



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD)) is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to all those who have contact with the organisation in accordance with the principles of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and with the law.

This includes:

- Children, adults and families to whom we provide a service;
- Staff members and students;
- Job applicants;
- Members of the Board of Management, the Company and other sessional and voluntary workers.

The company values diversity and the uniqueness of the individual, which enriches the agency and its work.

1.2 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) is a non-denominational organisation.

1.3 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) believes that discrimination is unacceptable, and is committed to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of:

- age;
- gender;
- social status;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- race, culture and language;
- religion;
- disability;
- marital, parental or employment status.

1.4 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) is committed to an effective system to monitor and review the Equal Opportunities Policy, and to make any improvements where necessary in the light of experience, current practice and legislative changes.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

1 SERVICE DELIVERY

1.1 All those whose lives are touched by the needs of children, within the limits of available resources and subject to the powers and constraints imposed by relevant legislation, a right to receive the services they may need or require, without discrimination.

1.2 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will work in partnership with service users with sensitivity to the needs of all individuals.

1.3 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will reflect the aims of the Equal Opportunities policy in all publicity material, publications and any written information provided for service users.

1.4 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) aims to ensure a close and trusting relationship between service providers and service users through which it is hoped that any problems which may arise can be speedily resolved to the satisfaction of the service user. In the event that problems cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaints procedure has been agreed as part of the Equal Opportunities Policy. THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will ensure that the formal procedure is widely known and understood by service users. In particular they will be made aware of the THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) leaflet "Comments, Complaints and Compliments" together with any assistance they may need in completing the paperwork and in resolving their dissatisfaction.

2 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

2.1 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) aims to ensure that good practice in staff recruitment and selection is compatible with the aims and objectives of the Equal Opportunities Policy.

2.2 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) wishes to ensure that suitably qualified individuals, from many and diverse groups in the community, who respect its ideals and values, are able to be considered for any vacant posts which may arise.

2.3 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will ensure that the Equal Opportunities policy is known to potential job applicants. All job advertisements will state that THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

2.4 All vacant posts will be advertised. Exceptions to this can only be agreed by the Board of Management.

2.5 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will ensure that job advertisements are placed in appropriate newspapers and publications that are relevant to the post being advertised.

2.6 The wording of advertisements will correspond with the main points of a job and person specification.

2.7 The wording of advertisements will also include a statement that THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) is an organisation which welcomes applications from people of all faiths, philosophies and experience, who respect our ideals and values.

2.8 Selection for appointments will be conducted by suitably trained personnel in accordance with the Staff, Recruitment Policy and Procedures and job related criteria. A copy of the job description and person specification will be given to all applicants setting out the key tasks, necessary qualifications, type and level of experience required and the desired personal qualities. The decision-making process can be accounted for and feedback offered to unsuccessful applicants.

2.9 The composition of selection and interview panels will take account of THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD)'s aims to promote equal opportunity principles.

2.10 In order to make the best use of the skills available to THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) and to promote wider employment opportunities, part time, job share or flexible hours working will be made available where this is practicable for the post concerned.

2.11 All job applicants will be made aware of, and will have access to, the Complaints Procedure.

3 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

3.1 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) believes that training is an essential element in the development and provision of its service.

3.2 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will ensure that all staff, students and voluntary workers will have equality of opportunity in access to training programmes which will enhance their personal development. Self employed sessional workers will be offered training as appropriate and available.

3.3 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will ensure that its annual training programme will include training relevant to the Equal Opportunities policy and refresher training in equality and diversity will be available to all.

3.4 Promotion within THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will be based on the individual's ability and experience and will be through the application procedure for a vacant post.

4 VOLUNTARY OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

4.1 THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) aims to ensure that its Membership and the appointments to its Board of Management and any of their sub-committees follows the principle of the Equal Opportunities policy.

4.2 Our teams will ensure that the Equal Opportunities policy is being applied in all matters at their meetings. The Panel has a duty to advise the Board of Management and staff on policy matters, including equal opportunities.

4.3 The Board of Management is accountable for all aspects of the Equal Opportunities policy, but delegates the day to day running of THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) to the Chief Executive which includes equal opportunity policy matters.

5 MONITORING

5.1 The Board requires that the Chief Executive should constantly monitor the policy, reporting immediately on any serious breaches of the policy and, in conjunction with the Adoption Panel and the staff group, s/he is required to present an annual review to the Board.

