

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

### **Introduction**

Family Voice Southend (FVS) 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.

- All individuals and groups will be treated with respect and valued equally.
- We believe that no one, whatever their needs, should be disadvantaged in their contact with Family Voice Southend.
- We will actively promote race equality and encourage the reporting of racist incidents so that we can take action to reduce the frequency of incidents and support the victims of racist behaviour.
- We will make ourselves accessible to everyone.
- We will plan our meetings and events so that they are accessible to everyone.
- We will regularly review all our policies and procedures to ensure that they comply with legislation and good equalities practice. We will maintain an action plan.

### **RACE**

FVS is keen to actively promote racial equality in all its work. This means ensuring that the views and priorities of members from all ethnic minority groups are reflected in FVS's policies. As part of our commitment to openness, we consult widely when developing and evaluating policies to ensure that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account.

- We will celebrate diversity, positively promote racial equality, foster equal opportunities and tackle discrimination in all that we do.
- Racism and racial harassment is not tolerated and will be challenged when it is encountered.
- We will record racial discrimination.

## **DISABILITY**

The Disability Discrimination Act says a “disabled person” has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.” It covers therefore a wide range of physical, sensory and mental disabilities, including chronic mental problems and learning difficulties.

- We seek to identify and remove any policies and practices that disadvantage people with disabilities in receiving our services or support.
- People with disabilities will receive full and equal consideration throughout the whole recruitment and selection process, and positive action is taken to support them in this process by offering a guaranteed interview to candidates who meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition of disability and the essential criteria within the person specification.

Disabled employees will be supported through compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and will be given additional support as appropriate.

- We will ensure we only use accessible public buildings

## **AGE**

Age issues include the need for us to consider institutional age discrimination and how to remove it.

- We ensure that consultation and participation in decision making involves people across the age ranges.
- A range of working patterns is available to members, with recognition given to the importance of work-life balance and family and caring commitments for members of all ages.

## **GENDER**

A range of working patterns is available to all members, with recognition given to the importance of work life balance, family and caring commitments for men and women.

## **RELIGION AND BELIEF**

Legislation on discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief covers any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief. It does not include any philosophical or political belief unless that belief is similar to a religious belief.

- FVS will not tolerate harassment of members or staff by reason of their religion or belief.
- No member or job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their religion or belief.
- FVS will respond sensitively to balancing service needs against issues such as requests for leave for religious observance, or in laying down rules on dress or uniform

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

Legislation on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation covers homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual people. It does not extend to sexual practices and sexual offences.

- FVS will not tolerate harassment of members or employees for reasons of their sexual orientation or gender re-assignment.
- No member or job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sexual orientation, or gender re-assignment, or will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be justified.
- A person's sexual orientation has no bearing whatsoever on their ability or suitability to do their job.