

FACES

EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Statement of Intent

The Trustees of FACES (Family and Children's Early-help Services) believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. FACES have adopted an equal opportunities policy which commits the charity to fair, unbiased and objective practices and an environment which is free of harassment and victimisation.

Rationale

FACES trustees are responsible for ensuring that the charity meets its legal responsibilities, including those relating to equalities legislation. All trustees accept and work to this Equality, Fairness & Diversity Policy and monitor its implementation in the day to day work of FACES by receiving and analysing regular reports.

Aims

FACES recognise the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the Charity. FACES expect staff, volunteers, families and children and young people (CYP) to be treated with dignity and respect and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances or other irrelevant distinction.

Employment Practices

Membership of FACES Trustee Board represents as wide a cross-section of the community served by FACES as possible, including statutory and voluntary agencies.

Volunteers should be represented on FACES' trustee board where possible.

Opportunities are offered to families to be represented on FACES' Trustee Board, where appropriate and possible.

Trustees endeavour to ensure that the time, place and conduct of meetings enable all trustees and potential members to have an equal opportunity to be involved.

Recruitment and selection

All job advertisements and job descriptions will state that FACES is committed to equal opportunities.

Job descriptions, person specifications and application forms will be reviewed as each vacancy arises to ensure they are directly relevant to the post. Consideration should be given as to whether the job can be shared and whether working hours can be flexible.

Application forms will only ask for information relevant to the post – health questionnaires are not used until after a conditional offer of employment is made.

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All vacant posts will be advertised as widely as appropriate for the job in order to encourage applications from all sections of the community.

Information sent to applicants will include the job description, person specification detailing essential and desirable attributes and the Equality, Fairness and Diversity statement and monitoring form.

Monitoring forms are separated from the application before short-listing and will only be used after the selection process for monitoring purposes.

Members of the interview panel have appropriate training and/or experience and reflect as far as possible the community served by FACES.

Short-listing and selection for the post will be carried out objectively on job related criteria, specified in the job description and person specification and in accordance with FACES' guidance. Trustees or staff with knowledge of a candidate will use only the applicant's application form to judge suitability for short-listing. The exception being where that knowledge is connected with safeguarding.

The person specification should indicate which requirements are essential and which desirable. Only essential criteria should be considered in the first round of short-listing.

Interview questions will relate directly to the person specification, job description and application forms. Questions will not be varied according to the age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation, or circumstances of each applicant. References will be taken up but information given to candidates at all stages explicitly states that any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory references.

The reference request proforma requires referees to confirm whether or not they are aware of any safeguarding concerns relating to the individual in relation to children or vulnerable adults.

References are judged as satisfactory if they have been verified by FACES. These should include at least one professional reference (previous employer wherever possible; school, college or other professional such as a church or faith leader or a volunteer supervisor).

Reasonable travel expenses will be offered to all applicants attending interviews.

All short-listed applicants will be advised of the result of their interview.

Decisions taken at short-listing and interviewing will be recorded. Feedback will be made available to unsuccessful interviewees on request.

Acceptance of FACES Equality, Fairness & Diversity Policy will be a condition of employment and all employees must work to this policy.

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Employment

Each newly appointed member of staff will receive induction in the job, relevant to the requirements of the job and to individual needs.

Supervision, on-going support and an annual appraisal is provided to all staff, in accordance with FACES guidance.

All staff will be informed of the routes of access to the Trustee Board, the Quality Assurance standards and of the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

All staff have equal and fair access to learning and development opportunities. Individual training needs and opportunities for development are identified, discussed and met as appropriate within the capacity of FACES' resources.

Appropriate consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of a member of staff within the scope of the Equality Act, providing the needs of FACES are met. This may include actions such as reasonable adjustment to the employee's working environment or flexible working patterns.

FACES is committed to ensuring that all employees have a workplace free from victimisation, bullying and harassment, are made aware of the relevant policies and procedures and know how to report incidents.

Service Provision Procedures

FACES will endeavour to keep up-to-date information about the community/area in which it works, including hard to reach and disadvantaged groups. It works to ensure that it builds appropriate relationships in order to offer accessible support, resources and involvement to every family that falls within its remit.

