

## Parent Carers Together Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

### Introduction

Parent Carers Together supports the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in employment and volunteering.

Through all its policies and actions Parent Carers Together seeks to:

- Be an inclusive organization
- Integrate the principles of equality
- Promote diversity in all aspects of our activity
- Ensure that all individuals who come into contact with Parent Carers Together are treated with dignity and respect
- Provide a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for all

Parent Carers Together recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. This policy seeks to value and harness these differences and to ensure that the forum is relevant and approachable for everyone. Our aim is to draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to meet the changing needs of our members, volunteers, partners and supporters.

Parent Carers Together recognise that there are particular inequalities and discrimination that our members may experience due to their life experiences as parents or carers of disabled children and young people, and there are some members who will face dual discrimination. We recognise that we may need to work in a range of different or more flexible ways, in order to ensure genuine equality of access or opportunity for groups and individuals who come from a position of persistent and longstanding disadvantage.

### Statement of Intent

Parent Carers Together has adopted Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as core values.

Parent Carers Together is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and recognises that no employees, volunteers, members or people who use our services should experience unfair discrimination during their work or other dealings with PCT on any grounds

We aim to ensure that no job applicant, worker, volunteer, member or user of our services receives less favourable treatment from the organisation on the grounds of caring responsibilities, age, disability, economic status, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender orientation or reassignment, marital status, nationality, political affiliation, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief/lack of belief or sexual orientation.

- We recognise that unfair discrimination can take many forms including stereotyping and misinformation, negative or abusive language, and the failure to take different needs into account when planning and delivering services. Parent Carers Together is committed to opposing unfair discrimination and to eliminating it from the ways in which we work.
- Parent Carers Together is committed to going beyond avoiding unfair discrimination and actively encouraging diversity and inclusion across the organisation, starting with a warm welcome extended to all and encouraging inclusivity in all our practices.
- This policy covers all areas of our work and activities, including the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers; induction, training and development; conduct at work; disciplinary and grievance procedures; flexible working practices; parental and dependants' leave; supervision and appraisal; the working environment; and delivery of services.
- Parent Carers Together will ensure that all new employees and volunteers will receive induction on the policy and that contractors will be fully informed.

### Legal Framework

Parent Carers Together endorse the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to the positive promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all members and to achieve this we will:

- Strive to ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs in the conduct of the work carried out by Parent Carers Together
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share the 'protected characteristics' that are listed below, and all other members of Parent Carers Together
- Foster positive relations between people who share the 'protected characteristics' and those who do not

Parent Carers Together recognise that individuals often face discrimination due to:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity (including race, colour, caste and nationality)
- Gender
- Gender reassignment

- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Religion, belief
- Sexual orientation
- Caring responsibilities
- Employment or financial status
- Non relevant criminal conviction.
- Political affiliation
- Social class

See appendix 1 for more detail, for definitions of terms in relation to discrimination and harassment see appendix 2.

Parent Carers Together is committed to providing an environment free of stereotyped and oppressive beliefs, attitudes and practices.

We seek to promote diversity and to respond to the needs of all individuals in a fair and equitable manner. We work to reduce unfair discrimination in society and seek to eliminate any such practices within the organisation.

### **Implementing the Policy - Service Delivery**

Parent carers Together will aim to provide welcoming and non-discriminatory services and will aim to promote equality of access by:

- Aiming to provide publicity and information material in appropriate languages, formats and styles.
- Liaising with organisations who work with any underrepresented user populations such as black and minority ethnic community groups and disability groups.
- Including information about equality, diversity and inclusion in the induction procedure for staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Challenging misinformed, negative or offensive remarks about the groups of people named in the policy in a constructive way, in order to maintain an atmosphere where the people named in our policy are treated respectfully.
- Ensuring as far as reasonably practicable that our premises, and any external premises we use, are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- Organising events and meetings at times of day that allow parent carers to be able to attend wherever possible.

### **Employment**

Parent Carers Together recognises that implementing equality and diversity procedures in the way it recruits and selects its staff and volunteers is a vital step towards eliminating discrimination.

We recognise that under the Equality Act 2010, we will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments required to ensure that arrangements at work (e.g. hours of work, time off for therapy, purchasing equipment) do not place an applicant or worker who is disabled at a disadvantage to one who does not have that disability.

In order to work towards this, Parent Carers Together will organise recruitment and selection of staff in the following ways:

- Adverts will be publicised widely so that they reach people from the groups named in the policy, commensurate with the role being recruited to.
- Adverts will include an appropriate short statement on equality, diversity & inclusion.
- Selection criteria (job descriptions, person specifications) will be non-discriminatory and essential for the effective performance of the job.
- All job descriptions and person specifications will include awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion and the ability to work in accordance with these principles.
- Shortlisting and interview will be done by the interview panel and will be based on the job description and the person specification.
- The interview panel will consist of a minimum of two people and, as far as possible, will have a diverse membership.
- The interview panel members will either have previous training in, or an awareness of, equality and diversity in relation to the recruitment and selection process, or will be given an introduction to, and explanation of, the procedures.
- We will record the details of the applicant's age, disability, ethnic origin and gender via the Equality monitoring form, which is separated from the selection process.
- Reasonable adjustment will be made during the recruitment process for applicants with disabilities.
- Recruitment of volunteers will follow the Volunteer Recruitment policy.

### **Implementation**

The Steering Group are responsible for the communication, promotion, implementation, and monitoring of the Equality and Diversity Policy in their service areas, including, in the wider community where appropriate.

The Steering Group will communicate the policy to staff and volunteers; ensure that staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities; ensure that no discrimination takes place and deal appropriately with any breaches. Steering Group must ensure that there is no scope for discriminatory practice.

Mandatory training and guidance to all employees and volunteers will be provided to ensure that the commitment to equal opportunities is known and understood.

**Complaints**

- Any complaint or grievance in relation to the policy, or breach of policy should be made to the Chair of Parent Carers Together steering group.
- If the complaint is about the Chair the matter shall be made to another member of the Steering Group.
- We encourage the reporting of any incidents whereby someone is discriminated against as a result of our work.
- We take all steps in our power to make our activities accessible to everyone and we actively seek to remove any barriers in our work that may prevent someone from taking part.

Policy Adopted on	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2022
Reviewed on	
Next Review Date	July 2023

### 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 in order 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 January 2020 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 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 particular 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 particular 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 and lesbian people.
- *Equal Pay:* Organisations need to ensure that a consistent approach is applied to remuneration and benefits for men and women and will make recommendations for amendments where any inequalities may be found.

## 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 particular 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 and 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.