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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY	
Version	3
1. Background	<p>Family Action is committed to encouraging diversity, promoting equal opportunities, and providing fair treatment in all that we do. We strive for a working environment that is inclusive, free from discrimination and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.</p>
2. Objectives	<p>Family Action has a clear vision and mission which are supported by strong values. These values are reflected in all our work, as well as in our professional relationships by always:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being people focused • Reflecting a 'can do' approach • Striving for excellence in everything we do • Having mutual respect for everyone we work with, work for and support as an organisation <p>We believe that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions to the workplace. We seek to encourage and harness these differences in order to meet the changing needs of our staff, volunteers, service users, trustees, partners, funders and supporters.</p>
3. Scope	<p>This policy has been developed through consultation with staff Family Action's recognised unions (Unison and Unite). It is a policy for everybody within Family Action, including all employees, volunteers, service users, trustees, consultants and agency workers.</p>
4. Policy	<p>4.1 Definitions</p> <p>Equality refers to eliminating discrimination and providing equal opportunities for all. Equal opportunities go beyond treating everyone in exactly the same way; it is recognition that some individuals or groups have particular needs which need to be met in order for them to have equality of opportunity. Diversity refers to recognising that individuals have visible and non-visible differences which should be celebrated and valued. Equality and Diversity are not interchangeable terms, but interdependent in maintaining the working environment we desire.</p>



4.1.1 What Is Discrimination?

Family Action is committed to compliance with the [Equality Act 2010](#), [Equality Act Codes of Practice](#) and other best practice guidance. This policy builds upon this statutory position to ensure equality and diversity is addressed proactively within the organisation.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly against any of the “protected characteristics.”

Protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy
- Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins)
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Marital or civil partnership status

We are committed to planning ahead in order to address any barriers which may discourage an individual from becoming involved with Family Action for any of the above reasons.

Please refer to the Appendix for examples of different types of discrimination.

4.2 What Are Your Responsibilities As An Employee Or Volunteer?

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that there is no discrimination involved in any of their decisions or behaviour. Staff and volunteers must:

- Complete all compulsory equality and diversity training within their probation period.
- Report any suspected acts of discrimination, both towards themselves or towards others - refer to the whistleblowing policy for guidance on who to contact.
- Report any bullying or harassment by service users, commissioners, suppliers, visitors or others to their line-manager who will take appropriate action.
- Co-operate with measures designed to promote equality of opportunity.
- Ensure all behaviour is non-discriminatory, treating others with dignity and respect at all times. This includes staff, volunteers,



service users, commissioners, suppliers, trustees and any other group or individual they come into contact with.

- Not encourage others to practice unlawful discrimination.

4.3 What Are Your Responsibilities As A Manager?

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, managers have a number of additional responsibilities in order to protect against discrimination and promote diversity. Managers must:

- Implement this policy as part of their day-to-day management of staff and act as a role model for equality and diversity, including creating an environment where staff can fulfil their responsibilities within this policy as outlined above.
- Build the culture within the service to support diversity and enable appropriate challenge.
- Encourage whistleblowing and the escalation of concerns, including ensuring staff are aware of the whistleblowing process and the protection Family Action can offer.
- Comply with all equality and diversity training, including ensuring staff complete this in a timely manner.
- Ensure staff are aware of this policy, as well as the policies listed under the 'Related Policies' section of this document.
- Ensure equality and diversity issues are addressed in performance management.
- Co-operate fully with any investigation into cases of potential discrimination.
- Ensure that their service provides support which is flexible in the way it is delivered, taking into account the need for flexible timeframes for families with disabilities.
- Ensure staff act in accordance with this policy, providing support and direction if required.

4.4 What Actions Are Family Action Taking To Celebrate Equality & Diversity?

Family Action believes it is important to take proactive steps to ensure equality & diversity remain embedded in all that we do. Diversity is not simply a mechanistic approach to equality legislation; it is the combatting of prejudice and the celebration of difference.

Below is some examples of how Family Action are continually celebrating the importance of equality and diversity.

Service Users

- Specific services aimed at engaging with certain groups in the community.



- Promoting our services through a wide range of sources.
- Providing leaflets and information in braille, and ensuring events are connected to a hearing loop where needed. Similarly, we work closely with interpreters, sign language services and organisations such as Deaf CAMHS to ensure all families can access our services.
- Employing staff who can speak a variety of languages, including sign language, in order to engage with a diverse section of the community.
- Regularly seeking feedback from service users about service provision, with a view to maintaining continuous improvement including improved accessibility for those with disabilities.

Recruitment Process

- Adopting the Positive about Disability commitments, which guarantees an interview for all applicants who declare themselves disabled and who meet the minimum criteria.
- Advertising jobs in local newspapers and magazines in order to encourage applicants who represent the local community.

