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Equal Opportunities, Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Scope of this policy

- 1.1 This policy covers all OHE employees plus interns, secondees, contractors, consultants, casual and agency workers collectively referred to as employees in this policy. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and therefore may be amended from time to time.
- 1.2 The policy also extends to any dealings that anyone who works with the OHE has with members, customers, stakeholders, suppliers job applicants and other third parties.
- 1.3 In this policy, third party means any individual or organisation you encounter during the course of your work for us, and includes actual and potential members, clients, customers, consultants, suppliers, distributors, business contacts, job applicants, agents, advisers, and government and regulatory and other public bodies, including their advisors, representatives and officials, politicians and political parties.

2. Responsibility for this policy

- 2.1 All employees must ensure that they read, understand and comply with this policy.
- 2.2 The HR Department will be responsible for monitoring and review of this policy and employees will be advised of any changes.
- 2.3 The Leadership Team fully support this policy statement, but all employees are responsible for playing their part in achieving its objectives.

3. About this policy

- 3.1 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the OHE wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities and dignity at work. We believe passionately that employing a diverse workforce is central to our success and we value the differences that a diverse workforce brings. We oppose all forms of discrimination against employees, members, customers, stakeholders, job applicants, suppliers and members of the public on the grounds of the following "protected characteristics"; gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, religion, religious belief, age, disability or race (which includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins).
- 3.2 Employees should not discriminate against, harass or victimise another colleague, a member, customer, stakeholder, supplier, a job applicant, or any third party or any member of the public on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed above.
- 3.3 We believe that it is in the OHE's best interest and that of all those who work for us to ensure that the working environment is fair and inclusive and encourages all employees to fulfil their potential, based on performance and ability.
- 3.4 Every possible step will be taken therefore to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly and that decisions relating to recruitment, selection, appraisal, terms and conditions of employment, training, promotion, career management and employment termination are based solely on objective and job-related criteria.

3.5 Behaviour, actions or words that transgress this policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.

4. The Policy

4.1 In order to put this policy into practice in the day-to-day operation of the business the OHE will:

- ensure this policy is clearly communicated and available to all employees and managers upon joining the OHE through its publication in this handbook
- periodically examine and review the OHE's terms and conditions of employment, together with existing procedures and practices for recruitment, selection, promotion, appraisal and training, to ensure their compliance with this policy
- provide HR guidance from gender related experts and training for key decision makers such as managers and supervisory staff and those involved in recruitment, promotion and personnel and management development practices
- provide general awareness training for all decision makers and employees on gender equality and unconscious gender biases.
- develop mechanisms for resolving grievances about unfair discrimination and harassment.
- collect data, monitor and formally report findings in relation to the contents of this policy on a regular basis for review by the senior team and the HR department. This will also include the assessment of measures and targets relating to work-life balance, organisational culture, the gender balance in the leadership and decision-making group, gender equality in career progression and recruitment, integration of the gender dimension into teaching content and measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

4.2 Any employee found to be in breach of the equal opportunities or dignity at work practices will be subject to disciplinary action in line with OHE's disciplinary procedure. Conduct of this type may be deemed as gross misconduct which could lead to dismissal without notice.

5. How we enforce this policy

5.1 We investigate any complaint or allegation raised regarding a potential breach of this policy, and if an employee believes they have been harassed or discriminated against they should contact their Line Manager as soon as possible. If an employee wishes to take formal action, they will need to follow the grievance procedure and read the policy on bullying and harassment.

5.2 Employees will face disciplinary action if OHE find that they have harassed or discriminated against anyone else in breach of this policy. Sometimes this type of behaviour may amount to gross misconduct, in which case this could lead to dismissal without notice and with no payment in lieu of notice.

5.3 Occasionally, people make complaints knowing them not to be true. They might do this to avoid or deflect disciplinary action, for example. We view any complaint made in bad faith as an act of misconduct and this will normally lead to disciplinary action. In some cases, bad faith complaints may lead to summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

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Policy Reviewed May 2023	