

Family Voice Norfolk equality, diversity and inclusion policy

Introduction

Family Voice Norfolk recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions to this organisation. This policy seeks to value and harness these differences and to make membership relevant and approachable for everyone. We aim to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences to meet the changing needs of our members.

Equality, diversity and inclusion statement

Family Voice Norfolk has adopted equality, diversity and inclusion as core values and places all its policy development in the context of the objectives of:

- Ensuring that all individuals who meet Family Voice Norfolk, whether as a parent carer representative, ambassador, colleague or in any other capacity, are treated with dignity and respect
- Providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all who are involved with Family Voice Norfolk
- Seeking through all its policies and actions to be a genuinely inclusive organisation. The objective is to integrate the principles of equal treatment and promotion of diversity into all aspects of the organisation's activity.

Scope

Family Voice Norfolk's membership is made up of parent carers of children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), associate members and affiliate members. Some of these parent carers act as parent carer representatives and ambassadors and answer to our steering group. The steering group is elected from our members by our members. Most steering group members are also representatives and/or ambassadors.

- We expect all Family Voice Norfolk steering group members, parent representatives, ambassadors and staff to behave in accordance with this policy and to have regard for Family Voice Norfolk values. The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion apply to the way in which representatives should treat each other and others they encounter when undertaking their roles

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- Family Voice Norfolk recognises that there are inequalities and discrimination that all members of Family Voice Norfolk are likely to experience due to their life experiences as parent carers of children and young people with SEND.

Legal framework

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and to advance equality and opportunity for all. The act simplified nine pieces of legislation, bringing into existence one single statute dealing with discrimination.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says a ‘disabled person’ has ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. It covers therefore a wide range of physical, sensory and mental disabilities, including chronic mental health issues and learning difficulties. The act also gives rights to disabled people to have accessible facilities and requires organisations to make all reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people and not put them at an unfair disadvantage.

Family Voice Norfolk is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities. To achieve this Family Voice Norfolk will:

- Ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the conduct of Family Voice Norfolk’s work
- Advance equality of opportunity for members of Family Voice Norfolk who share the ‘**Protected Characteristics**’ that are listed in Appendix 1
- Family Voice Norfolk recognises that individuals often face discrimination due to:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation.
- For **definitions of terms** in relation to discrimination and harassment see Appendix 2
- Family Voice Norfolk is committed to providing an environment free of stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices.

Roles and responsibilities

All members of Family Voice Norfolk steering group, parent carer representatives, ambassadors and staff will:

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- Ensure understanding of this policy and seek guidance if there are any questions
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion for others and strive to create a safe supportive and welcoming working environment
- Ensure their own behaviour and language is inclusive and non-discriminatory
- Ensure diversity and equal opportunities will be considered in all aspects of the work of Family Voice Norfolk
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour or discrimination
- Report unacceptable behaviour in accordance with Family Voice Norfolk policies and procedures.

Expectations of Family Voice Norfolk representatives, ambassadors, staff and working practice

Language or behaviours from Family Voice Norfolk representatives, ambassadors or staff which is offensive to any groups outlined in our statement is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any aspect of our work. Work practices which are discriminatory will be challenged and changed.

Training and development opportunities will be given equally to all representatives and staff. Family Voice Norfolk representatives and ambassadors have the right to discuss any training requirements with the Family Voice Norfolk steering group via Family Voice Norfolk Representatives Lead or Ambassadors Lead.

Implementation and redress

- The steering group will be responsible for implementing the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. If the steering group feels it is appropriate this may be delegated to a subgroup. The co-ordinator of any such subgroup will in this case report directly to the steering group.
- Any complaint or grievance in relation to the policy, or breach of policy should be made to the Chair, who will refer the matter to the steering group. If the complaint is about the Chair, the matter will be referred to the Vice Chair or Treasurer.
- All aspects of the policy should be monitored as an ongoing practice – this should be built into all procedures – for example as part of the recruitment process, publication process and activity projects.

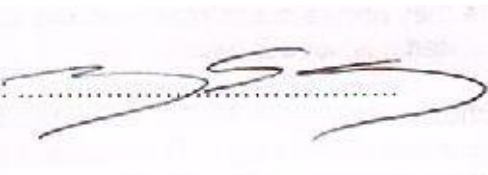
Review and update arrangements

The policy will be reviewed annually and may also be amended from time to time to reflect changes in legislation or improvements in best practice.

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Conclusion

Discrimination can be hurtful, insulting and demeaning to the recipient, and is not acceptable to our members. The term **‘vicarious liability’** means that any organisation could be prosecuted for the actions of their representatives or other staff if any person is discriminated against. Under separate legislation, it is also made clear under the Human Rights Act 1998 that all people have the right to live free from fear of discrimination.

Procedure created by	Lorraine Devere / Wayne Doman	Date of review	-
Steering group adopted (name and role)	 Tracey Sismey, Chair	Date	21 April 2019

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Appendix 1:

Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics (taken from Equality Act 2010)

Age: - The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their age, whether young or old unless it can be objectively justified.

Disability: - The Act continues to make it unlawful to discriminate against an individual on the grounds of their disability which amounts to a physical or mental impairment. It is also unlawful to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability. Organisations are expected to make any reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to systems of work to accommodate an individual's disability. The Act now makes it unlawful for an organisation to ask a candidate about their health before offering work. Such questions may only be lawful if an organisation is considering whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to accommodate an applicant throughout the interview selection process, to decide whether an applicant can carry out a function that is essential to the job or to monitor diversity among people applying for jobs.

Gender Reassignment: - It is unlawful to discriminate against a transsexual person who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change their gender. In addition, it is unlawful to treat an individual less favourably because they are absent from work as they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they are ill or injured.

Marriage and Civil Partnership: - the Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of marital status, heterosexual or same sex marriage or civil partnership.

Pregnancy and Maternity: - A woman is protected against discrimination during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination.

Race: - It is unlawful to treat an individual less favourably because of their colour, race, nationality (including citizenship or ethnic or national origin, or apply requirements or conditions which have a disproportionate effect on people of a racial group, and which cannot be justified on non-racial grounds.

Religion or Belief: - The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate because of an individual's religion or lack of religion or philosophical belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that the belief is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.

Sex: - It is unlawful to treat an individual less favourably because of an individual's sex or to apply selection criteria, policies, employment rules or any other practices which have a disproportionate effect on people of a sex unless they can be objectively justified.

Sexual Orientation: - the Act makes it unlawful to harass, victimise or otherwise discriminate against a person because of her/his sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation. The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual, pan and lesbian people.

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**Appendix 2:
Definition of Terms**

Direct Discrimination – occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination – can occur when there is a condition, rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Associative Discrimination – occurs when someone is directly discriminated against because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic (except in marital/civil partnership status).

Perceptive Discrimination – occurs when someone is directly discriminated against because others think they possess a protected characteristic (other than marriage or civil partnership) even if they do not actually possess it.

Harassment – is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Employees need not possess the relevant characteristic themselves and may be protected because of perception or association.

Victimisation – occurs when an employee suffers a detriment because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Sexual Harassment - occurs when an individual is subject to abuse, physical, verbal or hostile behaviour because of his/her sex which might threaten the individual’s job security or create an intimidating environment.

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