

Families Fighting for Justice

Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of Policy

1. Families fighting for justice recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedure, we have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.
2. The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.
3. Families fighting for justice will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.
4. The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.
5. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant codes of practice.
6. Families fighting for justice will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

Recruitment and Selection

1. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. Families fighting for justice will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
2. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decision relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
3. Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
4. Families fighting for justice will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
5. Families fighting for justice will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
6. All applicants who apply for jobs with Families Fighting for Justice will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.

7. All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
8. Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
9. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
10. Families Fighting for Justice will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
11. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

Training and Promotion

1. Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.
2. All promotion will be in line with this policy.

Monitoring

1. Families Fighting for Justice will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.
2. Monitoring may involve:
 - The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;
 - The examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
 - Recording equipment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reasons for those decisions.
3. The result of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality or opportunities to all applicants and staff.
- 4.

Families Fighting for Justice – Complaints Policy

If you have a complaint, you should follow the Complaints Procedure as set out below:

Process

The aims of the policy are to resolve complaints as quickly, effectively and fairly as possible and maintain a positive working environment. With this in mind, it is advised that, as far as possible, the informal stage of the procedure be employed. (See complaints form).

If informal resolution fails, or if it is not appropriate to resolve the complaint informally, the individual, individual's line manager or (if not appropriate) the Centre Manager or Chair of the Board may at any time start the formal stage of the procedure.

The objective of the informal stage is to remedy the situation by encouraging and facilitating communication between the complainant and the respondent and, where appropriate, to allow the matter to be resolved locally by the line manager.

The formal stage involves the submission of a written complaint which is then dealt with by a confidential investigation and decision-making process.

The policy focuses on providing a mechanism for dealing with cases where the complainant or the respondent is a member of staff. If either holds a manager's position the Board takes overall responsibility for ensuring that the matter is resolved. If the complaint concerns a member (s) of the Board, the complainant can approach his/her line manager or another member of the Board Committee.

The Decision-Making Process

Where possible the decision-making panel should have a minimum of 2/3 members. The panel may comprise individuals from Board Committee, or an independent organisation.

In the event that the panel finds that there is no case to answer to or that action other than disciplinary action should be taken, it is the responsibility of the panel to identify what course of action should be taken.

- If the panel decides that disciplinary action should be taken, a disciplinary hearing will be convened in line with the Centre's disciplinary and grievance policy.
- In accordance with the appeal stage of the Disciplinary and Grievance policy, if the case is found to be proven and a sanction imposed, the respondent has the right of appeal.
- In line with the appeal procedure, a separate appeal panel must be convened. This should comprise a minimum number of 2/3 panel members.
- The outcome of the disciplinary hearing may be reviewed in the light of the appeal. The decision of the appeal panel is final.
- If following the investigation, it is decided that there is no case to answer; the complainant has the right to appeal via the grievance procedure.
- The grievance must be lodged in writing and a review undertaken in line with the procedure.
- If as a result of the review the original decision is confirmed, the matter is concluded and the procedure is at an end.
- If, as a result of the review the original decision is overturned, the matter is resolved via the disciplinary procedure.
- The panel must also consider whether in bringing the complaint there was any malicious or vexatious intent on the part of the complainant and decide upon the appropriate course of action.
- It should be noted that, if at any point in the procedure there is evidence of the misuse of the policy by any party, action up to and including disciplinary action will be taken.
- Following the conclusion of the procedure an assessment will be made of:
 - (1) The existing working arrangements so that they can be readjusted as necessary to accommodate the staff who will be working together in the future.

- (2) Any action necessary to prevent the recurrence of the complaint or behaviour of a similar nature. This will include looking at the need for training, additional support, supervision or monitoring.

Staff

Staff, if you have a complaint speak to your line manager, as they are best placed to respond. If you fail to receive a reasonable response either from your line manager (or in turn the manager), then as your contract of employment states, you can continue your grievance procedure by writing to the board.

Members/Visitors

If any member or visitor of the Families Fighting For Justice wishes to make a complaint they can state the nature of their complaint by:

- Writing to the manager:-
 - Jean Taylor
Families Fighting For Justice
6 Anson Street
Liverpool
L3 6NY
- Telephoning the manager on 0151 7092994
- Meeting the manager in person

The complaint will be recorded and investigated as quickly as is practicable and hopefully resolved.

If the complainant does not feel satisfied the manager will advise them to contact the Board of Families Fighting for Justice who will look at the available evidence and/or investigate further themselves and respond within one month with their findings.

Grievance Policy

- 1) The majority of problems encountered at work are usually capable of being resolved informally by the employee and the line manager concerned and thereafter the centre manager. There is however, a formal procedure which can be followed if a grievance cannot be resolved in this way. Details of the procedure are set out as below.
- 2) The object of the grievance procedure is to enable employees who consider they have a grievance or complaint arising from their employment with Families Fighting For Justice, to have it dealt with at the nearest appropriate level within as short a time as possible. Anyone wishing to use this procedure can do so freely and without prejudice to his/her position in the centre. Employees should not hesitate to use this procedure which has been adopted in recognition of the fact that whilst the Centre's policies are designed to encourage good working relationships, from time to time there may be circumstances, due to pressure of work or otherwise, in which

misunderstandings or grievances may arise. It applies to all employees, irrespective of job or grade.

