the forms which unfair discrimination can take, guard against them and avoid any action which might influence others to discriminate against them and avoid any action which might influence others to discriminate unfairly.
- 1.3 This Policy applies to staff employed by Libraries N, including those working full-time, part-time on a permanent, temporary, fixed term or inward secondment basis.
- 1.4 Libraries NI recognise its obligations under the:
 - Equal Pay Act (NI) 1970 (as amended)
 - Sex Discrimination (NI) Order 1976 (as amended)
 - Fair Employment & Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (as amended)
 - Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (as amended)
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations(NI) 2003
 - Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (NI) 2006
 - Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Specific obligations are imposed on “public authorities”, including Libraries NI, in respect of the need to promote equality of opportunity and the desirability of promoting good relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

- 1.5 This policy is underpinned by a recognition of the importance for Libraries NI of equality of opportunity and good relations in the workplace. It is Libraries NI intention to comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the legislation.
- 1.6 The policy and accompanying procedures have been reviewed with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and consulted and agreed with Trade Unions.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to communicate the commitment of Libraries NI to the promotion of equality of opportunity. It is the policy of Libraries NI to provide equality of opportunity in employment to all persons and we will not discriminate unlawfully against our job applicants or employees on any of the protected grounds, which are:
 - sex, marital or civil partnership status
 - sexual orientation

- gender reassignment
- religious or similar philosophical belief
- political opinion
- racial group¹
- age
- disability
- pregnancy or maternity.

3. Policy

3.1 Libraries NI will:

- provide all employees with a copy of this policy and raise awareness of equality of opportunity, fair participation and good relations and the prevention of unlawful discrimination
- establish procedures to be followed to ensure that all complaints of discrimination and/or harassment are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our internal, policy and procedures
- monitor all incidents of discrimination and/or harassment and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically and in line with legislative requirements
- provide appropriate training to employees.

3.2 Libraries NI will regard breaches of this policy as misconduct which may result in disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

4. Authority

Policy Sponsor: The Director of Business Support is the Policy Sponsor.

Policy Owner: The Head of Human Resources is the Policy Owner and is responsible for its regular review.

Policy Contact: Any member of staff who requires further information about the Equal Opportunities Policy and associated procedures should contact the Deputy HR Manager responsible for equality.

5. Related Documents

Policies

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Capability Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Discipline Policy
- Managing Attendance at Work Policy
- Menopause Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Appraisal Policy

¹ Throughout this document the word 'racial group' is to be understood, in line with the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997, to include colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin. Irish Travellers are recognised by the Order as being members of a racial group.

Procedures

- Bullying and Harassment Procedures
- Capability Procedures
- Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Equal Opportunities Procedures
- Individual Grievance Procedures
- Managing Attendance at Work Procedures
- Menopause Procedures
- Staff Appraisal Procedures

Guidance

- Guidelines for Selection Panel Members
- Guidelines on Probation