



Equality and Inclusion Policy



Introduction

Following Whispers Family Consultancy has considered carefully a number of issues in relation to promoting equality in Employment and as a result has formulated the following policy. We are committed to a positive policy of equal opportunity in the delivery of the services and employment.

Following Whispers Family Consultancy aims to ensure the promotion of inclusive rights of any individual, in line with the framework for the inspection of independent fostering agencies (2013: section 20). This includes Following Whispers Family Consultancy meeting our responsibilities as set out in the equality legislation. Therefore, all individuals who have contact with Following Whispers Family Consultancy should receive a service level contact that is sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.

A range of services will be provided, maintained or promoted, that are sensitive to the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic needs of the community they serve.

Records will be maintained to ensure that services are developed, or adapted, to meet the needs of service users. In terms of meeting National Minimum Fostering Standard 2, promoting a positive identity, potential and valuing diversity through individualised care, the Following Whispers Family Consultancy management conduct six monthly service audits that measures the support its foster carers receive to promote children's social and emotional development, and to enable children to develop emotional resilience and positive self-esteem. We also conduct monthly RAG and Tier list audits to continuously monitor our service.

Equal opportunity of access to services and jobs will be supported. Relevant training in equality and inclusion will be provided for all Following Whispers Family Consultancy staff, foster carers, panel members, consultants and volunteers who work with children and families.

However, there may be certain posts within Following Whispers Family Consultancy where a genuine occupational requirement exists which may preclude certain people on the above grounds, these must be shown to be justifiable (e.g. people employed to work with specific ethnic groups). Equality and inclusion monitoring of the foster carers and staff will be the responsibility of the management.

Following Whispers Family Consultancy is committed to ensuring that Equality and Inclusion are embedded in our culture and that the spirit of the policy is carried through all areas of recruitment, employment, promotion and training. In addition, any policy or procedure adopted by Following Whispers Family Consultancy will take account of the implication of Equal Opportunities within the document itself and on its application.

Following Whispers Family Consultancy will provide an environment where social justice and legislative requirements are met. Where individuals are treated fairly, ensuring that discrimination or harassment does not occur. To facilitate this, every employee has a responsibility to ensure that the policy is adhered to and that any incidents are reported and management has the responsibility to investigate incidents fairly and consistently.

Following Whispers Family Consultancy will ensure that all staff concerned with the provision and delivery of services does so in accordance with Following Whispers Family Consultancy 's policy and the law.

To achieve these aims Following Whispers Family Consultancy will: -

- Promote equal opportunities and ensure that it is integrated throughout the organisation; (National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, 2011 25.9)
- Design our services to meet the needs of all our community;
- Combat discrimination whenever it occurs
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- Provide training and guidance to all employees to ensure that the Agency's commitment to equality and inclusion is known and understood.
- Review all systems and procedures in the provision of the service to ensure equality and inclusion, responsiveness, sensitivity and accessibility.
- Give active support to the community to enable participation in service development and decision making;
- Ensure that performance is constantly monitored and evaluated using equality and inclusion impact assessments.

We also aim to ensure the agency foster carers and newly recruited staff appropriately demonstrate their understanding of the Training Support and Development Standards:

- 1.1a:** Show your awareness of the principles and values essential for looking after children, young people and their families.
- 1.2a:** understand the different types of prejudice which can affect children and young people.
- 1.2b:** Understand why it is important to provide care which respects and preserves each child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.
- 5.6a:** Understand children and young people in the context of their wider family, caring or social network.
- 5.7b:** Understand how to enable children and young people to develop a positive sexual identity with regard to their own sexuality.
- 5.8a:** Understand the 'social model of disability' and what it means in relation to your work as a foster carer.
- 5.8 b:** Have a broad understanding of the needs of children and young people who are disabled or have learning difficulties.
- 5.8 c:** Understand the need to adapt activities and experiences so individual children and young people can take part.
- 5.8 d:** Understand how you might support children and young people with special educational needs, and their families.

The Law

There is now a considerable body of legislation with accompanying regulations and guidance placing statutory obligations on Organisation in the field of Equality and Inclusion.

Substantial penalties can result from the failure to obey the law, which broadly divides between that which protects people from discrimination in employment and service delivery and that which promotes equality and inclusion and access to jobs and service.

As an organisation we depend in many circumstances on the approval of Local Authorities, and outside bodies, who themselves require evidence of equality and inclusion (equal opportunities) policy and practice.

For example, to get agency approval for student placements for the Diploma - Masters in Social Work we must adhere to specific requirements including a clear policy on anti-oppressive practice.

Placement Policy for Children from Minority Ethnic Groups

We live in a multi-cultural society and as such Foster Carers should be committed to providing a home environment, which recognises and values this fact. Foster carers' attitudes towards equality and inclusion are an important part of the assessment and approval process, and will be further addressed through equal opportunities training post approval and during annual reviews.

A child's ethnic origin, cultural background, language and religion are important factors to be considered when placement needs are addressed. It will generally be the case therefore, that a child's needs are most likely to be met in a placement with a family of a similar ethnic and cultural background to its own.



