

No. 5 Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of intent

For us Too recognises that many people in our society experience discrimination or lack of opportunity for reasons that are not fair. This includes discrimination on the basis of: race, religion, creed, colour, national and ethnic origin, political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability (including mental illness), HIV status, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance, geographical area, social class, income level and criminal record.

For us Too will challenge discrimination and lack of opportunity in its own policies and practices and will help other organisations and individuals to do the same.

For us Too aims to create a culture that respects and values each other's differences. For us Too sees these differences as an asset to our work as they improve our ability to meet the needs of the families, partners and organisations that we serve.

All volunteers, employees and trustees of For us Too will read and declare their support for the objectives of this Equality and Diversity Policy. Failure to do so will result in further training followed by disciplinary action if necessary. All For us Too members will be encouraged to read this Policy.

2. What is discrimination?

For us Too believes that discrimination can take one or more of the forms set out below:

Direct discrimination is treating one person less favourably than another in the same or similar circumstances or segregating them from others solely because they are, for example, a lesbian, a gay man or because they have a disability or illness.

Refusing to employ someone who has the required skills because they are deaf or because they are pregnant would constitute such discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where there is a requirement or condition which applies equally to everyone but which, in practice, has an adverse impact on a particular group and cannot be justified.

For example, an unnecessary physical or age requirement can discriminate against women or older people. Setting language tests for a job where language skills and fluency are not essential criteria is another example.

Abuse and/or harassment - Discrimination also covers actions which amount to abuse and/or harassment of people or groups of people because, for example, they are a member of a national, racial or ethnic minority group, a woman, a lesbian, a gay man or have a disability or illness.

Victimisation occurs when a person is treated less favourably or is discriminated against because she/he has pursued or intends to pursue their rights in respect of alleged discrimination.

Institutional racism (Macpherson Report, 1999) is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.

It can be seen in the processes or attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination, to unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people.

Racist incident (Macpherson Report, 1999) is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. If the victim doesn't want to complain, another person may do so.

Discrimination in any of the forms stated above is unacceptable, regardless of whether there was any intention to discriminate or not.

3. Staff Development

Decisions about learning and development opportunities will be made in accordance with For us Too's training policy and all staff will have equal access to opportunities to enable them to develop in line with For us Too's aims and objectives.

4. Service Provision

All For us Too's services are covered by this policy.

For us Too will promote equality and diversity in its work with other agencies or individuals.

For us Too's services will be reviewed regularly and changed where needed.

All trainers, facilitators and consultants contracted to work for For us Too will be required to support our Equality and Diversity Policy.

5. Recruitment

For us Too believes that no person or group should be treated less favourably in employment, because of the reasons given in the Statement of Intent.

Staff appointments will be monitored to ensure no discrimination is occurring at the point of selection.

For us Too's separate Recruitment Policy gives full details of this process.

6. General

Office accommodation

For us Too will make every effort to ensure that premises used in relation to its work are accessible and inviting for all members of the community.

Purchasing

For us Too reserves the right not to purchase goods and services from agencies whose activities are contrary to the principles outlined in this policy.

Promotion of policy

Copies of this policy will be freely available to staff, volunteers, members and any other interested parties, via the website and also in hard copy.

7. Implementation and monitoring

Monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy and its implementation is the responsibility of the Trustee Board.

The Trustee Board will review the Policy annually.

Induction for Trustees, volunteers and new staff will include a briefing on the Equality and Diversity Policy.

A copy of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be given to all new staff, volunteers, Trustees, new members of For us Too and to any member on request.

Employees, trustees and volunteers will be encouraged to undertake training on cultural awareness, disability awareness and other subjects that will develop equality and diversity awareness.

8. Trustees

All Trustees will affirm their commitment to the Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Trustee Board's membership (including co-opted members and representatives) should aim to reflect a fair balance and representation of the local community and should endeavour to redress any imbalance of under-represented groups.

9. For us Too policies and procedures

All other For us Too policies support our commitment to equality and diversity.

10. Legislation

For us Too recognises and welcomes its responsibilities under the Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equal Pay (Amendment) Act 1983, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Equality Act 2010, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Human Rights Act 1998, Employment Rights Act 1996, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Employment Act 2002, Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003, Religion or Belief Regulations 2003, Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003, Age Discrimination Regulations 2006, and other relevant legislation and codes of practice, and seeks to fulfil its commitments by recognising the expertise, abilities and needs of every individual and by acknowledging the right to dignity and respect of every human being.

Annex 1

For us Too Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

As a provider of services For us Too is committed to fighting inequality and promoting equality by valuing diversity and combating unfair treatment.

Equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination are fundamental rights. For us Too will exercise leadership and commitment in promoting them.

We, the staff, trustees, volunteers and members of For us Too, believe we will achieve this through our roles as:

- Service provider
- Commissioner of goods and service
- Employer
- Representative voice of families of disabled children and young people

We are committed to ensuring that current and potential service users, employees or job applicants are treated with dignity and respect and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of their social circumstances or background, such as gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or age.

The principles of fairness, understanding and respect for others are central to what we believe and are committed to.

Our aims are:

- To provide equality of opportunity for all
- To foster good relations, and create effective partnership with all sections of the community
- To take no action which discriminates unlawfully in-service delivery, commissioning and employment
- To provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued

Our objectives:

- We will consult and engage with partners and the community to ensure we address their needs and consider their views
- Challenge all forms of discrimination, bullying, and harassment
- Celebrate and respect the variety of lifestyles, cultures and religions in Kent
- Ensure equality and diversity best practice principles are embedded into every aspect of our daily work
- Monitor and review our staff composition and seek to ensure that we have a workforce that truly represents the community that we serve