

Families First Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discriminatory (Diversity and Inclusion) Policy Statement**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Families First is an equal opportunities employer and service provider, and is committed to providing equal treatment of all service users, volunteers, employees and potential applicants.
- 1.2 Families First is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination towards all volunteers, in employment and to service users, members and stakeholders.
- 1.3 Families First complies with the requirements of legislation on protected characteristics and this currently includes age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

2. Employment

- 2.1 Families First supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and will challenge any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination.
- 2.2 Staff, trustees, volunteers and Individuals on temporary assignments are included in the scope of section one. For the purposes of this policy all people working for the benefit of Families First will be known as workers.
- 2.3 All new workers are informed of this policy during their induction. This information will be shared through the line management system, and with those responsible for recruitment, training and promotion. This statement is also accessible via the Families First website.
- 2.4 Families First believes that the interests of the Organisation and its workers will be best served by ensuring that all available talents and skills are given consideration when employment or promotional opportunities arise.
- 2.5 Steps will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly, that decisions on recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career management are based on objective and job related criteria.
- 2.6 Families First are committed, therefore, wherever practicable and within the framework of the law, to establishing and maintaining a workforce which is broadly representative of the area in which we are operating.
- 2.7 Families First will promote and develop a working atmosphere in which workers have regard for each other's rights and everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity requires the commitment of all workers.
- 2.8 Families First will create a culture where workers value each other, and respect the range of contributions each can make to the workplace.
- 2.9 Families First strive to ensure that minority groups are represented in our organisation to include publicising of volunteering opportunities, in recruitment and selection and by ensuring our Board of Trustees are made up from a diverse section of the local community, as far as is possible.
- 2.10 Families First will take steps to encourage workers to:

- Treat others with respect at all times.
- Actively discourage discriminatory behaviour or practice.
- Participate in training and learning opportunities that would enable them to adopt good practice.

3. Employment Policies

- 3.1** It is hoped that any matter of discriminatory practice will be resolved through the support and supervision process before a matter is raised as a formal grievance or disciplinary action.
- 3.2** Workers who believe they are being unfairly treated, through discriminatory practice, or by any other means, are entitled to raise the matter through the Families First HR 34 Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- 3.3** Action will be taken under Families First HR 32 Disciplinary Policy against any worker who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation.
- 3.4** Serious breaches of this equal opportunities policy statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and the worker could be liable to summary dismissal.
- 3.5** Workers should be aware that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination.
- 3.6** Families First will confront and deal with any form of harassment, for example:
- Repeated and unjustified comments, actions and suggestions.
 - Physical contact which is found to be unacceptable and offensive and which might threaten a worker's job security or create an intimidating work environment.
 - Undermining of status and role within the organisation.

Such actions are not acceptable to Families First and will be dealt with within the disciplinary procedures.

- 3.7** Workers who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.
- 3.8** Families First will also take appropriate action against any third parties who are found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful harassment against its workers.

4. Positive Recruitment Practices

- 4.1** Families First will ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment process are fully trained in order to implement the organisation's policy
- 4.2** Families First will ensure that all posts within the organisation are open to men and women regardless of age, colour, race, appearance, religion or belief, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, marital status and or disability.
- 4.3** Families First will strive to ensure that interview panels come from a diverse background when possible e.g. a mix of genders, service users, and or racial and ethnic groups.

- 4.4** Families First will seek, within reason, to provide facilities for people with disabilities. If an employee becomes disabled, subject to availability of suitable accommodation, suitable alternative employment and medical advice, an alternative employment will be offered.
- 4.5** Families First will explore the needs of staff with child care responsibilities and explore such options as:
- Parental leave provision.
 - Job sharing.
 - Flexitime.
- 4.6** Families First will recruit workers who have an open approach to people and ideas, and come from a diverse background.
- 4.7** Families First will support and supervise workers to ensure they are able to respond positively to change and development.
- 4.8** Families First will support and supervise workers to value and respect the diverse contribution each can make to the workplace.
- 4.9** Families First will ensure managers are responsive and accessible to workers so they can discuss and explore any concerns they may have.

