

EVERY PARENT & CHILD

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

EPC fully supports the principle of equality and diversity. We aim to encourage, value and manage 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 interest of this organisation to recruit and develop the best people for our jobs from as wide and diverse a pool of talent as possible.

The benefits include:

- ensuring our workforce really does represent the community we serve,
- being able to attract and retain the very best staff,
- giving our organisation the edge over other employers in an increasingly diverse and competitive labour market,
- improving staff morale and productivity,
- avoiding under-using and under-valuing able staff,
- managing all staff and volunteers better.

EPC recognises that certain groups and individuals in society are oppressed and disadvantaged due to discrimination directed against them. We aim to remove any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents individuals or groups from realising their potential and contributing fully to our organisation's performance and to develop an organisational culture that positively values diversity.

Discrimination operates through commonly held assumptions and prejudices, which are reinforced by laws, rules and customs. This makes discrimination appear normal and inevitable. Discrimination works by stereotyping people into different roles, by treating some people worse than others, or simply by ignoring them.

EPC is committed to opposing all forms of discrimination including that based on protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. This list is not exhaustive.

Discrimination can be direct, associative, perceptive, indirect, harassment (including by 3rd parties) or victimisation. (See glossary at end for definitions). All forms of discrimination are unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

Employees have a duty to co-operate with EPC to ensure that this policy is effective in ensuring equal opportunities and in preventing discrimination. Employees should draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or cases of bullying or harassment.

EPC recognises that the promotion of equal opportunities requires more than passive opposition to discrimination; we are therefore committed to taking positive action towards

equality of opportunity. We further recognise that the limited resources and the operational needs of the Centre may impose justifiable restrictions upon our ability to take such action. However, we will undertake regular monitoring and review the effectiveness of this Policy.

Responsibilities

EPC values its staff, contractors, volunteers, Trustees and service users, and expects them to be treated in a respectful manner. Accordingly, all have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The Chief Executive is responsible for providing advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, and to ensure the Policy document is kept up to date. The policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis and amended in line with new developments in Equality and Diversity best practice.

Aims

EPC aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity
- Celebrate and value diversity
- Eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination

EPC will provide equality of opportunity and equal treatment as an integral part of good practice. The organisation is committed to a working environment in which the contribution and needs of everyone are fully valued and recognised. We will support our staff, workers, volunteers, Trustees and contractors in not tolerating any inappropriate, violent or abusive behaviour from colleagues, other organisations or service users.

General purpose

EPC's practices will ensure that staff, volunteers, Trustees, and service users will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, race, sex, religion or cultural beliefs, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity (often called protected characteristics) and any latest legislation relating to Equality and Diversity.

EPC's commitment to anti-discriminatory practice relates to all kinds of discrimination, as set out below:

- Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another because they have a protected characteristic
- Indirect discrimination – when a requirement or a condition is applied which has a detrimental effect on a particular group or individual. This applies even if there was not a deliberate intention to discriminate.
- Associative discrimination – direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who has a protected characteristic.
- Perceptive discrimination - direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic even if they do not possess that characteristic.

- Harassment – unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic which violates a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This applies even if the conduct is not directed at the individual or if they do not have the protected characteristic.
- Third party harassment – potential liability for the harassment of staff by others such as clients or service users.
- Victimisation – when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint under the Equalities Act 2010 or it is thought that they have done so.

Employment Practices

EPC aims to promote equality and diversity as an employer and to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable in the context of the policy. Selection, recruitment, training, promotion and employment practices will be subject to regular review to ensure that they comply with the Equality and Diversity Policy. EPC regards discrimination, abuse, harassment, victimisation or bullying of staff, service users or others in the course of work as disciplinary offences that could be regarded as gross misconduct.

EPC as Service Provider

In developing its services and support materials EPC will seek to ensure access to its service users. This will include, wherever practicable, making specific access arrangements for its service users with disabilities or learning difficulties, or any other protected characteristic which may apply, such as religion and belief. EPC will attempt to ensure that none of its policies discriminate directly or indirectly against any group or individual.

Data Collection

EPC complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Any data, either qualitative and or quantitative, required in order to monitor the requirements or the impact of the Equalities Act 2010, will be collected where it is reasonable, proportionate and practical to do so. Any such requirements will be notified to EPC service users and will follow a common data format.

Equal Opportunities Policy Implementation:

- i) EPC is committed to promotion of equal opportunities in all aspects of the operation of the Charity including management, employment practices with both paid workers and volunteers, access to services and service provision.

EPC’s Mission Statement:

Our mission is to offer children in our community opportunities to learn, develop and thrive in their families and in society.

EPC’s values:

EPC is an approachable, flexible, resourceful, supportive, holistic organisation with high professional standards and its aim is to empower service users. We work with families, staff and all our partners in public services and other voluntary and community organisations for the benefit of local families. EPC adheres to the principles of equal opportunities and diversity.

EPC's objectives:

To advance the education of children resident or educated in the London Borough of Enfield and surrounding areas regardless of culture, beliefs or language who, because of difficulties in the school or home environment, require special assistance to help them complete their education.

