

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

- 1.1 Families First is an equal opportunities organisation and is committed to providing equal treatment of all service users, current volunteers and employees, and potential volunteers and employees.
- 1.2 Families First is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination towards all volunteers, employees, 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, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.4 Families First employees are committed to treating everyone with kindness and respect.

2. Employment

- 2.1 Families First follows good practice guidance in equal opportunities in employment and will challenge any form of unlawful or unfair discrimination.
- 2.2 Employees, and individuals on temporary contracts are included in the scope of section one.
- 2.3 All new employees 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 employees 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 employees 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, 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 employees 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 employees.
- 2.8 Families First will create a culture where employees value each other and respect the range of contributions each can make to the workplace.
- 2.9 Families First will take steps to encourage employees to:
 - Treat others with respect at all times.
 - Actively discourage discriminatory behaviour or practice.

- Participate in training and learning opportunities that will 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 as detailed in **Families First Support and Supervision policy**, before a matter is raised as a formal grievance or disciplinary action.
- 3.2** Employees who believe they are being unfairly treated, through discriminatory practice, or by any other means, are entitled to raise the matter through **Families First Grievance procedure**.
- 3.3** Action will be taken under **Families First Disciplinary procedure** against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation.
- 3.4** Serious breaches of this policy will potentially be treated as gross misconduct and the employee could be liable to summary dismissal.
- 3.5** Employees 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 an employee's job security or create an intimidating work environment.
 - Undermining of status and role within the organisation.

Such actions are not acceptable and will be dealt with within Families First Disciplinary procedures.

- 3.7** Employees 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 employees.

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 organisational policy and procedure.
- 4.2** Families First will ensure that all posts within the organisation are open to all regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 4.3** Families First will strive to ensure that interview panels come from a diverse background where possible e.g., a mix of genders, service users, and or ethnic groups.
- 4.4** Families First will seek, where possible, to provide facilities for people with disabilities.
- 4.5** If an employee becomes disabled during their employment, subject to availability of suitable accommodation, suitable alternative employment and medical advice, we will make every effort to find alternative employment within the organisation.
- 4.6** Families First will explore the needs of new and potential employees with child, disability or eldercare responsibilities and explore such options as:
- Job sharing.
 - Flexitime.
 - Hybrid working.

This will be considered in balance with the ability to commit to the contract for that position.

- 4.7** Families First will recruit employees who have an open approach to people and ideas and come from a diverse background.
- 4.8** Families First will support and supervise employees to ensure they are able to respond positively to change and development.
- 4.9** Families First will support and supervise employees to value and respect the diverse contribution each person can make to the workplace.
- 4.10** Families First will ensure line managers are responsive and accessible to employees 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, including those with protected characteristics.
- 5.2** Families First recognise 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 their own individual needs, learning potential, and strengths.
 - Everyone involved with Families First will be treated with equal respect regardless of their 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 employees 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 employees 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 is always striving to improve the environment will work towards making the environment as welcoming and as physically accessible as possible to all visitors.

6.2 Should access be unsuitable, an alternative venue may be considered as an option for work or service delivery.

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

6.4 All resources will positively reflect an inclusive culture.

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

- To make service users feel welcome.
- 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 whose first language is not English, endeavouring to use language that is understandable by all, for example no use of jargon or colloquialism.

- 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 all 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 protected characteristics.
- 7.4 Families First will create opportunities to learn about diversity and to hear the experience of those who have been discriminated against.
- 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 children, young people and families we work with.
- 7.6 Families First will encourage all parents and carers of children to be involved in their children's learning by creating an environment in which they feel welcome and able to contribute their skills.

8. Volunteering

- 8.1 Families First strive to ensure that protected 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.
- 8.2 Families First expect all volunteers to follow good practice, as outlined in this policy statement, in anti-discriminatory practice.
- 8.3 Volunteers will have opportunities to explore and discuss any concerns they have around discrimination with their line manager and the Volunteer Coordinator.
- 8.4 If a volunteer feels they have been discriminated against by their line manager and/or the Volunteer Coordinator they should seek help and guidance from Families First CEO or a member of staff they can trust.
- 8.5 Should a volunteer breach Families First values on anti-discriminatory practice they may be asked to leave the organisation without recourse to references for future employment or volunteering roles.

9. In summary

- 9.1 Families First will ensure that any identified instances of discrimination involving employees, volunteers, members, children, adult service users, or parents and carers are investigated and dealt with promptly and sensitively.
- 9.2 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.

9.3 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.

10. Policy review

10.1 Oversight of this policy remains with the Families First CEO and Office Manager who will notify the Board of Trustees of any updates or changes.

10.2 Review of this policy will take place every 2 years or sooner if there are changes to local guidelines or legislation. Following an incident, Families First learning will be incorporated.