



Sefton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF)

EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Approved by: SPCF Steering Group Committee

Approved on: May 2024

Next review due on: May 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

SPCF is committed to celebrating diversity, positively promoting equality, fostering equal opportunities and tackling discrimination in all it does. This policy should be read and adhered to in conjunction with all our other policies. Any changes in service delivery will reflect this policy.

2. PRINCIPLES

SPCF supports the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in employment, volunteering, engagement activity and service delivery. We aim to encourage and value diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population.

Not only are there legal, moral and social reasons for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, it is in the best interests of the organisation to engage with the broadest representation of parent carers, as well as recruit and develop the best people from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible. It is also important to promote workplace inclusion, so our people feel valued and accepted in the organisation, without having to conform.

We aim to support all employees, volunteers and trustees in the organisation, regardless of their background or circumstances, enabling them to thrive in the organisation.

SPCF recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination.

Discrimination is acting unfairly against a group or individual through, for example, exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, harassment, victimisation, a failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect, where there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone, but which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic and cannot be justified.

All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

Employees and volunteers have a duty to cooperate with SPCF to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion and in preventing discrimination.

Employees and volunteers should draw the attention of the Chair to suspected discriminatory acts and to practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

3. STATEMENT OF INTENT

SPCF aims to provide equality and fairness for all job applicants, employees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time, fixed term or temporary.

It aims to ensure that no job applicant, worker or volunteer receives less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation).

Each employee, volunteer, trustee and contractor is responsible for their own compliance with this policy.

Breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees; appropriate action against a trustee; termination of contracts for services of consultants or trainers; or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.

3.1 SPCF is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and recognises that no employees, volunteers, members or people who use our services should experience unfair discrimination during their work or other dealings with SPCF on any grounds.

3.2 We aim to ensure that no job applicant, worker, volunteer, member or user of our services receive less favourable treatment from the organisation on the grounds of caring responsibilities, race, gender, gender orientation or reassignment, nationality, religion, belief or lack of belief, pregnancy and maternity, ethnic or national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation, economic status or disability.

3.3 We recognise that unfair discrimination can take many forms including stereotyping and misinformation, negative or abusive language, and the failure to take different needs into account when planning and delivering services. SPCF is committed to opposing unfair discrimination and to eliminating it from the ways in which we work.

3.4 SPCF is committed to going beyond avoiding unfair discrimination and actively encouraging diversity and inclusion across the organisation, starting with a warm welcome extended to all and encouraging inclusivity in all our practices.

3.5 This policy covers all areas of our work and activities, including the recruitment and selection of employees, volunteers and trustees; induction, training and development; conduct at work; disciplinary and grievance procedures; flexible working practices; parental and dependants' leave; supervision and appraisal; the working environment; and delivery of services.

3.6 SPCF will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and trustees will receive induction on the policy and that contractors will be fully informed.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY: SERVICE DELIVERY

SPCF will aim to provide welcoming and non-discriminatory services and will aim to promote equality of access by:

4.1 Aiming to provide publicity and information material in appropriate languages, formats and styles, where possible.

4.2 Monitoring the demographic information of users of our services.

4.3 Liaising with organisations who work with any underrepresented user populations such as black and minority ethnic community groups and disability groups.

4.4 Including information about equality, diversity and inclusion in the induction procedure for staff, volunteers and trustees.

4.5 Challenging misinformed, negative or offensive remarks about the groups of people named in the policy in a constructive way, in order to maintain an atmosphere where the people named in our policy are treated respectfully.

4.6 Ensuring as far as reasonably practicable that our premises, and any external premises we use, are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

4.7 Organising events and meetings at times of day that allow parent carers to be able to attend wherever possible.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY: EMPLOYMENT

SPCF recognises that implementing equality and diversity procedures in the way it recruits and selects its staff, volunteers and trustees is a vital step towards eliminating discrimination.

We recognise that under the Equality Act 2010, we will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments required to ensure that arrangements at work (e.g. hours of work, time off for therapy, purchasing equipment) do not place an applicant or worker who is disabled at a disadvantage to one who does not have that disability.

In order to work towards this, SPCF will organise recruitment and selection of staff in the following ways:

5.1 Adverts will be publicised widely so that they reach people from the groups named in the policy, commensurate with the role being recruited to. Adverts will include an appropriate short statement on equality, diversity & inclusion.

5.2 Selection criteria (job descriptions, person specifications) will be non-discriminatory and essential for the effective performance of the job.

5.3 All job descriptions and person specifications will include awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion and the ability to work in accordance with these principles.

5.4 Shortlisting and interview will be done by the interview panel and will be based on the job description and the person specification.

5.5 The interview panel will consist of a minimum of two people and, as far as possible, will have a diverse membership.

5.6 The interview panel members will either have previous training in, or an awareness of, equality and diversity in relation to the recruitment and selection process, or will be given an introduction to, and explanation of, the procedures.

5.7 We will record the details of the applicant's gender, age, ethnic origin and disability via the Equality monitoring form, which is separated from the selection process.

5.8 Reasonable adjustment will be made during the recruitment process for applicants with disabilities.

6. COMPLAINTS

Complaints about discrimination should be raised with the SPCF Chair. Initially the person making the complaint and the Chair should aim to resolve the matter informally.

It may be that discriminatory action is unwitting and easily resolved once the problem is clear.

If the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome or the complaint is very serious, they should raise the matter, in writing, as a formal complaint under SPCF's Complaints Procedure.

The following provides the legal framework for Equal Opportunities policy and practice:

Data Protection Act 1988

Working Time Regulations 1998

National Minimum Wage Act 1998

Code of Practice (Disability Discrimination) 1996

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000

Fixed Term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2001

The Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004
Work and Families Act 2006
Equality Act 2010