We achieve this through:

- *Enabling children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health needs to access appropriate support.*
- *Informing children, young people and their families about the Special Educational Needs and Disability reforms and their entitlements.*
- *Engaging with children, young people and parents using our services to ensure their voice is heard when decisions affecting their lives are being made.*
- *Ensuring parents and carers have the knowledge to make decision on the services and support their families need.*

The Management Committee (also known as Board of Trustees) shall ensure that it acts in such a way that no individual or group referred to in this policy is discriminated against, in particular, in so far as is reasonable for it to do so:

- by making arrangements to accommodate the needs of the Management Committee and volunteers including travel and care costs;
 - by providing information, as far as resources allow, in a way that is accessible, for example, large print, community languages etc.;
 - by meeting in premises with facilities which are physically accessible to those participating;
 - by encouraging representation on the Management Committee of all groups facing discrimination for whom the Charity is relevant;
 - by making training in discrimination awareness and equal opportunities available
 - The recruitment of paid workers and volunteers shall be undertaken in accordance with this policy, in particular:
 - by ensuring that posts are advertised wherever possible in such a way as to encourage applications from groups experiencing discrimination;
 - by preparing job descriptions which clearly set out what the worker is to do, and person specifications which recognise that relevant experience can be as valuable as qualifications or previous paid employment;
 - by ensuring that in all selection procedures only factors relevant to the requirements of the post are taken into account, and that the spirit of the policy statement is adhered to
 - a copy of this policy is available on request by prospective applicants
- ii) The employment of paid workers and volunteers shall be undertaken in accordance with this policy, in particular:
- by providing training relevant to the needs of staff and designed to enable them to carry out their jobs;
 - by ensuring that any staff member who, in the course of their work, displays attitudes contrary to this policy to any person whether by word, behaviour or other manner shall be liable to disciplinary action;

- by recognising and responding to the individual needs of staff, especially those who are carers or who have disabilities, and ensuring that, within available resources, the necessary support is provided to enable them to work effectively.

Client Needs

In every aspect of the planning, management, access, provision and monitoring of services, the Management Committee and staff shall seek to promote equality of opportunity in accordance with this policy, in particular:

- by improving physical access to the charity for all individuals where resources allow and it is within the power of EPC, who is a tenant, to do this;
- by seeking to identify and respond to the needs of those groups experiencing discrimination, altering priorities and methods of service delivery where necessary;
- by seeking the views of client's through regular client feedback;
- by liaison and consultation with relevant groups and by regular analysis of the user profiles, to monitor the extent to which services are being taken up by groups experiencing discrimination.

Dealing with third parties

EPC will not unlawfully discriminate in dealings with third parties.

Training

EPC will ensure that all new employees, volunteers, and Management Committee members will receive induction on the policy and update training where necessary.

Review

The management of EPC shall regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in achieving the stated aims. Information on the effectiveness of the policy will be included in the Annual Report. This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Board of Trustees.

Complaints and Sanctions

EPC will treat seriously any complaints of unlawful discrimination on any of the stated grounds made by employees, volunteers, Management Committee members, service users or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints made by external parties will be investigated in accordance with EPC's Complaints Procedure and the complainant will be informed of the outcome.

In the event of an investigation concerning a complaint against an employee, EPC's Grievance Policy and Procedures will be followed and any action necessary dealt with under EPC's Disciplinary Procedure.

Complaints will be monitored annually and any outcomes/action recorded.

Appendix

Legislation

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we and our staff do not unlawfully discriminate under:

- (a) the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- (b) the Employment Rights Act 1996;
- (c) the Human Rights Act 1998;
- (d) the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000;
- (e) the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002;
- (f) the Civil Partnership Act 2004
- (g) the Work and Families Act 2006;
- (h) the Equality Act 2010; and
- (i) any other relevant legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination in employment and the provision of goods, facilities or services.

Glossary

Protected Characteristics

The protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity.

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse affect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Gender reassignment

A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The person does not have to be under medical supervision.

Race

Race includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups (e.g. Black Britons).

Religion or belief

Under the Equality Act 2010, religion includes any religion. It also includes lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sexual orientation

Includes bisexual, gay, heterosexual, and lesbian people.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see perceptive discrimination below), or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see associative discrimination below).

Associative discrimination

This is direct discrimination against someone because they are linked or associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination

This is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice in your company that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic and which cannot be justified in relation to the job.

Harassment

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

Third party harassment

Harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of your company, such as clients. EPC has a duty to prevent harassment and may be liable if aware that harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions and does not take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment, or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Positive action

Some people with protected characteristics are disadvantaged or under-represented in some areas of life, or have particular needs linked to their characteristic. They may need extra help or encouragement if they are to have the same chances as everyone else. The new positive action provisions held within the Equalities Act 2010 enable service providers to take proportionate steps to help people overcome their disadvantages or to meet their needs.

Cross ref: All EPC Policies, but particularly:
Complaints Policy and Procedure
Grievance Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Volunteer Handbook
Data Protection Policy
Whistleblowing Policy

This policy applies across the range of employment policies and practice, including those relating to Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Complaints.

Last Reviewed: July 2017

Next Review: July 2019