

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Working Families recognises that every person is an individual with different needs, preferences, and abilities. It aims to reflect this diversity in everything it does, including making its services inclusive and accessible to all working parents and carers from all sections of the community, and attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. Working Families believes that harnessing different life experiences, attributes and contributions from staff, volunteers and service users will make Working Families a more effective and inclusive organisation and a better place to work.

This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at the charity and covers the treatment and conduct of employees, volunteers, and service users.

Working Families values diversity and inclusion. By respecting and using diversity it can maximise its inclusiveness and impact through meeting individual needs and staying in touch with the changing societies in which it works.

Staff and volunteers recognise and fulfil their personal role in making Working Families a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation.

Working Families has a commitment to diversity and inclusion, which is about:

- Recognising and valuing difference
- Recognising and seeking to redress inequality and disadvantage
- Treating all in a fair, open, and honest manner
- Recognising the right of volunteers, employees, and service users to be treated with dignity and respect

Working Families is committed to:

- Equality of opportunity
- Tackling discrimination and disadvantage
- Tackling harassment and intimidation
- Making its workforce and the whole organisation more representative of working parents and carers
- Encouraging other organisations to adopt similar policies on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Working Families will not tolerate less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, gender, gender reassignment, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, criminal record, place of residence, religion, faith or other beliefs, health status or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Working Families will never use cultural practices as a justification for, or to ignore an issue of, safeguarding.

Working Families believes that discrimination is wrong and should be actively opposed. Discrimination denies human dignity, a freedom for people to be themselves, and a place in a free society.

Working Families is committed to a policy of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in service delivery and in employment practices and will not accept discrimination in its work with and for working parents and carers.

This commitment includes ensuring the Senior Leadership Team and all other employees and volunteers know their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Responsibilities include staff and volunteers conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination.

All staff and volunteers should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers and the public.

Provision of Services

Every service user will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy and respect.

Users of our services and those who take part in our activities will understand and, where appropriate, be informed that Working Families is committed to an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy so that:

- They will know a policy exists and a copy is available to guide all members of the organisation and others to share the commitment and code of practice of Equity and Diversity.
- All who meet Working Families will know the standards that we are trying to achieve and can assist us in trying to achieve them.
- They will know they have the right to complain, if they feel these standards are not being adhered to or are dissatisfied with the service provided to them.

Working Families will make sure that its services meet the needs of its diverse communities of working parents and carers by involving them in identifying their needs and by seeking to meet these needs.

Working Families will develop services to make sure there is maximum take up by all communities and particularly those groups facing disadvantage and discrimination. It will do this by:

- Providing information in plain English and use methods other than written documents to present information as appropriate,
- Offering information on request in accessible formats, including spoken community languages, large print, audio tape/CD, on DVD in British Sign Language and on the internet as appropriate.
- Accessing interpretation, translation, and sign language services on request, as appropriate and affordable.

Discrimination

Working Families will not unlawfully discriminate against or harass others including current and former employees, job applicants, volunteers, clients, service users, customers, suppliers, and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with service users, suppliers, or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- a) Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- b) Indirect discrimination: a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- c) Harassment: this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.
- d) Victimisation: retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- e) Disability discrimination: this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

Recruitment and Selection

Working Families will ensure that recruitment practices fulfil the requirement of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage groups from applying. All posts will have a job description and person specification, which will contain essential and desirable skills, qualifications, and experience. Person specifications will only contain details which are required. All recruitment adverts will carry the statement "Working Families promotes Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. A copy of our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is available on our website".

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Shortlisting is done by more than one person. The format for interview will be agreed before it takes place and will remain constant for all interviews for the position. Every effort will be made to make provision for staff and volunteers with a disability through reasonable adaptations.

All staff and trustees involved in recruitment and selection will be aware of this policy and always adhere to it. All applicants for posts will be treated strictly on merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. As an exception, posts targeted at specific groups of people will be exempted, if justifiable and allowed by legislation.

Working Families uses Applied for all recruitment. This includes an optional equality and diversity monitoring section, which cannot be used as part of the selection process. The information will be individually confidential and used for assessing recruitment and advertising practices periodically.

Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate) unless different treatment is justified.

Disabilities

If an employee is disabled or becomes disabled, they are encouraged to talk about their condition so that reasonable adjustments or support may be considered as appropriate.

Training and Development

The Board of Trustees, staff and volunteers need to recognise and fulfil their personal role in making Working Families a genuinely inviting and inclusive organisation. Working Families will ensure that all staff and volunteers know about the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and their responsibilities within it, by including it within Induction, and ensuring it has a high profile within our internal communications and practices.

Recording and Monitoring of Service Provision

Working Families will monitor and review the take up of the service with records being kept of actions and decisions by trustees, staff, and volunteers. Monitoring will be carried out based on ethnic background, gender, age, place of residence, sexual orientation, and disability. Provision of individual monitoring data will be supplied on a voluntary basis, using agreed categories.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees has the ultimate responsibility to provide, implement and review the policy. It is the responsibility of trustees, staff, and volunteers to support the policy by ensuring that Working Families activities promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. The Chief Executive holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that the policy is implemented and, in the first instance, for dealing with or acting on disciplinary offences.

The Board of Trustees will receive a report analysing monitoring data on an annual basis, to retain oversight of the impact and implementation of the policy.

Breaches of this policy

Working Families takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, volunteers, service users, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others during the organisation's work activities.

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

If an employee believes that they have suffered discrimination the matter should be raised with any manager or trustee and/or through Working Families' Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

Employees must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination.