

## PAC Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures

This policy extends across all that we do.

### Equal Opportunities Statement

#### Our commitment

PAC will ensure that:

- Staff experience fairness and equality 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
- Diversity in the workplace is valued

All aspects of the organisation are anti-discriminatory and we will take positive action to ensure this and to redress any inequalities within our employment practices, provision of services and trustee representation. We require that Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, Sessional Workers, Partner Agencies and Service Users are made aware of our policy.

Overcoming discrimination requires commitment from all staff. It is a condition of service that all staff adhere to this policy. Failure to do so will lead to disciplinary procedures being enacted and may lead to dismissal. Everyone has a duty to report any such behaviour to a member of the management (PAC has a separate Harassment and Bullying policy in the Employee Handbook).

#### Our aim

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, PAC will not tolerate discrimination against individuals on the basis of their age, disability, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity. These characteristics are known as 'protected characteristics'. In addition, we aim to ensure that no job applicant, employee, worker or client is treated less favourably or placed at a disadvantage on the grounds of their part-time status or trade union activities. This applies in the advertisement of jobs, recruitment, appointment, provision of benefits, allocation of training, promotion, disciplinary proceedings, dismissal, conditions of work, pay, giving a reference and every other aspect of employment.

#### Types of Unlawful Discrimination

The different types of discrimination are generally defined as follows:

- **Direct discrimination:** discrimination because of a protected characteristic.
- **Associative discrimination:** direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person with a protected characteristic.

- **Indirect discrimination:** a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a protected characteristic.
- **Harassment:** behaviour deemed offensive by the recipient, even when the behaviour is not directed at an individual directly.
- **Harassment by a third party:** this refers to harassment of staff or service users by people not directly employed by PAC, such as a contractor.
- **Victimisation:** discrimination against someone because they made or supported a complaint under Equality Act legislation.
- **Discrimination by perception:** direct discrimination against someone because others think they have a protected characteristic (even if they do not).

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### 1) Service Provision

The Registered Manager/CEO will ensure that:

- In each instance of service provision, service users are provided with a clear explanation of what is involved and their informed consent is obtained to the service provision.
- Service provision to each service user is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in order to assess whether the desired outcomes are being achieved.

Where children are involved, the service provision will seek to promote the five outcomes for children: namely that the service provided for them will result in them being healthy; staying safe; attaining, achieving and enjoying; making a positive contribution; experiencing social and economic well being. Particular attention will be given to children in order to meet their needs when these are the result of social exclusion, belonging to a minority group, or having a disabling condition.

PAC will seek to counter discrimination in any form and will seek redress for those who suffer such treatment. Staff will be expected to remain up to date in their knowledge of discriminatory practices, both at an individual and an institutional level.

### 2) Recruitment and selection

Our objective is to recruit staff best able and qualified to perform the required or anticipated tasks. We will recruit using a variety of methods, for example, advertisements in local newspapers and Job Centres.

The wording of any advertisements will not place unfair restrictions or requirements on a particular group or request specific qualifications that are not necessary for the effective performance of the job. All applications will be considered on the basis of objective criteria, such as qualifications, experience and ability to do the job.

Person specifications and job descriptions will only state requirements as necessary where they are essential for the job. Account will be taken of reasonable adjustments that may be required for applicants with disabilities.

The selection processes used will measure the suitability of the applicant in terms of the requirements for the position. Selection criteria and procedures will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are selected and promoted on the basis of relevant merits and abilities.

We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees who are making selection and recruitment decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or subconsciously, in making these decisions.

### **3) Training and promotion**

All employees will be given equality of opportunity and will be encouraged to progress within PAC.

We are committed to maintaining high standards of training and personal development strictly in the context of this policy on equal opportunities. Training will not be refused on an unlawful basis.

Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

Equal opportunities and diversity training will be provided to all new employees as part of the induction process. Written instructions and training will be given to managers from time to time on equality and diversity in recruitment, selection, training, promotion, discipline and dismissal.

### **4) Discipline and dismissal**

We aim to ensure there is no discrimination in our disciplinary or redundancy processes and will examine procedures and criteria to ensure that discrimination is not taking place. PAC will regularly monitor the decisions being made.

### **5) Monitoring Diversity**

We will maintain employment records for all employees and may review them in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

Monitoring may involve:

- a) Collecting and classifying information in relation to, for example, race, gender, disability and age of applicants and current employees.
- b) Examining, for example, race, sex, disability and age of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants.
- c) Reviewing recruitment, training and promotional records of employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy and changes will be made to this policy if necessary.

