

IOG EQUALITY POLICY (EP)

Review Date: September 2016

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 The IOG is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and is responsible for ensuring that no job applicant, employee, director, volunteer or member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (together the 'Protected Characteristics').

1.2 The IOG recognises that today's society is diverse; and the IOG will be responsible for ensuring that there is open access to all those who wish to participate in all aspects of our activities and that everyone is treated fairly.

1.3 Where appropriate, the IOG will encourage partner organisations to adopt, apply and demonstrate their commitment to the principles of equality.

2. Purpose of this Equality Policy ("EP")

2.1 The IOG recognises that individuals (and/or certain sections of the groundsman community) may have been affected by discrimination in the past and may have been denied the opportunity to participate equally and fully in our society as a whole.

2.2 This EP has been produced to prevent and tackle any discrimination, or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, that may preclude some people from participating fully in our activities.

3. Legal Requirements

3.1 The IOG is required by law not to discriminate and recognises its legal obligations under, and will abide by the requirements of, the following:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975, 1986 & 1999
- Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003.
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Gender Recognition Act 2004;
- Equality Act 2010
- Any later amendments to the above Acts/regulations, or future including any equivalent legislation (as amended) in any UK jurisdiction, any later amendments to the above and to any equivalent legislation in any UK jurisdiction and any other existing or subsequent legislation that may be relevant to the IOG.

3.2 The IOG will seek relevant and appropriate advice each time this EP is reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the current legal framework and good practice.

4. Discrimination, harassment and victimisation

The IOG recognises the following:

4.1 Discrimination can take the following forms:

4.1.1 *Direct Discrimination* - treating someone less favourably than you would treat others in the same circumstances;

4.1.2 *Indirect Discrimination* - imposing requirements or conditions that appear to apply equally to all but which, in practice can disadvantage certain sections of the population. Such requirements or conditions are lawful only if they can be objectively justified;

4.1.3 *Harassment* - inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact that is objectionable or causes offence to the recipient. Harassment is unlawful if directed towards people because of their sex, gender reassignment status, race, ethnic origin, nationality, age, sexual orientation, disability or religion or belief, or if the conduct is of a sexual nature. The IOG is committed to ensuring that our employees, members and volunteers are able to conduct their activities free from harassment or intimidation;

4.1.4 *Bullying* is a form of personal harassment. It is the misuse of power, or position, to persistently unjustifiably criticise, humiliate and/or undermine an individual's confidence;

4.1.5 *Victimisation* - when someone is treated less favourably than others because it is known or suspected that he or she has taken action against the IOG under the discrimination legislation (as previously outlined at 3.1 above) or provided information about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

4.2 The IOG regards discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation, as described above, as serious misconduct. All complaints made under clause 7 below will be taken seriously and appropriate disciplinary action may be brought against any employee, director, volunteer or member who discriminates against, harasses, bullies or victimises any other person.

4.3 When any decision is made about any individual, the only personal characteristics that may be taken into account are those that are consistent with any relevant legislation and are relevant to the substance of the decision being made.

5. Responsibility, implementation and communication

5.1 The following responsibilities will apply:

5.1.1 The Directors and CEO are responsible for ensuring that this EP is implemented, followed and reviewed when appropriate. The IOG Directors are also responsible for ensuring that this EP is enforced and any breaches are dealt with.

5.1.2 The IOG Chair supported by the CEO will ensure that equality is included as an agenda item at Board meetings when appropriate and that the Board takes equality issues into consideration when making decisions.

5.1.3 The CEO has the operational responsibility for the implementation of this EP.

5.1.4 An IOG employee, designated by the CEO, has the day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this EP and for achieving any equality related actions resulting from this. The IOG employee's work programme will be amended to reflect this.

5.1.5 All IOG employees, directors, volunteers and members have the responsibility to respect, follow and promote the spirit and intentions of this EP. Employees' individual work programmes will be amended to include equality related tasks, where appropriate.

5.2 This EP will be implemented immediately following Board approval. Implementation requires the following actions:

5.2.1 The IOG will regularly review its employment practices to ensure their continuing compliance with the relevant legislation. All recruitment material will include a link to the IOG's Equality policy statements;

5.2.2 No job applicant will be placed at a disadvantage by requirements or conditions which are not necessary to the performance of the job or which constitute unfair discrimination. This provision will equally apply to any selection process for consultants, advisers and suppliers to the IOG;

5.2.3 Consultants and advisers (and where appropriate suppliers) to the IOG will be required to abide by this EP. This EP will be referred to in any service level agreements or contracts issued by the IOG:

5.2.4 The IOG will produce, maintain and monitor an action plan to ensure the objectives of this EP are consistently delivered throughout all areas of the organisation: and

5.2.5 The IOG recognises that, in some cases, to further the principle of equality, unequal effort and resource may be required. If appropriate and proportionate, the IOG will consider positive action or introduce special measures to assist any group which is currently underrepresented in its membership, as employees, as directors as volunteers or in IOG activities.

5.3 This EP will be communicated in the following ways:

5.3.1 This EP will be part of any employee handbook (or equivalent paper or electronic document). This EP is for guidance only and will not form part of any contract of employment with any IOG employee. Reference will be made to this EP in any code of conduct.

5.3.2 This EP will be covered in the induction of all IOG employees. Evidence that it has been read and understood by the individual receiving the training is required to be kept.

5.3.3 A copy of this EP will be publicly available on the IOG website and copies in other formats can be requested from Head Office. All members will be made aware of this EP's existence. A notice and explanation of any revisions to this EP will be published on the website.

5.3.4 Each time this EP is reviewed, IOG Employees and volunteers will be consulted. Following the consultation process a notice of the changes made will be publicly available.

5.3.5 The IOG will promote continuing personal development for all employees and volunteers to support equal opportunities within the organisation and, where appropriate provide specialist facilities, equipment or training.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 This EP will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn. A review of this EP will take place as and when required but not less than once every three years.

6.2 The equality action plan, created to ensure the intent of this EP is delivered, will be reviewed by the CEO and the employee with the responsibility for its implementation regularly, but in any event not less than once every 12 months.

6.3 On an annual basis, statistical and, if appropriate qualitative, information will be produced by the CEO for the Board, and will be published internally and externally, to show the impact of this EP.

7. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and other complaints

7.1 To safeguard individual rights under this EP, any IOG employee, director, volunteer, member or job applicant who believes they have suffered inequitable treatment within the scope of this EP, may raise the matter through the appropriate procedure.

7.2 Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee, volunteer or member who violates this EP.

7.3 An individual raising a grievance will not be penalised for doing so unless it is untrue and not made in good faith.

7.4 As with all grievance procedures, the final point of appeal relating to this EP is to the Chair on behalf of the IOG Board.

7.5 Non-employment related complaints regarding this EP should be addressed to the the CEO or any other person specified on the website to be the main point of contact for matters relevant to this EP.
