

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum

Equal opportunities policy



Approved by:	SPCF Management Committee
Approved on	4 th November 2011
Reviewed on:	12 th July 2013, by SPCF Management Committee 10 th July 2015, by SPCF Management Committee 13 th July 2018, by SPCF Management Committee
Next review due on:	July 2021

PRINCIPLES

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) supports the principle of equality and diversity in employment and volunteering. We aim to encourage and value diversity and we recognise that talent and potential are distributed across the population. Not only are there moral and social reasons for promoting equality of opportunity, it is in the best interests of the organisation to recruit and develop the best people from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible.

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 co-operate with SPCF to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees and volunteers should draw the attention of the Chair to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

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 Equal Opportunities Policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action against employees; appropriate action against a member of the Management Committee; termination of contracts for services of consultants or trainers; or withdrawal of volunteer agreements.

- 1 SPCF is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and recognises that no employees, volunteers, members or people who use our services should experience discrimination on any grounds.
- 2 We aim to ensure that no job applicant, worker, volunteer, member or user of our services receives less favourable treatment 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 We recognise that 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 discrimination and to eliminating it from the ways in which we work.
- 4 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; and the working environment.
- 5 SPCF will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and Management Committee members will receive induction on the policy and that contractors will be fully informed.

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY: SERVICE DELIVERY

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

- 1 Aiming to provide publicity and information material in appropriate languages and styles.
- 2 Monitoring the users of our services.
- 3 Liaising with organisations who work with black and minority ethnic community groups and disability groups.
- 4 Including information about equal opportunities in the induction procedure for staff, volunteers and trustees.

- 5 By 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.
- 6 By ensuring as far as reasonably practicable that our premises, and any premises we use outside, are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- 7 By organising events and meetings at times of day that allow parent carers to be able to attend wherever possible, with expenses paid as per our Expenses and Remuneration Policy.

IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY: EMPLOYMENT

SPCF recognises that implementing Equal Opportunities 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:

- 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 equal opportunities.
- 2 Selection criteria (job descriptions, person specifications) will be non-discriminatory and essential for the effective performance of the job. All job descriptions and person specifications will include awareness of equal opportunities and ability to work in accordance with equal opportunities principles.
- 3 Shortlisting and interview will be done by the interview panel and will be based on the job description and the person specification.
- 4 The interview panel will consist of a minimum of three people and, as far as possible, will have a diverse membership.

- 5 The interview panel members will either have previous training in, or an awareness of, equal opportunities recruitment and selection, or will be given an introduction to and explanation of the procedures.
- 6 We will record the details of the applicant's gender, age, ethnic origin and disability via the Equal Opportunities monitoring form, which is separated from the selection process.
- 7 Reasonable adjustment will be made during the recruitment process for applicants with disabilities.
- 8 Recruitment of volunteers will follow the Volunteer Recruitment policy.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints about discrimination should be raised with the 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:

Equal Pay Act 1970 & (Amendment) Regulations 1983 and 2003
 Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 & 1986
 Race Relations Act 1976
 Race Relations Code of Practice 1984
 Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People 1990
 Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 & (Amendment) Act 1976
 Data Protection Act 1988
 Working Time Regulations 1998
 National Minimum Wage Act 1998
 Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 plus supporting regulations
 Code of Practice (Disability Discrimination) 1996
 Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
 Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
 Maternity and Parental Leave etc Regulations 1999 and 2006
 Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
 Fixed Term Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2001
 Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 The Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004
 Employment Equality (Age Discrimination) Regulations 2006

Work and Families Act 2006
Equality Act 2010