

# Hope for Kids International

## Equal Opportunities Policy



### 1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to all employees and volunteers of Hope for Kids International.

### 2. Context

- 2.1. Hope for Kids International (HFK) is a Christ-centred charity committed to serving vulnerable children and their communities in a number of countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe. We are committed to operating on a fair and equitable basis, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, life-style, sex, sexuality, physical/mental disability, offending background or any other factor.
- 2.2. In all our interactions with people in the UK and around the world, no person will be treated less favourably than any other person on any grounds. In the UK, we are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and encouraging diversity in our workforce, upholding the commitments made by our partner Kids Alive International.
- 2.3. We recognise the value of and the need for equal opportunities and seek, wherever possible, to follow the guidelines drawn up by the relevant statutory body. Moreover, we recognise that the UK has a rich diversity of cultures from around the world and we seek to bring Christian witness equally to all cultures.

### 3. Purpose

- 3.1. This equal opportunity policy reflects the mission and purpose of HFK as well as the spirit and intentions of legislation, which outlaws discrimination. The purpose of this document is to provide information concerning equal opportunities and to provide guidelines to employees and volunteers on good practice.

### 4. Definition

- 4.1. 'Discrimination' for the purposes of this document means unlawful discrimination.

### 5. Policy

- 5.1. HFK is a Christian organisation, seeking to operate in and for the name of Christ. In relation to matters of religion and belief, it is a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) for employees and volunteers to be loyal to the Christian ethos of the organisation in order to preserve its distinctiveness. For Service Team (mission teams, vision teams, etc.) visiting the overseas partners' programmes, however, we are at liberty to accept applications from non-Christians, provided at least 75% of the total team membership is Christian. The remaining team members are required to be tolerant towards the Christian faith in order to not risk offending the receiving countries.

- 5.2. Subject to the above, HFK will not tolerate unlawful discrimination and/or harassment on the grounds of an individual's sex, race, marital status, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, religious belief, union membership, union activities or employment status.
- 5.3. It is the responsibility of every individual, both employees and volunteers, to eliminate unlawful discrimination by ensuring practical application of this equal opportunity policy and reporting concerns about any possible breach to the Charity Trustees.

## **6. Implementation**

- 6.1. HFK is an equal opportunity employer. Equal opportunity is about ensuring good employment practices.
- 6.2. HFK is an organisation seeking to serve within a Christian context. The majority of HFK roles - Trustees, operational staff and volunteers - can only be filled by Christians. The nature of these posts or the context in which they are carried out, and their link to the ethos of the organisation, give rise to a GOR for the post-holders to be Christians. All staff and/or volunteers in these posts are required to demonstrate a clear personal commitment to the Christian faith. This policy is implemented under Equality Act 2010 and ACAS guidance.
- 6.3. In employment, HFK will actively seek to recruit with the right mix of passion, skills and potential, promoting equality for all, and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates. We select candidates for interview based on their skills, passion for the ministry, qualifications, experience and commitment to the values and purposes of the organisation. Subject to the GOR, entry into employment, promotion or change of post, is determined by personal aptitude and ability, relevant to the mission and purpose of our organisation.
- 6.4. Subject to the GOR, the selection and recruitment of volunteers are also determined by aptitude, ability and spiritual maturity, relevant to the mission and purpose of our organisation.

## **7. DBS**

- 7.1. As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust – including membership of teams to the overseas receiving countries - HFK undertakes to comply fully with the DBS Code of Practice and to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.
- 7.2. A Disclosure is only requested after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a Disclosure is required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered a position.
- 7.3. Where a Disclosure is to form part of a recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover to the recruiter within the organisation and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of a recruitment process.
- 7.4. Unless the nature of the position allows HFK to ask questions about an entire criminal record, we will only ask about 'unspent' convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 7.5. We ensure that all those in HFK who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance of circumstances of offences. We will also ensure that they have

received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

- 7.6. At interview, or in separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or voluntary work.
- 7.7. We make every subject of a DBS Disclosure aware of the existence of the Code of Practice and make a copy available on request.
- 7.8. We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in a disclosure with the person seeking a position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar a person from working with us. It will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of the offences.

## **8. Complaints**

- 8.1. Any employee or volunteer may use the Complaints Procedure to complain about discriminatory conduct or unlawful harassment. HFK aims to ensure that volunteers or employees feel able to raise grievances and that no individual will be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue or made in bad faith.
- 8.2. This policy also applies to the treatment of contractors, suppliers and those we serve. Any concern related to unequal treatment should be directed to the HFK board of trustees.

## **9. Discipline**

- 9.1. All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be treated seriously. Any employee or volunteer who unlawfully harasses any other employee or volunteer will be subject to the organisation's disciplinary procedure. In serious cases such behaviour may be considered to be gross misconduct, and accordingly, could result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.