

Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

Families United Network is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce and membership to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The organisation - in providing services and facilities for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities - is also committed against unlawful discrimination of staff, family members or the public.

Our policy's purpose

This policy's purpose is to:

1. Provide equality, fairness and respect for all in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time
2. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
3. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in:
 - pay and benefits
 - terms and conditions of employment
 - dealing with grievances and discipline
 - dismissal
 - redundancy
 - leave for parents
 - requests for flexible working
 - selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

Our commitments

The organisation commits to:

1. Encourage equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and within our provided services as they are good practice and make business sense
2. Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff and members accessing services are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, members, users of our services and the public

3. Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

4. Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Make decisions concerning staff being based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
6. Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law.

7. Monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, sex, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality for diversity and inclusion policy.

Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality, diversity and inclusion policy, and any supporting action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

8. Children and Adult's accessing our services will be respected and their individuality and potential recognised. We always strive to provide an environment free from prejudice and discrimination.

9. Families United Network respects the faiths and backgrounds of all Staff, children, family member's and Adult's accessing our services. We take note and where possible arrange activities in celebration of all different Faiths and beliefs. Where food is provided cultural and dietary needs will be met.

Agreement to follow this policy

The equality, diversity and inclusion policy are fully supported by senior management and our Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating this policy and ensuring its maintenance and review to the Charity Development Manager.

All Service Leads must ensure that they and all staff always adhere to the policy.

Equally those who are involved in recruitment, selection, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination of employment, promotion, training and development of employees have a responsibility for the practical application of this policy.

All workers are responsible for the success of this policy and must ensure that they familiarise themselves with its content and act in accordance with it.

Legislation

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion/Belief) Regulations 2003
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- The Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 (SDA)
- Ex-offender Legislation
- Race relations (amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Code of Practice 2002
- Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001

- Children's Act 1989 & 2004

It is our policy to ensure that our recruitment, selection, employment and management practices comply with all relevant legislation.

Our disciplinary and grievance procedures

Use of the organisation's grievance or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

All allegations of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with seriously, confidentially and promptly. Families United Network ("FUN") will not ignore or treat lightly grievances or complaints of discrimination or harassment from employees.

If you wish to make a complaint of discrimination, you should use Families United Network ("FUN") grievance procedure.

If you wish to make a complaint of harassment you should follow the following steps:

- First, report the incident of harassment to Families United Network ("FUN") Charity Development Manager as Families United Network ("FUN") Equality and Diversity Director. Alternatively, if you prefer you may speak to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- Such reports should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed, and any action taken expeditiously.
- All allegations of harassment will be taken seriously. The allegation will be promptly investigated and, as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed and asked to provide a written witness statement setting out the details of your complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigatory process to the extent that this is practical and appropriate in the circumstances. However, in order to effectively investigate an allegation, Families United Network ("FUN") must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the allegation. For example, the identity of the complainant and the nature of the allegations must be revealed to the alleged harasser so that he or she is able to fairly respond to the allegations. Anyone interviewed will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee, parent or guardian, in accordance with the Employment Relations Act 1999. Families United Network ("FUN") reserves the right to arrange for an independent person to conduct the investigation other than the original person with whom you raised the matter.
- Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and Families United Network ("FUN") conclusions and decision as soon as possible. Families United Network ("FUN") is committed to taking appropriate action with respect to all complaints of harassment which are upheld. If appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser.
- You will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if it is not upheld, unless your complaint was both untrue and made in bad faith.

- If your complaint is upheld and the harasser remains in Families United Network (“FUN”) employment, Families United Network (“FUN”) will take all reasonable steps to ensure that you do not have to continue working alongside him or her if you do not wish to do so. Families United Network (“FUN”) will discuss the options with you.
- If your complaint is not upheld, arrangements will be made for you and the alleged harasser to continue or resume working and to repair working relationships.
- Alternatively, you may, if you wish, use Families United Network (“FUN”) grievance procedure to make a complaint of harassment.

Any employee who is found to have discriminated against or harassed another employee in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action under Families United Network (“FUN”) disciplinary procedure. Such behaviour may be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal. In addition, line managers who had knowledge that such discrimination or harassment had occurred in their departments but who had taken no action to eliminate it will also be subject to disciplinary action under Families United Network (“FUN”) disciplinary procedure.

Training, Promotion and condition of Service

Training needs will be identified through regular appraisals. Employees will be given appropriate access to training to allow them to progress within FUN and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Families United Network (“FUN”) will provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities and dignity at work and what they can do to create a work environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

FUN’s conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all employees who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

Policy Last Reviewed 12th January 2023
Reviewed by Board of Trustees
Next Review Date due: 12th January 2024