

## **Policy on Equality and Diversity**

1. The Commission is totally opposed to all forms of unfair discrimination. It is committed to conducting its business in a way which is fair and appropriate to all sections of the community. This may mean taking positive steps to ensure equal opportunities in employment and equal access to its service.
2. The Commission will demonstrate its commitment by promoting, maintaining and rigorously implementing this Policy and a Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity, which will underpin all decisions and actions taken by the Commission and its employees.

## **Employment**

3. The Commission seeks to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on grounds of, for example, sex, disability, colour, race, nationality, ethnic group, regional or national origin, age, marital status, trade union activity, political or religious belief, class or sexual orientation.
4. The Commission is committed to providing appropriate and relevant training in equality and diversity for all staff.

## **Service delivery**

5. The Commission recognises the need to deliver services in ways which are appropriate to everyone and whenever possible removing barriers which will limit access.
6. The Commission is committed to following the requirements of legislation against discrimination and related victimisation which are summarised in the Commission's Code of Practice.

## **Discrimination**

7. The Commission recognises that discrimination may be direct or indirect and aims to ensure that its policy and procedures cover both.
8. 'Direct discrimination' consists of treating a person less favourably than others are, or would be, treated in the same circumstances.
9. 'Indirect discrimination' consists of applying, in any circumstances, a requirement or condition which, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group.

## **Implementation and review**

10. The Commission will review and monitor the implementation of the policy and take action as necessary. It will maintain an advisory group to help it to do this, the terms of reference of which are described in the Code of Practice..
11. It is the individual responsibility of every member of staff to ensure this policy is applied in practice, both in employment and in serving the public.
12. The responsibility to abide by the Commission's Equality and Diversity Policy and Code of Practice will be included in every job description, making it a contractual obligation. A special responsibility falls on those who have staff management, recruitment and personnel management responsibilities.
13. The Deputy Ombudsmen and Deputy Chief Executive collectively, have responsibility for the implementation of this policy, with one of the Deputies nominated to take the lead role.

