



# **BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE**

## **DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY POLICY**

**REFERENCE NUMBER** : **8382**  
**RELATES TO PROCEDURE NO** : **N/A**

**NEW or REVISED POLICY** : **New**  
**Revises Policy Titled** : **8290 Equal Opportunities Policy**  
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**POLICY OWNER (Dept)** : **Human Resources - Diversity**  
**POLICY AUTHOR (Job Title)** : **Diversity Manager**

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE** : **July 2006**  
**REVIEW DATE** : **July 2008**

### **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

The policy will help to ensure Bedfordshire Police meets its legal requirements and promote a culture and organisation that delivers excellent services and strives to be an employer of choice.

These policy documents apply to all aspects of employment and service delivery. All employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with this policy. Managers must make sure their staff know about and follow this policy.

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## **1. DIVERSITY**

### **1.1 STATEMENT**

- 1.1.1 Bedfordshire Police recognises, accepts and values the diverse individuals and communities it serves. Diversity is about understanding each other and moving beyond tolerance to embrace difference. Diversity offers greater access to a wider range of individual strengths, experiences and perspectives, but recognises that each of us has shared rights and responsibilities.
- 1.1.2 Employees are encouraged to challenge conduct, which may lead to or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, offensive or humiliating working environment.
- 1.1.3 Opportunities for employment, training development and promotion are equally open to candidates from all sections of society and will be advertised widely and fairly.
- 1.1.4 Selection for employment, promotion, transfer and training, and access to benefits, facilities and services, will be fair and equitable, and based solely on merit.

### **1.2 Aims of the Policy:**

- 1.2.1 To build an organisation and deliver services that make full use of the talents, skills, experience, and perspectives available in our society, and where all our people feel they are respected and valued, and can achieve their full potential.
- 1.2.2 To ensure service users, stakeholders, employees and volunteers do not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, religion or belief, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender, family circumstances, age, disability and Trans identity, or are victimised for taking action against unlawful and unwelcome discrimination, harassed, bullied, instructed or put under pressure to discriminate unlawfully.

### **1.3 Mainstreaming Diversity**

- 1.3.1 The policy will form part of the business plan and corporate strategy.
- 1.3.2 The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy.
- 1.3.3 The policy will be communicated to all employees and job applicants, and will be placed on the organisation's Intranet and Internet.
- 1.3.4 Employees and their representatives and trade unions will be consulted regularly about the policy, and about related action plans, strategies and outcomes.
- 1.3.5 All employees will be trained on the policy; on their rights and responsibilities under the policy, and in law; and on how the policy will affect the way they carry out their duties. Everyone will clearly understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable conduct in the organisation.
- 1.3.6 Complaints about discrimination, bullying or harassment in the course of employment will be actioned, and may result in disciplinary sanctions, or even dismissal. Please click on the [Grievance Procedure](#) link for more information.
- 1.3.7 Selection criteria will be exclusively related to the job or training opportunity.

## **1.4 Monitoring the Policy**

- 1.4.1 Monitoring information related to employment, promotion and training will be collected and analysed, to monitor the workforce, and each stage of the recruitment and selection process. The information will be held in strictest confidence and will only be used to promote diversity and prevent unlawful discrimination.
- 1.4.2 If any monitoring data indicates that people from a particular background are under-represented in particular areas of work, lawful positive action training and encouragement will be considered for the targeted group.
- 1.4.3 The following areas will also be monitored: grievances, disciplinary action, performance assessment, training and terminations of employment.
- 1.4.4 Requirements, conditions, provisions, criteria and practices will be reviewed regularly, in the light of the monitoring results, and revised, if they are found to, or might, discriminate unlawfully.

## **1.5 Procurement of Goods and Services**

- 1.5.1 All contracts for goods, facilities or services will include a clause prohibiting unlawful discrimination by contractors and their staff and by any sub-contractors and their staff. The clause will also recommend using appropriate codes of practice as basic good practice. Contractors, suppliers and agencies will be expected to have the following minimum standards in employment:
  - 1.5.2 An equality or diversity policy.
  - 1.5.3 The name of the person responsible for putting the policy into practice.
  - 1.5.4 A diversity or equality statement in their job advertisements.
  - 1.5.5 Diversity training for workers and managers, where appropriate.
  - 1.5.6 A statement that unlawful discrimination and harassment are regarded seriously, and may result in disciplinary sanctions, and even dismissal.
  - 1.5.7 A grievance procedure for complaints of discrimination, harassment and bullying at work.

