



Global Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

Introduction

VSO is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and diversity. Our success depends on people and capitalising on what is unique about individuals. Drawing on their different perspectives and experiences will add value to the way VSO operates.

We aim to treat employees, volunteers and applicants for jobs fairly, and ensure they are recruited, trained and promoted solely on the basis of their abilities, and we value their rights to dignity at work.

VSO will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying or any other form of unwanted behaviour, whether based on: race, caste or class, political or religious beliefs, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, pregnancy, marital status, civil partnership status, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, trade union activities or “spent convictions” of ex-offenders.

This is a global policy following VSO best practice and may vary in different countries in line with local legislation; please refer to your people group representative for clarification. All countries need to ensure that local legislation and minimum standards are followed.

This policy applies to all VSO employees and volunteers. In this policy the word “employee” includes temporary or other contract or agency workers.

All employees and volunteers are personally responsible for the practical application of the policy, but VSO acknowledges that specific responsibilities fall upon management, supervisors and employees professionally involved in recruitment and people management.

Any employee or volunteer who believes that VSO has applied inequitable treatment to him or her within the scope of the policy should raise the matter through the Global Grievance Policy (for employees) or the Global Volunteers Complaints Policy.

Any breach of the policy will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter which may result in termination of your employment or volunteer arrangement.

VSO may issue further guidance or make amendments to this policy from time to time.

Principles

VSO has made the following commitments in order to ensure we constantly strive to create a productive environment, representative of and responsive to different cultures and groups, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed at all levels through the organisation.

Gender

Women and men are fully and properly represented and rewarded for their contribution by:

- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Supporting employees and volunteers to balance their life at work and at home
- Supporting employees and volunteers who become pregnant or adopt and taking active steps to facilitate their return to work after maternity leave or adoption leave

Trans-gender status

People who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment are protected against all forms of discrimination and harassment. We will take positive steps to support a trans-gender person and ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

Marital status

People are treated fairly and equally in the workplace irrespective of their marital, civil partnership or family status.

Race and Caste

The racial and cultural diversity of our communities is promoted by:

- Challenging racial stereotypes
- Understanding, respecting and valuing different racial, caste and cultural backgrounds

Disability

The abilities of disabled people are recognised and valued by:

- Focusing on what people can do rather than on what they cannot
- Challenging stereotypes about people with disabilities
- Making reasonable adjustments in the workplace to help people with disabilities achieve their full career potential.

VSO will ensure disabled employees and volunteers have the opportunity at any time, and at least once a year, to discuss with their line manager or their people group representative any actions that can be taken to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

VSO will make every effort when employees or volunteers become disabled to make sure they stay in employment. VSO will take action to ensure an appropriate level of disability awareness to make our commitment work.

Age

Age diversity within the workforce is promoted and valued through:

- Challenging age stereotyping
- Recognising the benefits of a mixed-age workforce.

Religious beliefs and political opinions

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their religious beliefs and practices or political opinions by recognising individuals' freedom of belief and the right to protection from intolerance and persecution.

HIV

Discrimination against an employee, volunteer or potential employee on grounds that he or she has, or is thought to have, HIV/AIDS is not acceptable, and confidentiality will be respected in line with the wishes of an individual with HIV/IDS.

Sexuality

People are treated fairly in the workplace irrespective of their sexuality through:

- Respecting different lifestyles and choices
- Challenging negative stereotypical views.

Responsibilities

To ensure that this policy is consistently applied the People Group will monitor the operation of the policy and report the results annually. To evaluate the implementation they will collect and maintain the following information:

- Use of the equal opportunities monitoring form to assess recruitment and selection activities and decisions by gender, marital status, disability, race, age or part time status (where information is supplied)
- Creation and maintenance of employees records and analyses relating to gender, marital status, disability, race, age or part time status

All managers will:

- Promote equality and diversity at work and set the tone for behaviour towards others
- Deal promptly with complaints, grievances, disciplinary offences or requests for flexible working
- Not tolerate unfair discrimination in any form, from any employee, volunteer or a third party
- Review local practices and procedures periodically to ensure that they do not unfairly discriminate
- Ensure no one is victimised or treated less favourably due to involvement in a complaint of unfair discrimination or harassment
- Use only criteria which is relevant to the ability to do the job in selection and assessment processes

All employees and volunteers must:

- Be familiar with and promote the policy
- Demonstrate consideration, respect and understanding for all colleagues
- Challenge and report the unacceptable behaviour of others
- Recognise the value of social and cultural diversity in the workplace
- Ensure that their own behaviour at work does not unfairly discriminate
- Not engage in any behaviour which could be considered to be bullying or harassment

Policy number: 1838926

Version: 2

Date created: 30 December 2013

Date of last update: 26 March 2015

Responsible owner: People Group