



# Birmingham Child Contact Centre

## Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Birmingham Child Contact Centre (BCCC) strives for high standards both as an employer and as a provider of services. In so doing, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.
- 1.2 This policy provides guidance to enable all who work with or for Birmingham Child Contact Centre to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. This policy will also address anti-discrimination issues involving areas that currently fall outside any legislation.
- 1.3 Failure to follow the procedures in the policy may lead to disciplinary procedures or other appropriate action.
- 1.4 BCCC's aims and objectives will be achieved through action planning, effective monitoring and a willingness to tackle problems where they arise. BCCC is committed to reviewing this policy on an annual basis. Through our training, publications, interaction with members and other activities, BCCC will ensure those we work with know our statements of policy.
- 1.5 BCCC will regularly review the implementation of its Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and strategy. Where evidence is found of ineffectiveness, immediate remedial action will be taken to ensure implementation.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 Equal Opportunities ensures that policies, procedures, and practice within Birmingham Child Contact Centre do not discriminate against the people within it. It is about treating people fairly and equally regardless of who they are, their background or their lifestyle.
- 2.2 Diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and are able to maximise their potential and contribution to BCCC and to the community. It recognises that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas and a different approach, which can make the way we work and learn more fun, more creative, more efficient and more innovative.
- 2.3 Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin or gender. Also because of, for example, marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; criminal convictions; union activities.
- 2.4 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, which although it applies equally to persons of all groups, is such that only a considerably smaller proportion of a particular group can comply with it. Examples: a rule about clothing that disproportionately disadvantages a racial group; requiring applicants to have British qualifications.
- 2.5 Victimisation occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted rights under the Sex Discrimination Act, the Race Relations Act or the Disability Discrimination Act or acted as a Whistleblower on such activity. People must be able to act against unlawful discrimination without fear of reprisals.
- 2.6 Harassment means repeated, unreciprocated and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive and which might threaten an employee or participant or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by the individual.
- 2.7 Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist employees or learners who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of workplace knowledge and competencies that is comparable with 'representative' employees. These measures would normally take the form of additional training. 'Positive discrimination' at the point of selection for work is not permissible.

**Birmingham Child Contact Centre encourages volunteers, members and trustees to be aware of the less obvious types of discrimination which result from general assumptions and pre-conceptions about the capabilities, interests and characteristics of individuals.**

### **3. Policy Statements**

#### **Diversity**

- 3.1 BCCC will actively encourage diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and to bring benefit to individuals and communities.
- 3.2 BCCC encourages all people it works with and for to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.
- 3.3 The way we work, train and learn within BCCC reflects both the Mission and Objectives of BCCC and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.
- 3.4 BCCC will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offer, where appropriate, additional support to trustees, staff and volunteers to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in BCCC work.
- 3.5 BCCC will endeavour to deliver services in a way that genuinely recognises the importance of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers to individuals.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

- 3.6 BCCC is an equal opportunities employer and provider of services. No job applicant, employee, volunteer, trustee or members will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities. Nor will such person be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable. This principle applies to recruitment, promotion, transfer, training, benefits, facilities, procedures and all terms and conditions of employment.

### **4. Aims and Objectives**

4.1 The aims and objectives of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy are:

- a. To encourage, promote and celebrate diversity in all our activities and services
- b. To ensure equal access to jobs, volunteer opportunities
- c. To ensure compliance with legislation on discrimination and equality i.e. Equality Act 2010 (this supersedes Disabled Persons Employment Acts of 1944 and 1958, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act 1995)
- d. To create environments free from harassment and discrimination.
- e. To maximise the use of resources in the best interests of staff, volunteers and members.
- f. To confront and challenge discrimination wherever and whenever it arises whether it be between colleagues, or in any other area relating to BCCC's work.
- g. To make a willingness to accept and implement this policy to be a necessary qualification for any position in BCCC.
- h. To ensure, through positive action and as far as is practicable, that all BCCC premises and services are accessible to all people.
- i. To ensure that employment and advancement within the organisation is determined by objective criteria and personal merit.

### **5. Policy Implementation: Expectations**

- 5.1 BCCC recognises that passive policies do not provide equality and BCCC will seek to promote equality and diversity within the following framework of responsibilities.

- 5.2 Responsibility for implementing and developing the policy rests with the Trustees. The overall co-ordinating responsibility for equal opportunities and management of diversity is delegated to Birmingham Child Contact Centre. However, all who work with or for the organisation have an individual responsibility: to accept the policy and ensure a personal involvement in its application; to co-operate actively to ensure that the environment we desire is a reality. Therefore:
- 5.3 BCCC requires individuals:
- a. to co-operate with measures introduced by NACCC to ensure equality of opportunity, diversity and non-discrimination
  - b. not to harass, abuse or intimidate any other employee or participant on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; criminal convictions; union activities
  - c. to feel sufficiently confident to inform management if they suspect discrimination is taking place.
- 5.4 BCCC expects our Coordinators and Team Leaders
- a. to ensure that proper records of employment decisions are maintained and regular reviews of employment practices are carried out
  - b. to ensure that grievances are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and in line with Birmingham Child Contact Centre's Grievance Policy and Procedure
  - c. to ensure that individuals within their area are aware of their legal responsibilities, and the organisation's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
  - d. to promote actively the benefits of employee and participant diversity, in employment, services and training.
- 5.5 The person with responsibility for Equal Opportunities and Diversity will:
- a. ensure that Coordinators, members, trustees and Equal Opportunities and Diversity Advisers are supported in their roles in regard to the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and Procedures.
  - b. ensure Trustees and Managers are appraised regularly on the state of equal opportunities and diversity within BCCC
  - c. ensure that the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and associated documents are reviewed on an annual basis.
  - d. review and approve policies, procedures and practices that impact on equal opportunities and diversity practice.
  - e. co-ordinate the delivery of an equal opportunity and diversity strategy and action plan.