5.2 The Review will cover all aspects of the Equal Opportunities policy and may include recommendations for changes in practice or procedure where necessary and practicable.

5.3 As the policy and its implementation is the responsibility of all members of the organisation, individuals are encouraged to raise any issues for further consideration

6 STAFF CONDUCT

6.1 **Discipline** - Breaches of the Equal Opportunities policy will be viewed as a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) disciplinary procedures.

6.2 **Harassment** - THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) recognises that freedom from harassment is a right to which everyone in contact with the agency is entitled. Harassment, including physical, verbal, racial, sexual, relating to disability or illness, including HIV and other blood borne viruses, sexual orientation, age, class, gender, gender reassignment, culture or religion, will be regarded as grounds for disciplinary proceedings.

6.3 **Grievance** - All employees have a right to seek redress for any grievance arising out of the equal opportunities issue and will be dealt with in accordance with the THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) Grievance Procedures.

7 SUPPORT OF STAFF

7.1 In support of staff, neither discriminatory behaviour or remarks to them will be accepted or tolerated.

8 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

This section contains further statements which amplify the specific areas of the Equal Opportunities Policy as listed in paragraph 1.3.

8.1 Age

8.1.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) does not set age limits for participation of adults. We do not offer direct services to children or young people under the age of 18years

8.1.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not exclude any job applicant on grounds of age.

The normal retirement age is 65. Employment may be extended thereafter at the discretion of the Board of Management who would provide business reasons in the event of a refusal. Early retirement conditions are governed by the rules of the Superannuation Scheme.

8.2 Gender

8.2.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate on gender or gender recognition status.

8.2.2 Employment

All posts, paid and voluntary, are open to both men and women, unless exemptions apply under current employment legislation.

8.3 Social Status

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of their social status.

8.4 Sexual Orientation

8.4.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) aims not to discriminate for any reason on the grounds of a person's sexual orientation, always giving consideration to the long-term needs of the child.

8.4.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) considers that the agency has no need to know about the sexual orientation of employees or those seeking paid employment or voluntary or sessional work. If this information is known, THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate against them.

8.5 Race, Culture and Language

8.5.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) affirms that a child's race, ethnicity, culture and language are all important considerations. We help support families to meet these needs including how to meet any shortfall of provision for assessed needs.

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) aims to work families from various ethnic backgrounds

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will strive to prevent racism and racial discrimination for all service users within the service it provides.

We value and respect individuals' culture and customs.

We strive to limit any barriers to communication through the use of specialist services, eg, signers, interpreters, information in other languages or Braille, audio information, etc, and will try to ensure that written information is age or service appropriate.

8.5.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will strive to:

1 prevent racism and racial discrimination within all aspects of the employment of staff;

2 endeavour to work towards representation of a diversity of ethnic backgrounds throughout the organisation.

8.6 Religion or belief

8.6.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) welcomes all participants irrespective of their religious or other beliefs or none and will not discriminate.

We respect wishes and feelings regarding religion

8.6.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) wishes to ensure that suitably qualified persons from many and diverse groups in the community, who respect our ideals and values, are considered for any vacant posts. The agency will respect and will not discriminate against any person because of their religious beliefs or none.

8.7.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate against any service user on the grounds of their disability. Where access to agency premises and facilities are deficient for a person with a disability, alternative arrangements will be made.

8.7.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate against applications for job vacancies from people with a disability. No applicant will be rejected solely on the grounds of their disability.

The agency will endeavour, so far as it is able, to provide the necessary facilities and equipment for employees who have a disability.

The agency will not discriminate against staff who have caring responsibilities and will consider requests for flexible working.

8.8 Marital, Parental or Employment Status

8.8.1 Service Delivery

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will not discriminate against anyone because of their marital status.

The agency will consider applicants regardless of their parental status.

Applicants' employment situation will be just one of the many factors taken into account when assessing their suitability work with us

8.8.2 Employment

THE I MATTER PROJECT (I MATTER TRAINING LTD) will appoint suitably qualified and experienced people regardless of their marital or parental or previous employment status although will need to seek reasons for any gaps in employment or reasons for leaving employment relating to children and/or vulnerable adults.

We grant maternity, paternity, parental or adoption leave.