FACES endeavours to meet the individual needs of each family. The matching of a family with a volunteer will be done as carefully and sensitively as possible.

All families will have an equal opportunity to attend social events arranged by FACES.

Toys and other equipment/material will reflect as far as possible the diversity of our society.

The involvement of families will be encouraged and their views on the services offered will be taken into account when drafting strategic and operational plans and making policy decisions.

FACES reviews and analyses its monitoring information in order to fulfil its aim of ensuring that employees, trustees and volunteers reflect the population in the community.

Access to Services

The range of referrals or self-referrals accepted is only limited where FACES does not have the resources available to meet the number or complexity of cases.

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FACES will aim to establish positive links with a wide range of referring agencies in the area and will accept appropriate referrals, the permission of the family having been obtained first.

FACES will publicise the availability of its services as to all sections of the community including providing information about its services in user-friendly and in appropriate languages other than English, by talks and presentations to groups and other agencies.

All publicity material, talks and presentations will include positive images of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged by society.

FACES is sensitive to the communication needs of individuals and aim to meet them.

Every effort will be made to select office and other premises which are accessible and do not restrict the participation of anyone in the activities of FACES.

Consideration will be given to the needs of individuals who may use the premises, e.g. nappy changing facilities, translation services.

The ability of supported families to participate in the activities of FACES should not be restricted because of their responsibility as parents/carers, and options will be explored for meeting their needs, including signposting to complementary services and through partnerships with other organisations.

Working with Volunteers

FACES volunteers are a vital and invaluable resource. By giving of their time, experience and skills so freely they allow us to not only support families but reach those that would not accept a service from a paid member of staff. Therefore, although within the scope of the Equality Act volunteers do not have the same rights as employees, FACES will always treat its volunteers with equality and fairness and welcome diversity.

All volunteers are expected to accept and work to the Equality, Fairness & Diversity policy, a copy of which will be provided as part of the induction process.

Volunteers will be recruited from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible, taking into account the composition of the catchment area.

Where appropriate, former users of FACES will be enabled to become volunteers.

DBS checking is an essential part of the procedure for recruiting volunteers. The Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Check and Rehabilitation of Offenders policies play an important part in decisions made during the selection process.

The individuality and differences of volunteers are respected and selection of volunteers will be based on the experience and skills of each individual.

Volunteers' expenses are paid promptly on receipt of relevant documentation.

Regular support and supervision is provided to all volunteers in line with FACES policy and procedure.

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Training

All trustees, staff and volunteers undertake training in equal opportunities awareness training and implementation of FACES Equality, Fairness & Diversity Policy.

Trustees new to recruitment and who are involved in recruiting staff undertake training on recruitment and selection.

Trustees are aware of their responsibilities both in encouraging all staff to participate in training to meet their development needs, and in ensuring sufficient budgetary provision.

All training offered by FACES reflects this policy at all times.

The volunteer training course raises awareness of values and attitudes, the meaning of equality and diversity, the different types of discrimination and includes a session on equal opportunities issues. The content and materials of all courses encourage anti-discriminatory practice ensuring that inappropriate statements and practice are challenged.

All outside speakers are made aware of the Equality, Fairness and Diversity Policy Statement. FACES invite a diverse range of speakers from their community to FACES training.

FACES offers all volunteers the opportunity for on-going training within the organisation or externally and makes provision within its budget for this expense. The individual needs of participants are taken into consideration in the design of courses and in the choice of venue.

Monitoring

Performance in relation to this policy is monitored through self-assessments and reviews.

Regular surveys are done to measure progress. Action plans are then drawn up to inform FACES' planning and targets.

Monitoring forms used at recruitment are analysed to improve future recruitment.

This policy is operated alongside FACES' policies and procedures on:

- Disclosure and Barring Service
- Disability
- Expenses
- Harassment
- Human Rights Policy
- Managing referrals and waiting lists
- Recruitment of ex-offenders
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Safer recruitment and selection
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Staff development
- Supervision of staff
- Supervision of volunteers

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There are also checklists that FACES can complete to help identify that they are following good practice guidelines. These include

- Access to services
- Service provision
- Trustees
- Employment
- Working with volunteers

FACES will work to this Policy and Procedure and will monitor, review and evaluate its effectiveness.

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