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**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

This is the policy of Rutherglen HC Dental in respect of discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability or religion. This practice is committed to working towards equality of opportunity for every member of the team. This policy is a means of achieving this objective.

Please read it carefully. If there is anything you do not understand, please ask for an explanation.

**The Policy**

Rutherglen HC Dental recognises that discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability or religion is harmful and may be illegal. Through this policy, through training and by example, we wish to demonstrate that we do not tolerate discrimination by anyone working in this practice.

**Definitions:**

**Discrimination** is any form of unfavourable treatment

**Policy** is the same as a Code of Conduct and it is how we expect everyone in the practice – partners, associates and employees – to behave. It applies to our dealings with each other, with candidates for job vacancies, with suppliers and with our patients.

**Rutherglen HC** Dental Practice is the business owned and administered by C Ferry.

**Sex Discrimination** is any form of treatment which is unfavourable and which is related to gender or marital status. Discrimination according to sex is illegal under the terms of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. The act applies equally to men and women.

**Direct Sex Discrimination** is when one person is treated less favourably on the grounds of his or her sex than a person of the other sex is or would be treated under similar circumstances.

This can occur when a person is refused a position or promotion because of his or her sex or because of a factor which is sex linked, such as the ability to bear children. For example, it is illegal to employ a woman because she is of child bearing age and judged likely to have children. A candidate should be treated on merit, irrespective of sex.

**Indirect Sex Discrimination** is a requirement or condition which cannot be justified on job related criteria on grounds other than sex, which is applied to men and women equally but has the effect, in practice, of disadvantaging a considerably higher proportion of one sex than the other. For example, requiring employees to be of a minimum height, which cannot be justified in the terms of the task they have to perform.

**Direct Marriage Discrimination** can occur when a married person is treated less favourably in employment, because he/she is married, than a single person of the same sex is or would be treated in similar circumstances.

**Indirect Marriage Discrimination** occurs when a requirement or condition of employment, which cannot be justified on job related criteria on grounds other than marital status, is applied equally to married or single persons (of either sex) but has the effect in practice of disadvantaging a considerably higher proportion of married than single persons.

**Race Discrimination** is any form of treatment which is unfavourable and which is related to colour, race, ethnic or national origin. Discrimination according to race is illegal under the terms of the Race Relations Act 1976. As with sex discrimination, race discrimination can be either direct or indirect. An example of direct discrimination might be offensive remarks about black people or about religion where the majority of believers are black. Indirect discrimination might be where an employer requires higher language standards from employees than are needed for safe and effective performance of their job.

**Victimisation** is when the employer treats an employee (of either sex) less favourably than other employees are or would be treated, because the employee has brought or threatens to bring proceedings, or give evidence or information against the employer with reference to the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act or the Equal Pay Act. These provisions do not apply if the original discrimination allegation was false or was not made in good faith.

**Harassment** is a form of discrimination where a person is made to feel uncomfortable because of sex, race, disability or religion. It may involve action, behaviour, comments or physical contact, which is found objectionable, offensive or intimidating by the recipient. The recipient may feel threatened, humiliated or patronised by the perpetrator. It is not always a conscious or intentional act but it is the recipient’s feelings, in response, which are important.

**Sexual Harassment** is a form of sex discrimination. The practice defines harassment as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex, which affects the dignity of those who work in the practice. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Both men and women can be the subject of harassment.

**Racial Harassment** is a form of race discrimination and might involve racist jokes and banter or insults, taunts and jibes.

**Religious Discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably because of his or her religious beliefs. For example promoting a less able person to work rather than a Jewish person using the reason that the Jewish person would not work on Saturdays. The Fair Employment (NI) Act 1989 enables employees who feel that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion to take action against the employer.

**The Right to Equal Pay** provides equality in the terms of an employee’s contract where he/she is employed to perform work which is rated equivalent to that performed by a member of the opposite sex or work of equal value to that of a member of the opposite sex.

**Disability Discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably because of disability. Occasionally a disability may limit a person’s capability for some forms of employment. Discrimination occurs when the treatment of the individual is unfavourable taking into account the disability, for example, making it a condition of employment that the employee can drive an unmodified car when the job can be performed adequately without driving.

**Will not tolerate** means that we will take disciplinary action in accordance with the practice disciplinary procedure against any employee who breaches this policy. If the allegation involves a self-employed contractor or partner in the practice, the matter will be dealt with by C Ferry.

**What to do if you feel you are the subject of discrimination or harassment**

**Discrimination**

Raise the issue with C Ferry in the first instance, and if necessary submit a formal complaint in writing.

**Harassment**

1. Make the perpetrator aware of how you feel about his/her behaviour.
2. Ask him/her to stop the behaviour.
3. Keep a good record of any incidents
4. Report the incidents as soon as possible to C Ferry.

**What will be done about discrimination or harassment**

1. Any allegation will be taken seriously, listened to and recorded thoroughly.
2. We will adapt or modify this policy in the light of any changed in the law.
3. If you make a complaint or allegation of harassment, the practice will initiate its grievance procedure in your contract of employment. The incident will be investigated thoroughly. You will be informed of the outcome and kept well informed at all stages. Your complaint may be treated as confidential if you so request, but if you wish investigation it must involve the perpetrator who has a right to give their version of events. Your complaint will be dealt with as promptly as possible.
4. If you make an allegation of discrimination the practice will initiate its grievance procedure in your contract of employment.
5. An employee breaching this policy will be liable to disciplinary action. Persistent or blatant discrimination or harassment could lead to dismissal.
6. In the event of an allegation of discrimination by a prospective employee the incident will be investigated thoroughly and the complainant informed of the outcome.
7. If you feel that your complaint has not been resolved by the practice, you should contact the local Citizen’s Advice Bureau for advice. Legal redress may also be sought from an employment tribunal and the complaint should be referred within 3 months of the alleged discriminatory act.

Policy Last updated: Jan 25 Date of next review: Jan 27