## **6. Policy Implementation: Recruitment and Promotion**

- 6.1 BCCC strives to ensure that our trustees, staff and volunteers reflect the wider community.
- 6.2 Clear and accurate information on vacant posts should be available through advertisement, job descriptions, person specifications and interview. Vacancies will be advertised sufficiently widely to reach the widest possible range of candidates, either internal and/or external.
- 6.3 All recruitment material will not imply any preferred group, unless a genuine occupational qualification exists limiting a post to a particular group.
- 6.4 Applicants will be informed, through all recruitment material of BCCC's commitment to Equal Opportunities and Diversity and the existence of this policy.
- 6.5 Person specifications may include 'essential' and 'desirable' requirements that are necessary and justifiable. Care, and advice where necessary, is needed to ensure these are not discriminatory.
- 6.6 Staff and volunteers should be encouraged to discuss their development and training needs through a process of regular support and annual appraisals.
- 6.7 Role titles that are discriminatory will not be used e.g. specifying a gender

## **7. Policy Implementation: Interviews and Selection**

- 7.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, interviewing and selection policies and processes must take care to reflect the gender, disability and ethnic makeup of BCCC when selecting the panel.
- 7.2 The shortlisting panel will not select candidates on the basis of the gender, name, possible disability or age of the candidate.
- 7.3 The interview panel must take extreme care not to ask discriminatory questions unrelated to the requirements of the job, e.g. race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; gender; marital status or caring responsibility; sexual orientation; age; physical, sensory or learning disability; mental health; political or religious beliefs; class; HIV status; employment status; unrelated criminal convictions; union activities.

## **8. Policy Implementation: Training**

- 8.1 In line with the intentions of this policy, BCCC will not discriminate in the provision of training courses/ opportunities wherever possible.
- 8.2 Appropriate training will be provided to enable trustees, staff, volunteers and Committee members to perform their jobs effectively. The training offered will take into account the needs of all people wherever possible
- 8.3 Briefing on this policy will form part of the Induction Procedure for trustees, staff, volunteers and Committee members

## **9. Enforcement**

- 9.1 BCCC recognises the need for a continuing commitment to genuine equal opportunities and diversity within the organisation. The effectiveness of the policy's aims and objectives can only be judged by how the policy operates in practice.

## **10. Policy Enforcement – Grievances**

- 10.1 Any staff member or volunteer who feels they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination or unfairly treated in a way contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue through BCCC's established Grievance Procedure.
- 10.2 Any job applicant who believes that s/he has been treated unfairly and contrary to the intention of this policy should raise the issue with the Volunteers & Families Coordinator or Chair of the Trustee Committee..
- 10.3 All incidents of direct discrimination are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 10.4 Incidents of indirect discrimination will be investigated to determine whether they should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 10.5 Incidents of victimisation or harassment will be dealt with in accordance with BCCC's Harassment Procedure. Where incidents of victimisation and harassment are proven, the issue will be dealt with under Birmingham Child Contact Centre's Disciplinary Procedure.

## **11. Policy Enforcement – Disciplinary Procedure**

- 11.1 Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Standard Terms of Employment / Volunteering
- 11.2 Any paid/unpaid Volunteer found to be in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be removed from BCCC's register.
- 11.3 Any member of any Committee or working group of BCCC found in breach of this policy will be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be required to leave Birmingham Child Contact Centre.
- 11.4 Any staff member found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on his/her actions and may, where necessary, be referred back to their organisation or refused future services from BCCC.

## **12. Monitoring by NACCC**

- 12.1 NACCC view the collection/analysis of data as vital in informing change and improving performance. Where appropriate, statistics on NACCC's services will be collected and analysed in relation to equal opportunities and diversity. We will review employee turnover and seek information on reasons for leaving. Local and national data or statistics will be used to benchmark our performance.
- 12.2 The Trustees will review annually equality of opportunity relating to NACCC services. Recruitment and selection procedures will be monitored and reviewed annually by the CEO who will report to the NACCC Board. All aspects of personnel policies and procedures shall be kept under review to ensure that they do not operate against the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.
- 12.3 In order to determine the impact of this policy it is important that a monitoring system be developed which will measure commitment, progress and effectiveness. The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy will be monitored and reviewed as follows:
  - The policy will be an agenda item at NACCC team meetings.
  - The CEO will undertake an annual policy review. All relevant parties will be encouraged to submit comments for consideration.
  - The review recommendations will be presented to the next Trustee meeting for their comments and ratification.
- 12.4 Where it appears that there may have been or there is a breach of the policy, the CEO or chair of the Board will investigate the circumstances and appropriate action will be taken.
- 12.5 If it is found that the policy is excluding or discouraging the development of trustees, staff or volunteers or restricting other people, the CEO or Chair of the Board should take positive action to re-adjust the policy.