

## POST-ADOPTION CENTRE (PAC)

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY AND PROCEDURES (EOP)

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## **1 This policy and procedure arise from:**

Adoption Support Agencies National Minimum Standards (England) Care Standards Act 2000

- (Standard 12 – Fair and Competent Employer)

## **2 Aims**

- 2.1 PAC believe that diversity benefits and adds value to PAC's services. Having a diverse workforce better represents the people we serve. Differences in culture and range of different life experiences bring creativity, vitality and greater innovation to the organisation.
- 2.2 PAC staff will be encouraged and supported to take personal ownership and responsibility for full implementation of the EOP.
- 2.3 We shall use all methods to ensure that all:
- Staff experience fairness and equity of treatment in the workplace
  - Service users receive fair and equal access to PAC's services
  - Staff and service users are treated with dignity and respect
- 2.4 PAC will be active in removing barriers that can prevent certain groups obtaining:
- Employment and advancement within PAC
  - Access to PAC's services
- 2.5 It is PAC's Policy that everyone should be treated fairly and without discrimination in relation to their human rights regardless of sex, race, colour, age, disability, sexuality, language, HIV status, religion, birth or other status.
- 2.6 PAC has adopted the Stephen Lawrence inquiry definition of Institutionalised Racism. PAC will apply this definition in the widest sense, extending it beyond racism to all individuals, when working to remove discrimination on any grounds
- 2.7 PAC will not tolerate processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination, including harassment, victimisation and bullying through prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and stereotyping. This extends to behaviour which perpetuates stereotyping: i.e. one race or group of people having superiority over that of another group.
- 2.8 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 extends further the application of the Race Relations Act 1976 to public authorities to promote race equality. As local authorities subscribe to our services we too share in this duty of care to service users and staff. It is therefore PAC's responsibility to ensure that external trainers, consultants, therapists, paid and voluntary staff adhere to this policy.

Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures

### **3 Monitoring**

- 3.1 At the core of PAC's Equal Opportunities Policy (EOP) is our monitoring procedure which is the collection, storage and analysis of data about staff and service user's ethnic background. It is a bench mark of good practice used to assess the effectiveness of our Equal Opportunities Policy and for no other purpose. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provides the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity.
- 3.2 In the area of recruitment, monitoring enables us to examine the general make-up of our workforce and allows us to analyse how our personnel practices impact on different minority groups.
- 3.3 In service delivery, monitoring can tell us which groups are using our service, and how satisfied they are with them. PAC as an organisation can then consider ways of reaching underrepresented groups and make sure that our services are relevant to their needs and provided fairly. The services of translators/interpreters will be employed where necessary. Furthermore, an effective monitoring procedure can also serve to reinforce our reputation as a good employer and a fair provider of services.
- 3.4 Thus monitoring allows us to:
- Highlight possible inequalities
  - Investigate their underlying causes; and
  - Remove any unfairness or disadvantage.

### **4 Definitions**

- 4.1 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition of Institutionalised Racism: "...the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin." As stated above, this definition has been extended beyond racism to all individuals, when working to remove discrimination on any grounds.
- 4.2 Direct & Indirect-discrimination as defined under the Race Relation (Amendment) Act 2000.
- 4.3 Discrimination may be direct or indirect or it may take the form of victimisation.
- 4.4 Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another on racial grounds. This may take the form of: refusing a service to people from a specific ethnic minority group; ignoring racial harassment of employees; assuming that all black mental health service users/adolescents/offenders are aggressive and therefore subjecting them to tighter controls than their white counterparts. Failure to ensure that PAC's premises or the venues we hire are accessible to people with disabilities would also be a form of direct discrimination.

- 4.5 Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule is applied equally to everyone but it can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular racial group; the rule is to their disadvantage; and it cannot be justified on non-racial grounds.
- 4.6 Victimisation occurs when a person is disadvantaged because they have made a complaint of racial discrimination; or are thought to have done so; or because they have supported someone else who has made a complaint of racial discrimination.
- 4.7 As with the Stephen Lawrence definition of Institutionalised Racism, PAC has extended the definition of direct, indirect discrimination and victimisation beyond race to incorporate all individuals in our pursuit of zero tolerance to discrimination on any grounds.

## **5 Commitment**

- 5.1 Senior management at PAC realise that to make all of the above a part of our culture, staff must be provided with the necessary support and training to enable us to effectively challenge oppressive practice.
- 5.2 Appropriate action will be taken to redress the effects of any policy or procedure that in anyway contradicts the EOP.
- 5.3 Development activities incorporating human rights and equalities issues will be provided to bring about greater awareness in these areas for all staff.
- 5.4 Management and staff will work towards ensuring that the working environment is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- 5.5 It will be made clear through policy and practice that discrimination is unacceptable and will be treated as a serious, disciplinary offence.
- 5.6 Any complaints of discrimination including harassment, victimisation and bullying will be dealt with promptly and thoroughly.
- 5.7 Fairness and equity of treatment will be ensured in all employee practices
- 5.8 Policies and procedures will be disseminated to all staff.
- 5.9 Effective monitoring will be employed so that management can take any necessary action and inform future policy and procedures.
- 5.10 Staff training will be provided to make staff aware of the issues regarding equal opportunities and how it relates to their work.

## **6 Recruitment and Promotion of Staff**

- 6.1 The recruitment process will take into account the need to attract staff from underrepresented groups, primarily through its selection of advertisement media.

- 6.2 Individuals will be assessed purely on merit, performance and potential and without regard to stereotypes and assumptions.
- 6.3 Reasonable adjustments will be made to equipment provided for members of staff and service users with disabilities to ensure equality of access to employment and services. In addition, should a member of staff become disabled in the course of their employment, every effort will be made through reasonable adjustment, retraining or redeployment to enable them to remain in the employment of PAC.
- 6.4 Recruitment literature will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants as against another unless there is a genuine occupational requirement as provided under the Race Relations Act 1976 section 29.
- 6.5 The use of language in advertisements, person specification and job description will be clear and concise, detailing the necessary requirements for the job. This will enable potential applicants to realistically assess their suitability for a post.

## **7 Expectations**

- 7.1 All staff will be expected to treat everyone fairly, equitably and with respect. They will not use discriminatory practices in the work place or elsewhere that would result in individuals or groups being overlooked or excluded.
- 7.2 We shall know that we have succeeded when we all work in an environment where we all feel valued and where we believe that we are treated fairly and with dignity and respect.

## **8 Equality in service provision**

- 8.1 Staff must treat service users fairly, equitably and with respect.
- 8.2 Training must equip PAC staff with the skills to promote equality in service provision.
- 8.3 PAC will explore the implications of the key decisions taken to ensure equality.
- 8.4 Service users will be consulted with regards to service provision.
- 8.5 Services will be monitored through annual user evaluations to determine the effectiveness of its services for addressing the needs of its ethnically diverse service users, and to inform future policies and services.
- 8.6 According to its complaints procedure, management will rigorously act upon complaints in a timely manner and determine whether there are any underlying equality issues.
- 8.7 Management will use complaints to raise awareness of equality issues.

- 8.8 Management will implement changes that any complaints and investigation show to be appropriate.
- 8.9 Management will take appropriate action against any service user who harasses or acts in a discriminatory manner towards other service users or members of PAC's staff.