

Global equality and diversity policy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is designed to help implement the commitment of Sightsavers to diversity. Sightsavers operates in many different parts of the world each with its own unique cultural identity and organisationally we are keen to maximise the benefits of this rich resource.
- 1.2 Sightsavers defines diversity as valuing everyone as an individual. This definition encompasses moving beyond simple tolerance to recognising and respecting individual differences.

2.0 Scope and definitions

- 2.1 Every employee of Sightsavers, or prospective employees, trustees, volunteers, partners, beneficiaries, contractors and suppliers has the right to fair and equal treatment.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of every individual, whether working alone or within a team, to ensure their own conduct conforms to the expected standards as stated in this policy and to report any inappropriate behaviour that may be observed.
- 2.3 As a global equal opportunities employer Sightsavers is committed to embracing diversity throughout our workforce by creating an inclusive environment that reflects the many cultures and locations where we work. We recognise that a diverse workforce promotes a positive working environment and helps us achieve our mission. Our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and we will actively promote the inclusion of individuals with a disability.
- 2.4 One of our guiding organisational values is that 'people with visual impairment should be able to develop their potential to the full', and that 'we work with disabled people and others to promote equal rights and opportunities'.
- 2.5 This policy applies to recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment (including performance management, reward, promotion, training and development) and every other aspect of employment. It also applies to Sightsavers trustees and volunteers. We will reflect this policy in our ways of working with partners, supporters, consultants and contractors.
- 2.6 Sightsavers' Global Equality and Diversity policy must be strictly adhered to by all parties regardless of length of service or seniority. Sightsavers will not tolerate any form of discrimination including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Discrimination, abuse or failure to comply with organisational policy and practice may result in disciplinary action being taken, which could result in summary dismissal in serious cases and will be addressed through the Global Disciplinary Policy. Any employee who believes that they may have been subjected to treatment that breaches this policy may raise the matter through Sightsavers' Global Grievance Policy. Failure to comply with this policy by third parties could result in the termination of the relationship with Sightsavers.

2.7 Definitions:

“**Inclusive environment**” is the provision of working conditions, arrangements and practices that are free from all forms of discrimination and harassment and promote and foster good relationships between different groups.

“**Diversity**” includes all the characteristics and cultural influences that make each person a unique individual.

The “**Global Grievance Policy**” is designed to cover problems or concerns that are directly affecting an employee.

The “**Global Disciplinary Policy**” is designed to ensure all employees are treated fairly, consistently and sensitively in relation to cases of unsatisfactory conduct and any action that may be taken as a result.

“**Discrimination**” is less favourable treatment to a person (or persons) that is not capable of being justified.

3.0 Organisational commitments

3.1 At Sightsavers we aim to:

- Provide a safe and accessible working environment that values and respects the identity and culture of each individual.
- Ensure the working environment is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Recognise, respect and value the differences we all bring to work.
- Ensure that diversity is encouraged and embraced throughout the organisation.
- Continually improve our understanding and application of diversity by identifying and promoting best practice and reviewing our policy regularly.

3.2 Sightsavers will uphold these commitments through the following actions:

- Periodically review our processes to ensure that we encourage diversity through all our organisational policies and procedures.
- Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of local contexts and cultures.
- Periodically review our selection practices, to ensure an inclusive system whereby individuals are selected, developed, promoted and treated solely on the basis of their merits and abilities.
- Embrace appropriate local country disability initiatives and quality standards where available.
- Ensure our policies and practices address potential issues of work-life balance and support employees with any sex/gender-specific difficulties they may encounter while working for Sightsavers.

- Ensure training, development and progression opportunities are provided to all employees equally.
- Comply with legislation promoting diversity across different countries and cultures.
- Promote organisational diversity even where the legal or cultural frameworks do not automatically require this.
- Provide fair and transparent pay structures and reward systems and uphold the principles set out in our Global Reward Policy.
- Ensure all employees are managed in a fair and equitable way within the performance management framework.
- Provide cross cultural learning opportunities where appropriate.

3.3 Sightsavers will maintain our commitment to diversity through our work with partner organisations and local communities by:

- Supporting both existing and new partners to increase diversity awareness, knowledge and skills in their organisation and in the communities, through the provision of appropriate capacity building and resources.
- Acknowledging and valuing the similarities and differences of all partners when planning programmes, policies, procedures and in assigning resources.
- Listening and responding to local community views.
- Ensuring Sightsavers' written and electronic based communications and material is available and accessible to all audiences.

4.0 Monitoring

- 4.1 The effectiveness of our policies and practices are monitored by collecting data on existing employees and potential candidates for new roles. We encourage all employees to disclose personal information, including their ethnicity and disability status, to help inform us about how we can best support diversity in the workforce.

We work with partners in low and middle income countries to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

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