



Equal Opportunities

This policy is a brief summary of several documents held for reference in the office. It is used as an overview of the key measures we take to ensure that we address equal opportunities, tackle disadvantage and challenge discrimination in all that we do. It is not a comprehensive statement of all the issues involved.

Introduction

Equality Matters, a guidance document issued by the Big Lotteries in 2008, describes six equality principles as follows:

1. Promoting accessibility

People should be able to use services with relative ease, without spending too much time and money and which are sensitive to the different needs of people using them.

2. Valuing cultural diversity

People have different needs, beliefs, values and abilities and these differences need to be respected and promoted. Cultural diversity within an organisation helps:

- build trust and confidence between varied communities
- provide a richer mix of ideas and talents to draw from
- create more efficient and effective decision-making

3. Promoting participation

The best services are based on a close understanding of the needs they are trying to meet. This means that the people who will be affected by them should be involved in developing the services, because they know their needs best. Traditionally, some groups are more likely than others to be consulted and involved. The challenge for many organisations is to reach out and involve groups that are often left out, and to help them take a more active part in shaping the work that the organisation does.

4. Promoting equality of opportunity

Some groups in the community find it harder to get jobs and they may also find it harder to make use of services, or find using those services more difficult. We believe that we should create a level playing field for everyone and this may mean treating people differently in order to help them have the same chance to take part in work or in local services.

5. Promoting inclusive communities

We want to help build strong communities, in which:

- people feel they belong
- their lives are appreciated and valued
- people have similar life opportunities, and
- strong, positive relationships develop between people of different backgrounds.



6. Reducing disadvantage and exclusion

To help those groups most at risk of being disadvantaged or excluded from work and services, there need to be initiatives that:

- deal with the causes of disadvantage and exclusion
- promote inclusion of the most disadvantaged and excluded

Summary Policy

Allsorts Youth Project recognises that different forms of prejudice and discrimination disadvantages individuals within our society and believes that prejudice and discrimination in any form are wrong.

While the law gives some protection against discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, and disability and, to a more limited extent, sexual orientation and gender identity, we are committed to extending protection against discrimination to groups and individuals who are not protected by law. In order to take a pro-active stance against direct and indirect discrimination, we will:

- strive to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all in our provision of services to young people and in the employment of staff/volunteers to provide those services
- actively assist all groups to benefit from our services, paying particular attention to the needs of those excluded from and discriminated against in the wider community
- seek to identify the needs of groups affected by prejudice and discrimination, establishing close relationships with local networks involving people from those groups
- collect and monitor records of equalities information of young people attending our services and activities, and people applying for volunteer and paid employment with us
- ask all agencies working in partnership with us to demonstrate their own commitment to equal opportunities before they can provide services or activities with us
- make it a requirement on the person specification that all volunteer and paid staff demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities and explore this commitment at interview
- offer training around equalities to all volunteers and staff, an element of which will be included in our volunteers' induction process
- endeavour to support each other and those attending the services provided by Allsorts in deepening our awareness of how our experiences of homophobic, bi and transphobic discrimination and harassment have affected us negatively and provide training on internalised homophobia as part of our volunteer's induction process
- respond without delay to any allegation of discrimination by a volunteer, staff member, other provider, young person or visitor
- challenge behaviour that expresses discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping and invoke grievance and/or disciplinary procedures if appropriate and regularly review equal opportunities practice against policy



- there is no retirement age. A worker may retire at 65 if they wish too whether male, female or trans

Dealing with harassment and bullying

As part of this policy, Allsorts is committed to challenging all forms of harassment and bullying whether among staff/volunteers/partnership agencies or young people using our services. Where harassment or bullying takes place, appropriate action will be taken in the following ways:

- young people who are victimised or harassed by other young people are invited to take the matter to a member of staff/volunteer as soon as possible who will then consult with the young person/visitor concerned and invoke the *Allsorts Ground-rules*, if necessary excluding that person from the building immediately
- young people who are victimised or harassed by members of staff/volunteers are invited to make a complaint to another member of staff/volunteer who will, if necessary, assist that young person in making a formal complaint through the *Allsorts Complaints Procedure*
- staff/volunteers victimised or harassed by other members of staff/volunteers are invited to follow the *Allsorts Grievance Procedures*
- staff/volunteers victimised or harassed by a young person using our services should inform a staff member immediately and the young person should be reminded of the *Allsorts Ground-rules*
- *Staff or volunteers who witness any form of harassment or bullying should challenge the behaviour where appropriate, and discuss the behaviour with the person who has been the recipient. They should seek guidance from that person, other members of staff and the Project Director as to the best course of action that should be taken.*

Allsorts recognises that in each of these scenarios it may be helpful for an individual to obtain independent advice from within the project or from an outside advisory body. An advisor/supporter may then be present at all interviews concerning the incident. The experience of being bullied or harassed can feel shameful and cause fear, especially if it is taken out of one's control.

Sensitivity and care should be taken to ensure that the person on the receiving end of this behaviour is kept fully informed and feels fully involved in the process of addressing the issue. Negotiating with them about the action they would like to see happen is an important first step.