Current Staff and Volunteers

- Fully supporting all staff and volunteers through offering reasonable adjustments where needed and [seeking medical advice from an OH specialist where necessary](#).
- Offering flexible working where possible and the option of a job share where appropriate in order to meet staff needs.
- Employer supported childcare in the form of childcare vouchers through the salary sacrifice scheme, allowing employees to take advantage of tax and national insurance savings in relation to childcare.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers are given adequate time to sign-up for training in order to support those with additional needs.
- Internal awareness-raising events, each focusing on a particular theme. For example previous themes and events have included Disability, LGBT and International Women's Day.
- A page on the intranet dedicated to equality & diversity, including the sharing of documents, a calendar of events and key contacts for further support.
- Encouraging feedback and suggestions from staff and volunteers via a designated equality & diversity email address.

4.5 Ensuring This Policy Is Upheld



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In addition to proactive actions, Family Action recognises the need to ensure this policy is upheld. This is achieved through a range of actions, including:

- An Equality & Diversity Steering Group, which meets on a quarterly basis
- Inclusion of equality & diversity as a fundamental part of Family Action's Organisational Strategy and Workforce Strategy.
- Embedding our commitment to equality & diversity within other organisational policies, for example Safer Recruitment, Flexible Working and Redundancy.
- Comprehensive equality & diversity guidance around job advertisements and the selection process, including compulsory additional safer recruitment training for all recruiting managers.
- Compulsory equality & diversity e-learning training for all staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Retaining the 'Investors in Diversity' accreditation.
- Regular analysis of workforce data, including in relation to ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- Regular staff survey to gain the views of all employees, including a section on equality and diversity.

4.6 Point of Contact

If you have any questions about Equality & Diversity within Family Action, wish to join the Steering Group or have any ideas about how Family Action could embrace Equality & Diversity even further, please contact the Equality & Diversity Steering Group by emailing equality.diversity@family-action.org.uk. You are also able to discuss any equality and diversity related matters with your union representatives, a list of which can be found in the Family Action Disciplinary Policy.

In addition, employees are reminded that confidential independent advice and counselling is available for free through Premier EAP. This is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be used by any employee or their relatives on a range of issues including employment matters, emotional support and legal queries. Their number is 0800 1116 394, and they can also arrange for some face-to-face counselling if you would prefer.

4.7 Non-Compliance With This Policy

Family Action will not tolerate any behaviour which breaches this policy and will regard any breaches as misconduct. Serious offences, for example harassment, bullying or victimisation, will be treated as gross



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	misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action including dismissal from employment without notice.
5. Timescales	With immediate effect
6. Supporting Appendices	Appendix 1- Types of Discrimination Equality Act Codes of Practice
7. Linked Policies	Equality & Diversity is embedded within Family Action's policies and procedures. Please therefore use this policy in conjunction with the following: Anti-Bullying and Harassment policy Recruitment and Safer Recruitment policy Employee Code of Conduct Supervision policy Flexible Working policy Grievance policy Disciplinary policy Complaints policy Whistleblowing policy
8. Legislation	Equality Act 2010 Equality Act Codes of Practice
9. Policy Lead	Chair of the Equality & Diversity Steering Group
10. Approval at EG	13 November 2018
11. Review Date	31 October 2019
12. Effective Date	15 November 2018



Appendix 1- Types of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

Occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. *It can be an act or an omission of an act.*

Example: An applicant without a disability being selected for a role, despite scoring lower in the selection process than an applicant with a disability.

In some circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. This must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect Discrimination

Occurs when a provision, criterion or procedure is applied that is to the detriment of people who have a relevant protected characteristic, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Example: An employer insisting that all employees must be cleanly shaven. This may indirectly discriminate against some religious groups.

Harassment

Occurs when unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (except marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity), has the *purpose or effect* of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not the effect was intentional.

Example: An employee refusing to call a colleague who has undergone gender reassignment surgery by the pronoun they wish to use, including making inappropriate jokes or comments about their gender.

Associative Discrimination

Occurs when an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic (except marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity).

Example: A female employee achieves the highest score in an interview for a promotion; however she is refused the promotion due to the employer assuming that because she is a woman she will soon want to have a child.



Perceptive Discrimination

Occurs when an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic (except marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity), when they do not in fact have that protected characteristic.

Example: A female employee is discriminated against based on the assumption that she is a lesbian, when in fact she is heterosexual.

Victimisation

Occurs when an employee is subjected to a detriment because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so.

Example: An Indian employee raises a grievance about racial harassment within the workplace, and is then subsequently excluded from all team meetings.

Third-Party Harassment

Occurs when an employee receives harassment from a third party related to a protected characteristic (except marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity).

Example: If an external trainer refers to an older employee with an inappropriate nickname based on their age.

Failure To Make Reasonable Adjustments

This is where a physical feature, provision, criterion or procedure puts an individual with a protected characteristic at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic, and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to overcome the disadvantage.

Example: An employer not installing a ramp in order for an employee in a wheelchair to be able to access the office building.