## **2. HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

### **2.1 STATEMENT**

- 2.1.1 Bedfordshire Police believes that all of its employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment and bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All staff have an obligation to ensure they do not harass or bully their colleagues or condone harassment or bullying by others. Bedfordshire Police will take action if such behaviour takes place.

### **2.2 Aims of the Policy:**

- 2.2.1 To ensure that all employees of Bedfordshire Police are treated with dignity and respect.**

## **2.2.2 To ensure that harassment and bullying are prevented.**

2.2.3 To ensure that action is taken to stop harassment and bullying if it does occur.

2.2.4 To ensure that the working environment is such that each individual feels confident and happy about the way they will be treated whilst at work.

2.2.5 To ensure that all the employees know what harassment and bullying is and what the Bedfordshire Police policy is.

2.2.6 To explain the responsibilities of Police Authority Members, Senior Mangers, Managers and Employees.

### **Definition of Harassment**

2.3.1 Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Employees can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- Race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or Belief
- Age
- Trade union or non trade union membership
- Disability, impairment or health status
- Status as ex offenders
- Real or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS
- Personal appearance
- Speech impediments
- Marital/partner status

## **2.4 Sexual Harassment**

2.4.1 A definition of sexual harassment is conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex affecting the dignity of men and women at work. This definition would also cover the harassment of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and Trans-gendered people.

## **2.5 Racial Harassment**

2.5.1 A definition of racial harassment is racially motivated actions and behaviour that are directed at people because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins and cultural differences that cause offence and distress. The Stephen Lawrence report defines a racist incident as, "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

2.5.2 As with sexual harassment, racial harassment can be expressed in a range of behaviours such as: physical or verbal conduct (e.g. assault, derogatory name calling, malicious comments, jokes, hostile attitudes), non-verbal conduct (e.g. graffiti, display of racial material) damage to personal property, denial of opportunities and exclusion from social activities.

## **2.6 Harassment of Disabled people**

2.6.1 As with sexual and racial harassment described above, there are a range of behaviours which will be unacceptable. Examples will include physical abuse and/or intimidation, unreasonably questioning a disabled person's work capacity and/or ability by making inappropriate demands or requirements, making assumptions about a person's impairment and sickness record, jokes and mimicking a particular disability.

## **2.7 Harassment on the grounds of Religion or Belief**

2.7.1 Examples will include the use of nicknames, name-calling or other behaviour which may not be intended to be malicious but still results in a person being upset. Harassment may relate directly to the individual's religion or belief or it may be about the religion or belief of those with whom the individual associates.

## **2.8 Examples of harassment**

Some examples of unacceptable behaviour that are covered by the policy include but are not limited to the following:

### **2.8.1 Physical Conduct**

Unwanted physical conduct including unnecessary touching, patting or pinching, physical threats and insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures.

### **2.8.2 Verbal Conduct**

Unwelcome advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity or offensive flirtations; innuendo; lewd comments or abusive language which denigrates or ridicules; insults which are gender, age, race or nationality related or which relate to disability, religious belief or sexual orientation and include offensive comments about dress, appearance or physique.

### **2.8.3 Non-verbal conduct**

The display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written materials, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.

## **2.9 Definition of Bullying**

2.9.1 Bullying can be defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating behaviour, abuse of power or authority which attempts to undermine an individual or group of individuals and which may cause them to suffer stress. Bullying at work can be described as the persistent use, over a period of time, of oppressive behaviour or the abuse of power, which makes the recipient feel threatened. It should be recognised that bullying does not occur only in manager/subordinate relationships. It can also occur when there is unacceptable peer pressure or pressure by others in a position of authority.

2.9.2 Allegations of bullying should be treated with caution. One instance of someone being aggressive does not make him or her a bully. Bullying behaviour would have to be deliberate and

persistent and would exhibit a pattern of continuous behaviour. Anyone who thinks they are being bullied should consider this section carefully.

## **2.10 Examples of bullying can include:**

- All forms of harassment
- Aggressive, insulting and unco-operative attitudes
- Destructive innuendo and sarcasm
- Constant unjustified criticism
- Persistently picking on people in front of others, or in private
- Unreasonable refusal of requests (e.g. leave or training)
- Persistently undervaluing an employees efforts
- Making someone the butt of jokes

## **2.11 Remedies**

2.11.1 An employee who believes they are being bullied and/or harassed should use the Grievance Procedure to seek to redress this issue.

