

## 1.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive working and learning environment that respects and celebrates difference. ARCA aims to provide a community where everyone feels able to participate fully to achieve their full potential.

ARCA's commitment to equality and diversity is endorsed and led by the management team and Governing Council. ARCA's goal is to ensure that this commitment translates into action and that equality and fairness become embedded into our everyday activities. In order to achieve this, ARCA need all staff, candidates, partners, visitors, contractors and sub-contractors working on behalf of ARCA to share this commitment.

## 2.0 WHO DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO?

This policy applies to all individuals within ARCA including stakeholders, staff, candidates and visitors. The policy is also binding on external contractors, employers and other partners who ARCA collaborate with. The policy applies to all sites and premises belonging to ARCA or used by ARCA for carrying out its functions.

## 3.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

ARCA's policy is governed by the Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of one or more of the following protected characteristics:

- a. age
- b. disability
- c. gender
- d. gender reassignment
- e. race
- f. religion or belief
- g. sexual orientation
- h. pregnancy and maternity
- i. marriage and civil partnership

This policy does not exist exclusively as a response to legal requirements, but also reflects ARCA's intention to ensure that equality and diversity underpin everything ARCA does.

## 4.0 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY

ARCA:

- expect all stakeholders of the organisation to treat each other with dignity and respect. ARCA supports the right of individuals and groups to hold their own beliefs and values, but will not tolerate these being manifested in a way that intimidates, humiliates or creates a hostile or degrading learning or working environment.

- is striving to create an inclusive learning and working environment that supports good relations between people and challenges prejudice, intolerance and discrimination in all its forms.
- will ensure that all candidates, staff and visitors, as well as those who apply or seek to apply to work or study with ARCA, are treated fairly and are not discriminated against on any grounds, including those protected by the Equality Act 2010.
- will communicate its commitment to promoting equality and diversity in staff and candidate recruitment material, handbooks, policies, social media and in other corporate communications.
- will ensure that publicity material positively promotes the diversity of ARCA.
- will actively engage with staff, candidates and partners on key matters related to equality and diversity.
- will ensure that every opportunity will be given for candidates and staff to disclose any disabilities or other needs relating to 'protected characteristics' that they may have. ARCA will promote a culture of inclusivity, in which individuals feel confident and safe to make a disclosure. It will provide reasonable adjustments in response to individual need and will not disadvantage a candidate or member of staff on the basis of such needs.
- will ensure that where data relevant to equality and diversity, or any of the protected characteristics is gathered and stored by ARCA, it will be done so appropriately and in line with data protection guidelines.
- will ensure that there are effective and sensitive support and complaints mechanisms in place, should anyone feel that they have either witnessed or experienced discrimination.

### **5.0 CURRICULUM, LEARNING AND TEACHING**

- The curriculum offered will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is culturally sensitive and reflects the interests and backgrounds of the candidates.
- All teaching staff will use resources and activities that are free from discriminatory or stereotypical assumptions or images.
- All classroom and work-based candidates will receive information on equality and diversity as part of their induction programme. This will familiarise them with this policy as well as endorse our approach to dignity and respect. It will also ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities to others whilst studying at ARCA.
- Work based candidates will be empowered and supported to challenge practices and behaviours in the workplace, which they feel contravene ARCA policy in relation to Equality and Diversity.

## 6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

A successful equality and diversity policy requires the active support of all stakeholders. Whilst there is a collective responsibility to ensure this policy is successfully implemented, there are also specific responsibilities as set out below:

- The ARCA Governing Council has ultimate responsibility for the effective implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy. The practical application of the policy rests with the CEO and the Departmental Management team at ARCA.
- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that candidate and staff related issues are effectively addressed.
- Departmental Managers are accountable for delivering the equality commitments in their designated areas of responsibility.
- All staff, candidates and others to whom this policy applies are responsible for ensuring that they read and understand this policy and seek clarification where required. Staff and candidates will be reminded of their responsibilities through the appropriate ARCA organisation communication channels.
- All staff and candidates, those carrying out work or delivering services on behalf of ARCA and partners, are required to adhere to this policy and everyone is expected to support ARCA in promoting equality and challenging discrimination and harassment.

## 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

ARCA will ensure that:

- This policy is communicated to employees, applicants for employment, contractors and others working for ARCA, candidates and those applying to study with ARCA.
- Staff and candidates are provided with appropriate equality and diversity training and guidance, including training during induction courses.
- Specific and appropriate duties in respect of implementing the equality and diversity policy are incorporated into job descriptions and work objectives of staff.
- Prompt action is taken to address any allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

## 8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

ARCA will:

- Review and amend the equality and diversity policy to reflect developments in equality legislation and best practice.
- Regularly report to Governing Council and the ARCA leadership team on equality and diversity issues.

## 9.0 COMPLAINTS

Members of staff who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the appropriate grievance procedure.

Candidates who believe they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the complaints procedure.

Every effort will be made to ensure that any person making a complaint will not be victimised. All complaints of discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with promptly and confidentially.

ARCA takes all allegations of discrimination, harassment or victimisation very seriously. If on investigation, it is established that discrimination, victimisation or harassment has occurred, disciplinary action will be taken and may result in dismissal or expulsion.

## 10.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy was reviewed in January 2019 and will be reviewed in January every year.

This policy will be reviewed earlier if ARCA has reason to believe that the circumstances have changed such that this policy is no longer fit for purpose.

**Signed:** ..... **Name:** .....

**Job Title:** ..... **Date:** .....