

LMC

Livestock & Meat Commission

Equality Policy for Service Providers

1 Introduction

LMC are an *equal opportunities service provider*. This means that LMC will make good faith efforts to comply with the spirit and letter of the equality laws.

We will continually work to ensure that our service users will always be treated with dignity and respect in a harmonious environment that is open and welcoming to all.

We will not discriminate unlawfully against or harass any person on the grounds of:

- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Religious or similar philosophical belief
- Political opinion
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins)
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Pregnancy or maternity

We will also work to ensure that our premises and the way in which we deliver our services do not unreasonably exclude or disadvantage those of our service users or potential service users who have disabilities. To this end we will comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments that is imposed on us in relation to such persons. We understand that an unjustified failure to comply with that duty would be an act of unlawful discrimination.

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all those who use the services of LMC e.g. stakeholders, members of the public etc.

2 Service Users Rights

Our service users have a right to gain access to our services and to be treated by us in a way that is fair, open and welcoming and that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. They also have a right to complain about any treatment from us that falls below acceptable standards should it occur.

LMC have established a complaints procedure to deal with such complaints and we would encourage aggrieved persons to use it. This can be found at www.lmcni.com. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Our complaints procedure does not replace the right of aggrieved persons to also pursue complaints to a County Court.

Service users who make complaints of discrimination and harassment, and others who give evidence or information in connection with such complaints, will not be victimised (i.e. they will not be discriminated against or harassed in retaliation for their actions). Victimisation is also discrimination contrary to the equality laws and this policy.

3 Service Users' Responsibilities

We ask our service users to respect this policy and our efforts to implement it. Service users should treat our employees and our other service users with dignity and respect. We will give serious consideration to withdrawing our services from any service users who fail to do this.

4 Employees Responsibilities

All our employees must comply with this policy. They must treat our service users with dignity and respect. They must not themselves commit any acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment against any other person. Such behaviour will not be permitted or condoned. We will treat it as misconduct which may warrant dismissal from employment.

All our employees should discourage discrimination and harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting service users who suffer such treatment. Any employee who is aware of any breaches or potential breaches of this policy should alert a manager or supervisor to enable us to deal with it.

5 LMC Responsibilities

LMC will continually make good faith efforts to implement this policy. This responsibility will be carried out by the CEO. LMC will:

- Provide all employees and managers with a copy of this policy and explain it to them at their induction training and other appropriate times
- Provide appropriate training to managers and to those employees who work in customer facing roles to prepare them to be able to deal effectively with breaches or potential breaches of this policy
- Display a copy of this policy www.lmcni.com where service users may read it
- Make copies of the policy available in alternative formats on request
- Ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly, seriously and confidentially and in accordance with our complaints procedure

- Set a good example by treating all service users with fairness, dignity and respect
- Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and will take appropriate action to stop it
- Monitor all complaints and review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) has granted an exemption to the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland as regards the production of an equality scheme and disability action plan. This exemption was granted in January 2018.

Exemptions to the production of an equality scheme and disability action plan are only granted in exceptional circumstances. When making its decision the ECNI took into account the current limited scope of the LMC's functions and activities in Northern Ireland.

The exemption relates to the duty to produce an equality scheme and disability action plan and not to the Section 75 duties and Disability Duties respectively. Therefore, although the Livestock and Meat Commission for Northern Ireland may be exempt from producing an equality scheme, it will still be subject to the Section 75 duties and the duties of Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.