# **3. DISABILITY EQUALITY**

## **3.1 STATEMENT**

3.1.1 Bedfordshire Police is committed to eliminating discrimination against disabled people and ensuring that disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens. In pursuing these commitments the Service acknowledges its statutory duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 [DDA], the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

3.1.2 The social model of disability underpins Bedfordshire Police commitments because it emphasises the dangers of exclusion and prejudice. The service believes the barriers that exclude disabled people from full participation in society are the result of the way the social and built environments are constructed, and society's attitude towards disabled people.

3.1.3 This policy applies to all aspects of employment and service delivery.

## **3.2 Mainstreaming Disability**

3.2.1 Bedfordshire Police will ensure that in carrying out all of its duty people with disabilities are free from prejudice and discrimination in their everyday lives. To achieve this objective the Service has adopted the following principles:

3.2.2 All policies, procedures and practices will be reviewed to ensure they comply with relevant legislation and Codes of Practice.

3.2.3 In planning and delivering services, police officers and police staff with disabilities will be at the centre of the process and their specific needs considered and taken into account in any consultation/service user process.

3.2.4 Barriers in the provision of joint services will be tackled through effective partnership working.

3.2.5 Information will be available on request through a range of media and in a range of formats [including the provision of materials in symbols, large print, Braille, British Sign Language

video or audio description] and alternatives to verbal communication will be offered so that people with disabilities enjoy equal access to information and service.

- 3.2.6 Manage sensitively allegations of discrimination and harassment, offering appropriate support to the alleged victim(s) in accordance with current policy and procedure.
- 3.2.7 Access to independent advocacy, self advocacy, legal and advice services for people with disabilities will be provided or improved where available to enable disabled officers and police staff to take control over their own lives.
- 3.2.8 Recruitment and selection will be carried out in accordance with organisational standards and best practice. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that applicants with disabilities and existing employees who are or become disabled are treated fairly and with proper consideration of their abilities.
- 3.2.9 All reasonable efforts will be made to help employees who are or become disabled to remain in employment with Bedfordshire Police.
- 3.2.10 Employees and Police Authority members will receive appropriate training in disability awareness and diversity and will be made aware of their responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- 3.2.11 Staff will be managed fairly and appropriately, ensuring there is no discrimination in terms of attitude, work allocations, promotion, development opportunities, conditions of employment or the work environment.

### **3.3 Remedies**

- 3.3.1 Any employee who feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy should, if they feel able to, try to resolve the matter informally by discussion with the other party. If that fails, the matter should be taken up with their line manager. If there appears to be no prospect of the parties reaching agreement the matter should be taken forward by the use of the Grievance procedure.

## **4. TRANS POLICY**

### **4.1 STATEMENT**

- 4.1.1 **Bedfordshire Police recognises that there are possible differences between physical appearance and gender identity. Bedfordshire Police Service will not discriminate against people on the following grounds:**
- 4.1.2 **Transvestism (wearing clothes of the opposite sex).**
- 4.1.3 **Transexualism (a person's feeling that the gender identity given at birth is a false or incomplete description of themselves).**
- 4.1.4 **Intersex conditions (when a person's body does not conform to expectations of a stereotypical male or female body) or;**
- 4.1.5 **Gender re-assignment, begun or complete.**
- 4.1.6 When this policy refers to 'Trans people', it has in mind people living with any of the identities described above. Where it refers to 'gender identity', the policy covers both the fixed identity

of people living in the gender of their birth, and the more fluctuating identities of many Trans people.

#### 4.2 Mainstreaming Trans Issues

**4.2.1 Bedfordshire Police recognises that trans people may need to access medical treatment, which could include periods away from work. We will provide a supportive environment to assist an individual through the stages of gender reassignment. Bedfordshire Police accepts the need to undertake special measures to ensure genuine equality of access for trans staff.**

**4.2.2 Bedfordshire Police recognises that stereotyped gender roles can be harmful to trans people, who may feel constrained to behave in ways, or work in areas that are traditionally considered appropriate for their registered sex at birth (or appropriate for their role after gender transition).**

4.2.3 Bedfordshire Police will respect any request for anonymity and will seek to update its records to include the chosen name and sex identified by the individual.

4.2.4 Bedfordshire Police will provide support for staff returning after a break caused by medical and surgical treatment.