However, it is not our policy that the ethnic origin of a child shall automatically, of itself, take precedence of the other assessed needs of the child when placement plans are being considered.

Consequently, we will endeavour, by all appropriate means to recruit a wide range of carers from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, ethnic groups and religions. Additionally, we will attempt to ensure that all carers, whatever their background, can demonstrate understanding and sensitivity to these issues and will provide appropriate training and social work support in pursuit of that objective.

As an organisation, Following Whispers Family Consultancy will fulfil its responsibility to investigate any concerns regarding discrimination by either young people or staff and to take whatever action is deemed appropriate to eliminate prejudice or bias

Glossary of Terms

Ethnic Minority

Belonging to a cultural, racial or religious group that is numerically smaller than the predominant white Protestant, majority power-base in the United Kingdom. This includes groups visible based on their skin colour, as well as others such as Irish, Jewish, Polish, Turkish and travelling peoples. Belonging can come either through the allocation by others or individuals to it.

Ethnicity

Refers to individuals' identification with groups sharing some or all the following traits: customs, lifestyles, religion, language and nationality. In the context of this society, the "racial factor" influences individuals' definition of their own ethnicity (such as black/Asian, black/Caribbean.) It is important to remember that people of white origin also belong to ethnic groups.

Eurocentric

Looking at, exclusively valuing and interpreting the world through the eyes and experience of white Europeans. This includes for example, the presentations and interpretation of historical events, defining of 'correct' methods of child rearing and organising family life: seeing Europe as the centre of the world.

Culture

An identity which everyone has, based on a number of factors, such as: memories, ethnic identity, family attitudes to child rearing, class, money, religious or other celebrations, division of family roles according to gender or age. Cultures are neither superior nor inferior to each other. They are constantly evolving for individuals and communities.

Disabled

Having a physical, emotional or learning impediment that requires the provision of specific facilities to enable the individual to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from both their personal life and the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship, in so far as they chose to do so.

Able-Bodied

Having no physical, emotional or learning impediment, requiring the provision of specific facilities to enable the individual to participate, contribute and benefit as they choose. Many people with disabilities prefer the term "able-bodied" or the generic term "differently-abled".

Ableism

People who experience discrimination because of having a physical, emotional or learning impediment. This can be institutional or personal discrimination and is based on the belief that to be able bodied is to be superior.



Sexuality

A sense of self as a sexual being, which may be expressed in a number of ways. During their lives, adults may choose to be active or celibate.

Sexual Identity

An expression of sexuality, by which, adults define their sexual identity. This may be lesbian, gay, heterosexual or bisexual.

Heterosexist

A belief that heterosexual behaviour and relationships are the norm and that therefore other sexual behaviour and relationships are abnormal and deviant.

Homophobia

Discrimination based on heterosexual beliefs. Both personal and institutional, it is supported by legislation, affecting family life, employment and immigration rights and civil liberties. In this context, it affects all lesbian and gay social workers, adult and young adult clients, prospective carers and colleagues from other agencies.

Sexism

The personal and institutional differentiation of power and status between the sexes, which limit opportunities for girls and women both as services users and staff.

(Race Equality Unit 1991)

Relevant Legislation

Equality Act 2010:

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

Civil Partnerships Act 2004:

Provides legal recognition and parity of treatment for same-sex couples and married couples, including employment benefits and pension rights

Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005

Introduced a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality for disabled people.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Outlaws the discrimination of disabled people in employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the administration or management of premises.

Employment Equality (Age) Regulation 2006

Protects against discrimination on grounds of age in employment and vocational training. Prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment and instructions to discriminate.

Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in employment, vocational training, promotion and working conditions.



The Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity leave, sets out the extent to which it is discriminatory to pay a woman less than she would otherwise have been paid due to pregnancy or maternity issues.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003

The directive protects against discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions.

Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)

This gives an individual a right to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment, where the man and the woman are doing: like work; work rated as equivalent under an analytical job evaluation study; or work that is proved to be of equal value.

Equality Act 2006

Establishes a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007 that replaces the three existing commissions. Introduces a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate sex discrimination. Protects access discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in terms of access to good facilities and services.

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The purpose of the Act is to provide transsexual people with legal recognition in their acquired gender. Legal recognition follows from the issue of a full gender recognition certificate by a gender recognition panel.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Places a statutory duty on all public bodies to promote equal opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good relations between different racial groups.

Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulation 2003

Introduced new definitions of indirect discrimination and harassment, new burden of proof requirements, continuing protection after employment ceases, new exemption for a determinate job requirement and the removal of certain other exemptions.

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Act seeks to stop people from intentionally using threatening words or behaviour to stir up hatred against somebody because of what they believe.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex. Sex discrimination is unlawful in employment, education, advertising or when providing housing, goods, services or facilities. It is unlawful to discriminate because someone is married, in employment or advertisements for jobs.

The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999

The Act seeks to prevent sex discrimination relating to gender reassignment. It clarified the law for transsexual people in relation to equal pay and treatment in employment and training.