

# Voscur Equality and Diversity Policy

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## 1. Statement of Intent / Commitment

Equality of opportunity is vital to Voscur's work; it improves our ability to meet the needs of the organisations and people we serve, adding value to our work and the opportunities we offer.

We strive to advance equality of opportunity as a key principle across all our activity in a culture of openness and trust, collaboration and healthy relationships, and by encouraging good practice and behaviour.

Voscur believes that many individuals and groups experience discrimination or lack opportunity and that this creates major barriers to creating a fair and just society. People are discriminated against because of their characteristics or circumstances. Discrimination can take one or more forms based on for example: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants,

appearance, geographical area, social class, income level or criminal record. Voscur recognises that these groups are not mutually exclusive.

Voscur's position on equalities is constructive, anti-discriminatory and proactive. Voscur will create a culture within the organisation that respects and values diversity. We will undertake creative, positive action to improve the position of people who are marginalised and who experience oppression.

Voscur is committed to managing diversity eliminating discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policies and practice; and to helping other organisations and individuals to do the same.

**Voscur will:**

- create a culture that recognises the diversity and value of individuals, in which people are treated with dignity and respect
- conform to the letter and intent of current legislative requirements
- adopt mechanisms for dealing with discrimination, harassment and bullying
- adopt and maintain standards of good practice
- regularly monitor and review this policy and practice

**2) Reference to legal duties / law enforcement**

Voscur will comply with legislation set out in appendix 2.

**3) Implementation**

This policy describes Voscur's procedures for managing diversity both in its employment practices and in its service delivery; it details how these will be implemented and offers guidelines for good working practices.

All Voscur employees and Board members will be asked to declare their support for the objectives of this equality and diversity policy.

We expect member organisations and anyone representing Voscur to acknowledge and adhere to the spirit of our 'Statement of Intent' as outlined in this policy.

**3a) Recruitment, selection and employment**

Voscur believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment because of the reasons given in the 'Statement of Intent.'

All employees will be selected on the basis of merit, competence and potential. In order to continue to diversify our organisation we will encourage those groups under represented among our staff team to apply for positions. Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection.

Our recruitment policy gives full details of this process. See Appendix 3.

We strive to accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce, recognising the need for a work/life balance. Voscur will facilitate this by ensuring that working conditions promote and enhance flexible working practices.

### **3b) Training and Development**

Induction for Board members, new staff and Reps will include a briefing on the Equality and Diversity policy. New staff, board members and reps will be required to attend an Equalities Induction event which will provide information about Voscur's policy and practice and give confidence and a shared understanding across the organisation about actions to take to uphold Voscur's equalities policies

Voscur will provide access to high quality training on all equalities issues to members of the Board and staff. The training will ensure individuals are provided with an opportunity to acquire or develop the skills and knowledge required to translate the equalities policy into good practice.

Staff, Board members and Reps will be expected to attend Equalities Training where they have an identified learning need.

### **3c) Members**

Voscur provides a structural voice for communities who frequently experience discrimination via Voscur Assemblies, Networks and its representative structure.

Our 'Statement of Intent' and this policy relates to Voscur as an organisation but it is our hope and intention that Voscur members adopt a similar policy.

Voscur offers equalities training for its members.

### **3d) Board**

Voscur will ensure that its Board reflects, in its membership, a fair balance and representation of Voscur's member organisations. Voscur will endeavour to redress any imbalance of under represented groups through co-option.

Voscur will actively seek to ensure that groups and individuals referred to in this Equality and Diversity policy are not disadvantaged from taking an active role on the Board. The Board shall ensure that it acts in such a way that no individual or group identified in this policy is discriminated against.

### **3e) Voscur Meetings and Events**

Voscur aims to meet the access needs of all our members. This includes physical access, venue facilities as well as geographical location.

Voscur will use accessible venues for all of its meetings, events and training.

We aim to make our meetings accessible to groups from all areas of the city, so where there are no fully accessible venues available, we will use the most accessible venue in the area.

Our criteria for accessible venues are laid out - see appendix 4.

Our list of accessible venues is also appended - see appendix 5.

### **3f) Service Provision / Working with Partners and Contractors**

i) All Voscur services are covered by this policy.

ii) Voscur will promote equality and diversity, and will challenge bad practice in its work with other agencies or individuals.

v) Anyone representing Voscur will be required to acknowledge and adhere to Voscur's Statement of Intent.

vi) Purchasing: Voscur reserves the right not to purchase goods and use services from organisations or businesses whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

vii) Publicity and promotion: Voscur's material will demonstrate positive images of the diversity of its workforce and membership.

viii) Voscur's services will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed to ensure that they comply with this policy.

ix) We will make reasonable adjustments to policies, practices and procedures to ensure our services are accessible to all staff, board members and users of our services.

## **4) Action to be taken if breaches occur**

Please see Breach Flow Chart – appendix 6.

## 5) Responsibilities: ‘Managing Diversity’

*The following suggestions to be approved by the Board:*

<b>A</b>	<b>A. Induction and on-going Equalities training will be provided for:</b>	<b>Action</b>
	(i) Staff	Line Manager
	(ii) Board members	Voscur Chair
	(iii) Reps	Development Manager – Participation [MS]
<b>B.</b>	<b>Terminology list</b>	Development Manager – Equalities [RP]
<b>C.</b>	<b>Legislation appendix</b>	Development Manager – Equalities [RP] / Training Officer [SEB]
<b>D.</b>	<b>Regularly update Statement of Intent</b>	Voscur Board
<b>E.</b>	<b>Flow chart reviewed regularly</b>	Chief Executive / Voscur Chair
<b>F.</b>	<b>Reps form to refer to the policy and to indicate their responsibilities</b>	Development Manager – Participation [MS]
<b>G.</b>	<b>Policy to go on website</b>	Deputy Chief Executive [NNS]
<b>H.</b>	<b>Laminate Statement of Intent and display at Voscur events</b>	Deputy Chief Executive [NNS]

## 6) Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of the Equality and Diversity policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Board.

The Board will review the policy annually.

The Board will be provided with monitoring data on recruitment and Voscur events, by Voscur staff.

There is a standard monitoring form to be used for all Voscur activities.

## **7) Promotion of Policy**

A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be given to all new staff, Board members and Reps. New Voscur members, and anyone representing Voscur will receive a copy of the 'Statement of Intent.' A copy of the policy is available to anyone upon request. It is also on the Voscur website.

Staff members, Board members and Reps will be expected to attend an Equalities and Diversity Training session in their first year.

## **8) Appendices - references and further information**

1. Definitions
2. Legislation
3. Recruitment policy
4. Criteria for accessible venues
5. List of accessible venues – June 2007
6. Breach flow chart
7. Language and Terminology used in this policy