**4.2.5 Bedfordshire Police will recognise without query all medical documents produced by a medical practitioner. In general, Bedfordshire Police Service will take the word of the person transitioning. No attempt will be made to expect medical proof of conditions such as gender dysphoria. Nor will any person transitioning be subject to intrusive questioning by any representative of Bedfordshire Police.**

**4.2.6 All Gender Recognition Certificates will be honoured.**

**4.2.7 No trans person will suffer discrimination at any stage in the interview process, or for selection for promotion, or at any other time.**

#### 4.3 Remedies

4.3.1 Any employee who feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy should, if they feel able to, try to resolve the matter informally by discussion with the other party. If that fails, the matter should be taken up with their line manager. If there appears to be no prospect of the parties reaching agreement the matter should be taken forward by the use of the Grievance procedure.

## 5. SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICY

### 5.1 STATEMENT

5.1.1 Bedfordshire Police values its entire workforce, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender assignment. It aims to create an environment in which the sexual orientation of all its members is respected.

### 5.2 Mainstreaming Sexual Orientation

5.2.1 Recruitment, progression and promotion will be based entirely on relevant criteria, which do not include sexual orientation.

- 5.2.2 Everyone is treated with equal dignity and fairness regardless of their sexual orientation.
- 5.2.3 Homophobic abuse, harassment or bullying (for example, name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour, and intrusive questions) will be treated as a serious offence, and will be dealt with under the appropriate procedure.
- 5.2.4 Homophobic propaganda, in the forms of written materials, graffiti, music or speeches will not be tolerated.
- 5.2.5 Bedfordshire Police will provide a supportive environment for employees who choose to be open about their sexuality. However, it is an individual's right to choose. To 'out' someone without his or her permission is a form of harassment, and will be treated as such.
- 5.2.6 Assumptions will not be made that partners of employees are always of the opposite sex. Whenever possible, workplace benefits will apply equally to same sex partners.
- 5.2.7 Sexual orientation issues will be included in all equality training, internal employee surveys, monitoring of complaints of harassment etc. The results of this monitoring will be published.

### **5.3 Remedies**

- 5.3.1 Any employee who feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy should, if they feel able to, try to resolve the matter informally by discussion with the other party. If that fails, the matter should be taken up with their line manager. If there appears to be no prospect of the parties reaching agreement the matter should be taken forward by the use of the Grievance procedure.

## **6. RELIGION AND BELIEF POLICY**

### **6.1 STATEMENT**

- 6.1.1 Bedfordshire Police celebrates and values the diversity brought to its workforce through individuals and aims to create an environment where the cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs of all its employees are respected.

### **6.2 Mainstreaming Religion & Belief**

Bedfordshire Police seeks to ensure that:

- 6.2.1 Recruitment, selection, training and development are based on relevant criteria, which do not include religious belief or non-belief (except in the case of a genuine occupational requirement where it may be possible to establish that being of a certain faith is a genuine occupational requirement for certain specified positions).
- 6.2.2 Members of any religion or none are treated with equal dignity and fairness.
- 6.2.3 Under-represented groups in society are encouraged to apply for jobs.
- 6.2.4 Where possible, appropriate services are provided to meet the cultural and religious needs of all employees.

6.2.5 Everything in this policy has the aim of ensuring equal treatment for all employees, regardless of any religion or none. It is based on the principle that everyone has the right to his or her own belief system. However, they have no right to enforce it on others.

### **6.3 Dress Code**

6.3.1 Bedfordshire Police operates a dress code policy, which sets standards for:

6.3.1.1 Uniformed police officers, including special constables

6.3.1.2 Uniformed support staff and cadets

6.3.1.3 All staff not in uniform

6.4 Follow the [Dress Code Policy](#) link for more information.

### **6.5 Religious Observance**

6.5.1 All employees, regardless of religious belief or non-belief, are required to work their hours in accordance with their contract. There is likely to be some flexibility over how the hours are worked. Line managers should make every attempt to ensure that those whose religion requires them to pray at certain times during the day are free to do so. In addition, requests from those who require, for example, an extra hour at midday on Friday, or to not work beyond sunset on Friday should be accommodated where possible.

6.5.2 The Force will make reasonable efforts to provide a suitable space for prayer and religious observance if practical. In some cases individual requirements will be met by facilities in the locality.

6.5.3 Any weekend working arrangements shall ensure that no one is forced or pressured to work at times when their religious beliefs forbid them to do so.