5. Service Delivery

- 5.1** In the provision of services to children and their families, through advocacy, promoting their opinion and all other working practices, Families First will ensure equality of opportunity to all service users, on the grounds of age, colour, race, appearance, religion or belief, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, marital status and disability.
- 5.2** Families First recognises that all forms of discrimination, both institutional and personal are prevalent in our society and that such discrimination prevents equality of opportunity in service delivery (and employment).
- 5.3** Families First is committed to challenging and dismantling all forms of discrimination in our working practice. With this in mind, Families First champion the following Code of Practice:
- Each person is an individual, with his or her own individual needs, learning potential, and strengths.
 - Everyone involved with Families First will be treated with equal respect regardless of his or her position within the organisation.
 - All children will be consulted with and their opinions taken into consideration, in the development and review of our Children's Services. All outcomes of these consultations will be shared and explanations given as to Families First's final decision.
 - All adults will be consulted with and their opinions taken into consideration, in the development and review of our Family Support services. All outcomes of these consultations will be shared and explanations given as to Families First's final decision.

- Partner agencies will be consulted with and their opinions taken into consideration, in the development of our services. All outcomes of these consultations will be shared and explanations given as to Families First's final decision.

5.4 Families First is committed to developing and delivering services that maximise the flexibility of workers and service users, for example:

- Rotas.
- Flexible hours.
- Job sharing.

5.5 Each service will define its own model of working practice to meet these needs.

5.6 Families First will ensure managers and staff are responsive and accessible to service users so they can discuss and explore any concerns they may have.

5.7 Families First will make good use of research, publications, and other materials to develop good practice.

6. Access to Services

6.1 Families First will work towards making the environment as welcoming and as physically accessible to all visitors as possible.

6.2 Should access be unsuitable an alternative venue may be considered as an option.

6.3 Families First will make promotional materials as accessible as possible to those that may wish to access the information.

6.4 Materials will positively reflect an inclusive culture.

6.5 Staff and volunteers will be actively encouraged to understand the cultures and values of all service users:

- To make service users feel welcome, and
- To provide appropriate services that have meaning

6.6 Families First will identify a range of activities to broaden service users' horizons and experiences.

6.7 Families First will seek to find appropriate means of communication with service users who have sensory impairment, or English is not their first language (endeavouring to use language that is understandable by all – no jargon).

6.8 Families First will arrange meetings and events at times and places that are most suitable to all.

6.9 Families First will distribute information as widely as possible.

6.10 Service users will be able to access information relating to them on request.

7. Offering Choices

7.1 Families First will offer service users and volunteers a variety of ways of being involved with Families First valuing the skills they can bring to the organisation.

- 7.2** Families First will procure a range of materials and equipment which support service user development and interests.
- 7.3** Families First will procure a range of materials which reflect variety and diversity with positive images of:
- Family structures.
 - Gender roles.
 - Race.
 - Culture.
 - Disability.
 - Religion.
- 7.4** Families First will create opportunities to learn about diversity and to hear the experience of those who have been discriminated against through the 'protected characteristics'.
- 7.5** Families First will be aware of the full range of facilities in their catchment area and beyond, and where appropriate, establish positive working relationships to enable access for the service users Families First work with.
- 7.6** Families First will encourage the primary carers of children to be involved in their children's learning by creating an environment in which all carers feel welcome and able to contribute their skills.
- 8. In summary**
- 8.1** Families First will ensure that any identified instances of discrimination, whether involving staff, volunteers, members, children, adult service users, parents or carers are investigated and dealt with promptly and sensitively.
- 8.2** Families First will monitor equal opportunities information and practice to assess the effectiveness of this policy statement. Where changes or further training is required, this will be implemented.
- 8.3** Families First will ensure that line management structures are responsive and accessible to everyone involved with the organisation to discuss and address any concerns they may have.