



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Statement of Values

Family Futures' work is based on the belief that adults and children are individuals in their own right and that they are of equal worth whatever their race, culture, disability, gender, sexual orientation, social class, marital status, gender reassignment, age, religion or other belief systems.

Family Futures is fully committed to the active promotion of equal opportunity in its employment practices, in the work it undertakes and in the provision of all its services. Every possible step will be taken to ensure that parents, carers, children, consultants and staff are treated equally and fairly, and that all decisions, including those on recruitment, appraisal, training and development, are based solely on the related standards, policies and regulations which are themselves based on our principle of equality. It is in Family Futures' interests, and those who work with us, to ensure that the attributes, talents and skills available throughout the organisation are recognised and utilised in the interests of parents, carers and children.

In its capacity as an employer, service provider, development agency and provider of information and other resources, Family Futures is determined to make all efforts to prevent discrimination against any of its existing staff, potential staff or other users of its services regardless of their race, culture, religion, or other belief systems, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability. Family Futures is opposed to all discriminatory practices and attitudes and is committed to translating this into all aspects of its work.

Statement of intent

Family Futures recognises that passive policies will not in themselves provide equality of opportunity and acknowledges that specific and positive programmes of action are needed.

As part of a planned strategy, Family Futures has the following measures to combat direct and indirect discrimination in its employment practices, in the work it undertakes and in the services it provides:

- To regularly examine the structure of the organisation and its decision making processes at all levels and introduce special measures to develop ways of combating discrimination within its own practices which directly or indirectly affect groups within the organisation that experience discrimination
- To promote a greater awareness within the organisation of the needs of those experiencing discrimination and develop strategies to ensure that in its practices and procedures Family Futures is doing everything it can to meet those needs
- To work to ensure that the services Family Futures provides, the research and development work it undertakes, the information it provides and the employment practices it adopts, are in line with this policy and are appropriate, relevant and accessible to individuals or groups who experience discrimination
- To carry out detailed reviews of our employment practices and procedures, to identify potential areas of discrimination and to analyse and act on the information produced by such monitoring to bring about change
- To monitor all our activities in order to identify any inequalities in content or participation and to determine the steps needed to rectify them. This is done through the retention of records, e.g. applications for employment, which are reviewed each year by the Management Team as part of a wider review of quality standards
- The Management Team regularly monitor and review our Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures along with an annual staff team workshop on culture and diversity.

Responsibility for Implementation

The Management Team of Family Futures is responsible for implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy within individual service areas. All staff and consultants are, however, personally and individually responsible for ensuring that they read and understand this policy, and act in accordance with it.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Awareness

The organisation is committed to providing training on equality and diversity issues, and employees are expected to attend this training.

Recruitment

Recruitment procedures embody the principles of this policy and the details are set out in the Recruitment Policy itself.

Training and Development

Training and development opportunities are open to all staff, and will be provided in order to support them to fulfil their roles.

Promotion Opportunities

Vacancies will normally be advertised internally, as well as put out to external markets, and are open to all to apply.

Pay

Family Futures operates a policy of equal pay for work of equal value.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed as new legislation comes into force. The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored on an annual basis through analysis of the profile of the staff team and their positions in the organisation, showing a breakdown of ethnicity, gender, age and disability status. As a result of this profile of information the Registered Manager will prepare a report for consideration by the Management Team including recommendations for action.

Failure to Comply

Failure to follow this policy will be considered a serious matter and staff may be subject to the disciplinary procedure. Whilst consultants are not subject to the disciplinary procedure, other penalties will be considered, including ceasing to offer them work.

THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

This Act replaced all other legislation relating to discrimination and brings a greater consistency to the way in which certain groups are protected by legislation. It brings together all the groups covered by the legislation and calls them “protected characteristics”. The protected characteristics (PCs) covered by legislation are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity.

All PCs are protected from **direct discrimination** which is defined as treating someone less favourably than another person because of a PC. All are protected from **indirect discrimination** apart from pregnancy and maternity. Indirect discrimination is defined as having a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a particular PC.

Discrimination by association and **by perception** are now applied to all the PCs except marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. Discrimination by association is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who

possesses a PC. Discrimination by perception is direct discrimination against someone because the others think they possess a particular PC.

All PCs are protected from **victimization** which is defined as treating someone badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under the Act.

SPECIFIC AREAS

Whilst Family Futures supports equality of opportunity for all the groups outlined above, and additional groups as set out in its Statement of Values, it is important to set out additional points in relation to some of the areas covered, especially where this has particular significance for its work.

People with Disabilities

People with disabilities often do not receive equal treatment or access to opportunities. This is not acceptable. Family Futures will actively work to ensure that people with disabilities are treated fairly.

Children with disabilities must be given the same opportunities to develop and make the most of their talents as other children, commensurate with their physical and mental capacities. This includes access to school, leisure and recreation.

People Living with HIV or AIDS

Family Futures recognises that stigma and discrimination, together with concerns about health, can result in high levels of stress for people living with HIV and AIDS. We acknowledge the need to provide extra support to people affected by HIV and AIDS.

Race, Ethnicity, Culture, Religion and Heritage

We strongly support our obligations under the Act in relation to these areas, and work to promote communication and good relationships with racial, cultural, ethnic and religious groups in the development of policies and practice to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic parents, carers, children, staff and consultants.

Sex Discrimination

Our recruitment practices ensure that all decisions related to the recruitment of staff and consultants are made solely upon evidence of an individual's capability to fulfil the position applied for.

Family Futures expects that all parents, carers, children, staff and consultants, show no discrimination towards others in regards to gender.

Sexual Orientation

There are lesbian and gay parents and carers providing care for children; Family Futures welcomes and supports all parents, carers, children, staff and consultants, showing no discrimination in terms of their sexual orientation and recognising that all carers have their own unique talents and skills that they bring to their caring role.

Age

Family Futures recognises that a major change in society is that people are living longer and are leading more active and healthier lives as they grow older. Against this background Family Futures recognises the valuable role that older people can play in providing a home for adopted or fostered children.

Children can also experience discrimination due to their age, particularly in relation to being heard and taking a meaningful part in decisions about their future. Family Futures staff are expected to recognise these potential barriers and to help children to overcome them.

Recruitment decisions are based on people's attributes, talents and skills in relation to the position applied for. Age-related criteria undermine objectivity and are wasteful of the attributes older or younger people may bring to the organisation.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour which is unwanted by the individual to whom it is directed. It undermines respect and dignity. Family Futures does not find sexual, racial or any other form of harassment acceptable and will take appropriate action to deal with it. Family Futures therefore aims to create working relationships in which the dignity of all is respected and where parents, carers, children, staff and consultants feel able and are encouraged to reach their full potential (see Dignity at Work Policy for further information on harassment and bullying).