### **6.6 Leave for Religious Festivals**

6.6.1 By custom, holiday arrangements include time off at Christmas and Easter, both of which are Christian religious festivals. In the interests of diversity, those practising other religions or none have a right to use their annual leave entitlement to take leave on the dates of most significance to them, providing these days are booked with the agreement of their line manager and the operational requirements of the organisation. Further requests for holiday entitlement to be taken at times of religious significance will be treated sympathetically.

6.6.2 The number of annual leaves days overall will remain as in the contract of employment, for all employees, of any religious belief or none.

### **6.7 Extended Leave**

6.7.1 If an employee requests extended leave at a particular time for the purpose of going on pilgrimage, the line manager should attempt to agree to the request. The amount of time that is reasonable to take off will vary according to individual circumstances and operational needs. Normally, any extension of leave beyond annual leave entitlement will be without pay.

6.7.2 Employees with relative's abroad may have particular religious/cultural needs for occasional extended leave for births, weddings, and deaths. Line managers should treat such requests for leave sympathetically and in line with 7.1 above.

## **6.8 Offensive Actions or Behaviour**

- 6.8.1 Any attempt at coercion or bullying of others to comply with a particular belief system, for example through distribution of hate literature, propaganda, offensive remarks, may result in disciplinary action.
- 6.8.2 Any employee who feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy should, if they feel able to, try to resolve the matter informally by discussion with the other party. If that fails, the matter should be taken up with their line manager. If there appears to be no prospect of the parties reaching agreement the matter should be taken forward by the use of the Grievance Procedure.

## **6.9 Remedies**

- 6.9.1 Any employee who feels that they are not being treated fairly in accordance with this policy should, if they feel able to, try to resolve the matter informally by discussion with the other party. If that fails, the matter should be taken up with their line manager. If there appears to be no prospect of the parties reaching agreement the matter should be taken forward by the use of the Grievance procedure.

## **7. Remedies & Assistance**

If you require further information about any of the issues in this policy contact the Diversity Manager x 2804 or email ✉ [neil.carter@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:neil.carter@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk) or ☎ Typetalk 18001 01234 842 804

You can also contact your line manager if you have a grievance and need more information about what to do next.

## **8. Areas of responsibilities under these policies:**

### **Police Authority members**

- To support and promote these policies.

### **Chief Constable and Force Executive**

- To take ownership of the policies.
- To promote a positive and supportive culture throughout the organisation.

### **Managers**

- To create a supportive working environment.
- To treat colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Communicate the details of these policies.
- Take complaints of harassment and/or bullying seriously and deal with them quickly and efficiently.
- Intervene to stop harassment and/or bullying.

### **Human Resources**

- Publicise the policies and any linked procedures.
- Maintain and update these policies as appropriate.
- Provide advice and support to managers and employees.

### **Employees**

- Comply with these policies.
- Treat colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Be aware of your own standards of behaviour and set a good example to others.
- Make it clear that you find harassment and bullying unacceptable.
- Intervene to stop harassment and/or bullying and give support to recipients of harassment and bullying.

### **Staff Associations & Trade Unions**

- Publicise the policies and any linked procedures.
- Help to create a supportive working environment.
- Intervene to stop harassment and/or bullying and give support to recipients of harassment and bullying.

## **Diversity - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What does diversity mean?**

**Many people equate diversity with cultural differences or positive action. But diversity is not so simply defined. Diversity is more than simply “us vs. them” – it is the understanding that we are all unique in various ways. Diversity should not be seen as a detriment, but rather an asset, a celebration of our individuality as well as our commonalities.**

### **How does diversity affect people on an individual level?**

Diversity impacts on us every day of our lives, wherever we go. Diversity influences our thinking and behaviour, including:

- Our communication style: how directly and emotionally we communicate, our pace of conversation, even language restrictions.
- Our conflict resolution style and culture: our comfort level receiving assistance from third parties, and how high our concern is for our and others' interests.
- Our learning style: whether we learn most effectively by listening, doing, or visualising.
- Our working style: whether we are team-oriented, prefer individual achievement, and under what type of leadership style we work best.

- Status differentiation/power distance: whether we see others as our equals, if we defer to people of higher status, and how formally we treat others of different status.
- Our hierarchy of values: where family, achievement, financial and other concerns rank on our priority list.
- How we form personal and professional relationships.
- How we handle responsibility, such as whether we believe in individual or group responsibility and the importance of saving face.
- Our use of time: whether we are mono or polychronic or see time as linear or spiral.
- Our use of space: how close we are comfortable standing to others or the appropriateness of touching.