- 3) Any grievance must be discussed initially with the immediate line manager and thereafter the centre manager who will attempt to resolve the matter after making such consultations as are necessary. You may be required to put any such grievance in writing. Every opportunity will be given for your grievance to be stated and thoroughly discussed. As appropriate, further investigation may take place and action taken.
- 4) At each stage of the procedure, you may choose to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official to help put the case.
- 5) If the complaint or grievance relates to the centre manager or the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction within a reasonable time, the grievance can be raised in writing with the board. Having enquired into your grievance a member of the board (The investigating officer) will convene a formal hearing before two other members of the board (The hearing panel) to discuss the matter. You will be given at least 3 working days' notice of the grievance hearing. The investigating officer will state the findings of his/her investigation and you will be given an opportunity to thoroughly state your case. As appropriate, further investigation may take place and action taken.
- 6) The decision of the hearing panel will be notified to you in writing within 7 working days unless extended by mutual consent.
- 7) The decision of the hearing panel is final and the grievance procedure is exhausted following this stage.
- 8) All meetings will be private and confidential.

Families Fighting for Justice – Safe from harm policy

Families fighting for justice in accordance with its mission statement aims to help any individual regardless of background. Those individuals who have been in trouble with the police and may have a criminal record will not be discriminated against. However because of the nature of Families fighting for Justice and its activities, there are certain criminal offences we are not qualified or skilled to deal with. If, however the individual seeks help, we would refer them to other agencies more able and skilled than ourselves to deal with their particular needs.

The offences we cannot deal with are:

- Those convicted of sexual abuse, especially against children
- Those convicted of rape
- Those convicted of serious violent crime against another person

In the interests of safety for all concerned, as part of the conditions of acceptance on one of our courses the following disclosure must be completed. It must be stressed that this is in no way discriminatory, but merely a means of helping us to help you. All disclosures are treated in the strictest of confidence.

Families fighting for Justice – Child Protection Policy

Definition of Abuse

A child may be abused or neglected by inflicting harm or by failing to act or prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger.

A duty to investigate

It is important that children (the Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18) are protected from abuse. The abuse may be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

The centre is committed to working together with the local area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) and to complying with their procedures. It recognises that it has a responsibility towards young people within Families Fighting for Justice to safeguard and promote their welfare and to take appropriate decisions about how this can be achieved. It is not the centre's responsibility to investigate abuse. Nevertheless, it has a duty to act if there is a cause for concern and to notify the appropriate agencies so that they can investigate and take any necessary action.

The social services/police have the primary responsibility in the field of child protection. The Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to take steps to protect children in appropriate circumstances and give certain powers to the police so that they can take action to protect children.

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. "Working Together Under The Children Act 1989", published by the Department of Health sets out the governments guidance on child protection and says that all staff should be aware of the need to alert Social Services, the NSPCC or the police, when they believe a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

It can involve any one or more of the following:

- Neglect
- Physical injury
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

Procedure

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation is made that a child has been abused or when there is suspicion that a child has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should never be given to a young person as the matter may develop in such a way that these cannot be honoured.

If the complainant is the young person questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged and leading questions should be avoided. The use of leading questions can cause problems for the subsequent investigation and any court proceeding.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information including:-

- The date and time
- The place where the alleged abuse happened
- Your name and names of others present
- The name of the complainant and, where difference, the name of the child who has allegedly been abused.
- The nature of the alleged abuse.
- A description of any injuries observed.
- The account which has been given of the allegation.

Any person who has a suspicion that a child is believed to be suffering harm or is at risk of abuse should discuss the concern with the centre manager immediately.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the centre manager as soon as possible any in any even within 2 hours. A response should be given to the young person within 2 hours as to how the matter will be handled.

The nominate member of staff must report the matter to the local Social Services department, whether or not she/he feels that this action is justified in the particular circumstances of the case.

Some children with special educational needs (SEN) may need different treatment to other children e.g. in the way their physical/mental condition might mask possible abuse. Particular attention should be given to children with speech impediments as these can make communication difficult.

Families Fighting for Justice has a duty to make enquiries about the welfare of a child in their area if there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

Procedures for all professionals and members of the public

If any employee or member of the public has reason to believe that a child may have been abused should always try to ensure that the child is safe. This should be the first priority and should surpass notification to the centre manager, social services or the police.

All instances or suspected instances of abuse of a child or young person must be discussed at once with your line manager and/or the manager of Families Fighting for Justice (Jean Taylor). **YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED FOR YOUR OWN BENEFIT AND FOR THAT OF THE CHILD/CHILDREN CONCERNED THAT YOU DO NOT DISCUSS THE INCIDENT WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN THOSE MENTIONED ABOVE.**

The person making the report should provide, where possible the child's name, date of birth and address with correct spelling. Any other information about the child/family would be helpful. Explain

clearly the nature of your concern. Ensure that social services know where the child is currently placed and give a contact number.