



SIGBI Equality and Diversity Policy

Foreword

Soroptimist International (SI) is a worldwide organisation for women in management and the professions, working through service projects to advance human rights and the status of women. SI is a vibrant, organisation for to-day's professional and business women. We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong and peaceful communities worldwide.

Membership

Soroptimist Clubs are Associations and membership **is restricted exclusively to women.**

Our Mission Statement

Through international partnerships and a global network of members, SI inspires action and creates opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls by :

- Advocating for equity and equality of opportunities
- Creating safe and healthy environments
- Increasing access to education
- Developing leadership and practical skills for a sustainable future

Our Values

- The advancement of the status of women
- High ethical standards
- Human rights for all
- Equality, development and peace

SIGBI is an organisation offering professional women with a social conscience, opportunities for community and humanitarian service. We aim to be the leading women's voluntary service organisation by committing our time, skills, knowledge and expertise to improve the lives of women and girls globally. Professional women of all ages, cultures, ethnic groups and religious beliefs are welcome. The organisation is non religious, non sectarian and non party political.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 SIGBI undertakes to promote equality and diversity, not to discriminate either directly or indirectly and expects members to deal fairly and equitably between individuals in respect of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion, nationality or age, gender reassignment, HIV status, political affiliation or trade union membership or any personal characteristics.

Members as well as leaders are made aware of their responsibility for taking all reasonable steps to adhere to and enforce this policy in respect of both members and staff.

- 1.2 In implementing this policy, SIGBI will encourage members to ensure that the principles are observed in their dealings with each other, with staff, with members, associates, and our guests, contractors, and partner organisations.

2. Definition

- 2.2 Neither Direct nor Indirect discrimination is acceptable. (Direct discrimination is when an individual is treated differently because of disability, age, gender, marital status, ethnic or national origins, sexual orientation, race, colour, nationality, religion or any personal characteristics. Indirect discrimination is when a condition is unreasonably applied equally to all, but not all can comply leading to the detriment of some individuals.)

3. General Principles

- 3.1 SIGBI is committed to strengthening and retaining membership which is valued and whose diversity reflects the communities it serves, enabling it to fulfil its mission as set out above.
- 3.2 SIGBI is also committed through its behaviours and values policy to enabling every member of the organisation to achieve her full potential in an environment characterised by dignity and mutual respect.
- 3.3 Equality of opportunity means that diversity is viewed positively and that different individuals can contribute unique combinations of experience, knowledge and skills.
- 3.4 SIGBI strives to be an organisation that women want to join and to participate in its programme work.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Federation Consultative Council Members (FCC) and Members of the Federation Management Board (FMB) are responsible for ensuring that its Clubs are made aware of the requirements of this policy.
Federation Board Members (members of the Board who are officers of the SIGBI with operational responsibility for the management of the Federation) and Directors carry lead responsibility for ensuring that: -
 - a) they carry out their responsibilities in a manner consistent with the policy;
 - b) members are made aware of their responsibilities under the policy;
 - c) any allegations of a breach of the requirements of this policy are promptly and properly investigated and that appropriate action is taken;
 - d) appropriate records of membership decisions (recruitment and invitation and resignation) are maintained within the Club;
 - e) SIGBI be a champion of equality of opportunity, promoting and encouraging all members and staff of SIGBI, to realise their full potential;
 - f) they take positive action to promote equality of opportunity;
 - h) they undertake to ensure that all members, staff and key external contacts are made aware of this policy and the procedure for reporting complaints, good practice and improvements;
 - i) they aim to create an environment in which positive relations are fostered;
 - j) SIGBI undertakes to provide a positive, inclusive ethos with a shared commitment to challenging and preventing discrimination to respecting diversity and difference and to encouraging good relationships between people of different groups;

- k) SIGBI deems that wilful discrimination is counter to the aims of the organisation and in conflict with its behaviours and values

4.2 All SIGBI members

All members are expected to observe this policy in their behaviour towards other members, staff and those supported in project work. In particular, members should:

- a) comply with the requirements of this policy,
- b) co-operate in the implementation of measures introduced by the FEB to foster equality and diversity.

5. Leadership and Personal Development

- 5.1 Every new member will receive a membership pack, including SIGBI Behaviours and Values and a copy of this Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 5.2 SIGBI Leadership Development Sub Committee designs and delivers leadership training and personal development opportunities.
- 5.3 As part of its overall commitment to equality for a diverse membership SIGBI aims to create a culture in which all members have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- 5.4 To achieve this policy objective, SIGBI deals with harassment and bullying through the mediation policy.

6. Communication of Policy

SIGBI will publicise its commitment to equality and diversity by the following means:

- a) By publishing this policy on its website
- b) By making this policy available to all new members on joining the organisation.
- c) By its incorporation into leadership development and training modules

7. Grievances and Discipline

- 7.1 A member who considers that this policy is not being applied appropriately to themselves or to another member should seek resolution through the SIGBI mediation procedure.
- 7.2 A member who has in good faith made a complaint shall not for that reason receive less favourable treatment than any other member.

8. Review of Policy and Procedure

- 8.1 This policy and the related procedures and practices will be subject to regular review in the light of developments in legislation, future issues of codes of practice and other examples of good practice. The Director of Membership will submit to the Federation Executive Board periodic reports on the operation and effectiveness of the policy.
- 8.2 Members will be informed of any legislative changes that change or impact on this policy in any way.

9 Legal Obligations

SIGBI is governed by the laws of England and Wales and within the UK SIGBI will comply with its obligations under the following legislation and statutory provisions of the:

Sex Discrimination Acts 1975/1986,

Equal Pay Act 1970,

Race Relations Act (1976)

Race Relations Amendment Act (2000),

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2003),

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations (2003)

Race Relations Act 1976 (amendment) Regulations (2003)

Gender Recognition Act 2004

all of which are now covered by the Equality Act 2010

January 2011