### **What are the benefits of diversity?**

Diversity has many benefits when handled inclusively and respectfully. In interpersonal relationships, diversity gives us new perspectives. Within teams, diversity can bring balance, as some people will be more comfortable than others taking on different roles, and each person brings different knowledge, experiences, and abilities. This can also lead to new ideas and greater creativity, and help to prevent a phenomenon called “group think” in which everyone agrees with an idea in order to conform. Furthermore, understanding diversity can help you personally to understand others and improve interpersonal relationships with people different than you, as well as learn things about yourself you might never have discovered.

### **Sexual Orientation**

#### **Q] Do the Regulations apply to transgender people?**

**A]** No. Discrimination against people who have undergone gender reassignment treatment is a separate issue and is not related to sexual orientation. It is covered by the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999. There are separate Guidelines available which cover these regulations.

#### **Q] How might discrimination occur?**

**A]** By treating employees less favourably in any way, for a reason connected to their sexual orientation. Bedfordshire Police Service also discriminates if it applies a rule or has a practice that puts people of a particular sexual orientation at a disadvantage

#### **Q] Does the legislation only apply to gay and lesbian people?**

**A]** No. The legislation protects everyone - i.e. those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual. It will also protect those whose employers or colleagues believe them to be of a particular sexual orientation, regardless of whether this is true. It will even protect those who are treated less favourably because they associate with people of a particular orientation.

#### ***Explanation of Terms:***

The term ““homophobia” and ‘out’ are used in this statement in the following sense:

Expressions of dislike, hate or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as homophobia, although the terms xenophobia and biphobia are also coming into use. Heterosexism is any negative valuing and discriminatory treatment of individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay,

bisexual or those perceived to be so. It is based on social values, which teach that everyone is or should be heterosexual.

To 'out' someone is to publicly declare that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Employees are vulnerable to being outed by colleagues. This can be unintentional, or a calculated act. Either way the individual's right to privacy has been compromised. Employees should not 'out' another employee. To deliberately 'out' someone is a form of harassment and will be treated as a breach of the grievance procedure.

### ***Religion or Belief***

#### **Q] Do the Religion or Belief regulations cover all religions and beliefs?**

**A]** It is likely that minority religions (e.g. Rastafarians, Scientologists) will be covered and probably also such belief systems as Humanism. ACAS advises that non-belief is likewise covered.

#### **Q] How should managers deal with employees spreading faiths in the workplace?**

**A]** Employees should not be using work time to make converts or spread their faith. If religious employees want to meet during lunchtime to celebrate/share their religious experiences etc, that would not be unreasonable, but no other staff member should be subjected to pressure to join religious groups (or any other groups). Behaviour that offends, intimidates, is hostile, degrading or humiliating may constitute harassment under the new regulations and may be cause for disciplinary action.

#### **Q] Do prayer rooms have to be provided regardless of the number of worshippers involved?**

**A]** No, but it would be good practice for the organisation to make a quiet room available for prayer or contemplation.

#### **Q] How should the balance between different views be managed?**

**A]** Staff will have a range of views of issues concerning same sex relationships, just as lesbian, gay and bisexual employees will have different opinions on the morality of the doctrines of some religions. The regulations do not seek to infringe anyone's rights to hold these views, but neither should they be made manifest in the workplace in such a way that offends, intimidates or humiliates, is hostile, degrading or humiliating to others.

#### **Q] Can an existing employee who is religious refuse to work with a gay employee on religious grounds, or vice versa?**

**A]** No. The regulations are intended to protect people from discrimination. Any collusion with such a request could encourage a claim of harassment by a lesbian or gay employee within the definition of harassment under the regulations. The same would apply if a lesbian or gay employee refused to work with a religious colleague because of their views on homosexuality.

Disciplining a member of staff who refused, for example, to work with a lesbian or gay colleague would not constitute unfair discrimination.

**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION/LEGISLATION**

None

**GUIDANCE**

The Policy Author should in the construction of the policy consult as appropriate with the following departments of the Force.

Civil Litigation	Community Action
Data Protection	Diversity Adviser
Estates	Finance
Health Safety & Welfare	Information Security
IS/IT	Procurement
Professional Standards	Risk Manager
Training	Transport

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ASSESSMENT**

This policy is suitable for access by the General Public

Paragraph:  
Exemption: None

Freedom of Information Officer Signature : V Barham

**RATIFICATION BY HRMG**

**SENIOR COMMANDER SIGNATURE** : **V Hislop**

**DATE** : **July 2006**