

Rickmansworth Children's Centre



Equality & Diversity (August 2010)

This policy represents the agreed principles for equality & diversity throughout the Children's Centre.

The staff of the Children's Centre, the Children's Centre Advisory Body and the Governors of the Lead Agency, Shepherd Primary School, have agreed this policy.

All Partners of the Children's Centre will be expected to have regard for the policy and procedures for equality & diversity.

The Children's Centre embraces the social model of disability of inclusion and access rights

Where partners will be providing services from, or on behalf of the Children's Centre, they will be required to sign an agreement stating that they will follow the Children's Centre's policy and procedures for equality & diversity.

However, if any issues become apparent with regards to diversity or equality in relation to any contractor or third party, these will be taken very seriously by the Children's Centre and addressed at the first opportunity with the contractor or third party.

Aim:

We are committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture within which we actively value difference and recognise that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work. Diversity is valued, respected and built upon, enabling us to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position to establish and pursue effective policies of promoting equality.

The Children's Centre works hard to tackle discrimination or disadvantage and to ensure no individual or group is discriminated against for any reason with regard to employment or access to its services.

Within the Children's Centre environment, we recognise that all children have a need to develop by exploring and discovering people and things around them, that they are entitled to enjoy a full life and take part in society, developing their own cultural and spiritual beliefs.

The Definition of Equality and Diversity

Equality can be described as breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation.

Diversity can be described as celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions.

Equality and Diversity are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if difference is not valued and harnessed.

We will not allow any attitudes, behaviours or actions that amount to discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness or stereotyping.

Training

The Children's Centre is committed to ensuring all staff are trained in equality and diversity. Specific training will be given on race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexuality, age, religion and belief, in accordance with the requirements of the law and good practice

Diversity and equality forms an integral part of The Children's Centre induction package and managers are to ensure that all new entrants are made aware of our Equality and Diversity Policy and Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination policy.

Each employee is responsible for:

- Implementing the policy in their day-to-day work and their dealings with colleagues, centre users and visitors;
- Ensuring his or her behaviour is appropriate within the policy and treat people with respect and dignity;
- Not discriminate against other employees or service users.

All staff should ensure that they:

- co-operate with any measures introduced to ensure equality of opportunity;
- report any suspected discriminatory acts or practices;
- not induce or attempt to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination;
- not victimise anyone as a result of them having reported or provided evidence of discrimination;
- not harass, abuse or intimidate others

The Children's Centre will not accept behaviour from staff which breaches our equality and diversity policy. Any such breaches will be regarded as misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

UK Laws applicable to this policy are:

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

Race Relations Act 1976

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Sexual Orientation Act 2003

Equal Pay Act 1970 (appendix to Sex Discrimination Act)

Age Discrimination Act 2003

Transgender Act 1999

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Equality Act 2010 (becomes law October 2010)

Glossary of terms

Disability: A disabled person is described in the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 as one who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Diversity: Diversity is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences, and encouraging and using those differences to create a productive and effective workforce.

Ethnicity: A strict definition of an ethnic group is a group regarded as a distinct community by virtue of certain essential characteristics – a shared history which distinguishes it from other groups and a cultural tradition of its own. Sikhs and Gypsies are examples. However, it has come to have a broader meaning and the expression 'ethnic monitoring' is used in reference to groups defined by colour, race or national origin as well.

Gender: The word 'gender' is often used in place of the word 'sex' in equality issues. 'Gender' does not appear in legislation (except for 'gender re-assignment' - see below) but 'sex discrimination' and 'gender discrimination' are generally interchangeable.

Gender Reassignment: Gender re-assignment is a process undertaken under medical supervision for the purpose of reassigning a person's sex by changing physiological or other characteristics of sex. The Sex Discrimination Act was extended in 1999 to make it unlawful to discriminate in employment on the grounds of an employee intending to, undergoing or having undergone, gender reassignment.

Genuine Occupational Requirements: The Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act and the Religion or Belief Regulations and the Sexual Orientation Regulations allow for circumstances where a person's sex, racial group, religion or sexual orientation is a genuine requirement for a particular job.

Harassment: Behaviour which is unwelcome or unacceptable and which results in the creation of a stressful or intimidating environment for the victim amounts to harassment. It can consist of verbal abuse, racist jokes, insensitive comments, leering, physical contact, unwanted sexual advances, ridicule or isolation.

Liability: Employers have legal liability for any act of discrimination (including harassment) carried out by their employees unless the employer can show that they have taken all reasonably practicable steps to prevent it.

Quotas: It is unlawful to select a person for a job on the basis of their gender or race in order to achieve a fixed quota of employees of that gender or race.

Sexual orientation: Whether a person is attracted to people of their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes. Assumptions and perceptions of a person's sexual orientation are also covered by law.

Targets: These can be percentages of underrepresented groups that employers aim to achieve in the make-up of their workforce as part of their equality action plan. It is unlawful to use a target as a reason for selecting someone, but it is not unlawful to take steps to get more qualified applicants from particular groups

Transsexual: A person with gender dysphoria who feels a consistent and overwhelming desire to live their life in the gender that is opposite to that assigned to them at birth.

Victimisation: If a person has made or is making an accusation of discrimination in good faith, it is unlawful to discriminate against them for having done so, or because they intend to do so or it is suspected that they intend to do so.