### **6) Equality of Access**

We will ensure that there is equality of access to our services. The Registered Manager/CEO will review service leaflets on an annual basis to update them and to ensure that the wording and/or method of distribution, in the context of equal

opportunity, do not exclude or discourage users from accessing services. Through consultation with each service user, we will assess our progress and review improvements. The use of the "Comments, Compliments and Complaints" leaflet will be encouraged by all staff.

#### **7) Partnership**

We seek to work in partnership with all service users and will involve them in our service planning and review processes. We seek also to join with our partners in maximising our energies and potential to provide the highest quality of service.

#### **8) Advocacy**

We seek to encourage and support all who seek a service from us. We will advocate to ensure that disadvantage is overcome. We will seek to empower and enable our service users and their supporters to take control of their lives. We will not take any action which deliberately sets out to disempower or disrespect any individual.

#### **9) Anti-discriminatory Services**

We will be sensitive to the needs of our service users in delivering services. All staff will challenge discrimination or oppression, however it is expressed. We will support each other, our service users, volunteers and supporters in finding a voice and expressing opinions about PAC. We will take positive action to redress the balance for those who experience or are vulnerable to discrimination.

#### **10) Promoting Respect, Fairness and Dignity**

PAC will treat all people fairly, equitably and with respect and dignity and welcome their unique contribution. We will consult whenever possible with all relevant parties and take whatever steps are necessary to enable them to express their opinion. We will value their opinions and their individuality. We will seek to maximise the potential of everyone, whether as an individual or as part of a group, to make a contribution to our policies, work practices and procedures.

We seek to promote an environment where all forms of discrimination and/or oppression are known to be unacceptable. We will take positive action to challenge and refute any word or action that is discriminatory or contrary to this policy. We will support our workforce in developing their full potential and will seek every means at our disposal to do the same for our service users.

#### **9) Race Relations**

PAC operates according to the Race Relations Acts 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and does not treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origin, during the recruitment, training and promotion of employees. PAC's aim is to promote racial equality by providing fair and accessible services and in addition, improve and provide equal employment opportunities for all racial groups.

PAC embraces the Stephen Lawrence inquiry definition of Institutionalised Racism i.e. "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional

service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin". PAC will apply this definition in the widest sense, extending it beyond racism to all individuals, when working to remove discrimination on any grounds.

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.

### **Equal Opportunities Procedure**

1. All staff will immediately challenge any language, action or material that is discriminatory and will draw it to the attention of the Registered Manager/CEO.
2. Any complaint against a member of staff relating to breach of this policy will be investigated by the Registered Manager/CEO (or a person appointed by the Trustees) and, if upheld, will result in disciplinary proceedings.
3. All other policies and working practices will be reviewed regularly in order to eliminate any breach of this policy.
4. Applicants seeking employment in our organisation are encouraged to complete our Equal Opportunities Monitoring forms, which enable us to examine the effectiveness of our recruitment procedures in attracting different minority groups to apply for vacant posts.
5. Services will be monitored through annual user evaluations to determine their effectiveness for addressing the needs of service users, including those relating to ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, age and gender, in order to inform future policies and services.
6. The organisation at every level will always consider the use of appropriate support services to meet individual needs. In PAC's Service Level Agreements, Local Authorities are asked to provide interpreters to assist its residents in accessing our services, where necessary.
7. The managers of the organisation will seek to promote access to the service for all people with a disabling condition and inform the Trustees of any actions that need to be taken on a permanent basis to provide such access.
8. All staff will promote positive images of black and minority ethnic groups.
9. Religious practices will be taken account of by managers when planning service delivery.
10. The Registered Manager/CEO, in consultation with the Head of Operations, will ensure that, where the methods of communication currently available are inadequate to meet an individual's needs, an alternative is speedily found.
11. All staff involved in meetings will ensure that minority issues are heard and considered by the meeting.

12. All reports will address, as appropriate, any issues regarding inequality, whether experienced through direct, associate, indirect, institutional or any other kind of discrimination (see page 1).
13. The Registered Manager/CEO will seek to keep all staff and volunteers updated in awareness training and ensure that this is part of their work appraisal process.

### **This policy and employees**

Employees are required to assist PAC in meeting its commitment under this policy and to avoid unlawful discrimination. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action, and serious acts of discrimination will lead to dismissal without notice for gross misconduct. Serious acts of harassment might also be considered to be a criminal offence.

If staff feel or consider that they have been treated less favourably or placed at a disadvantage on the basis of the above, they must inform Line Manager or, if the complaint relates to the person's Line Manager, their line manager, so that the issue can be investigated and resolved. All complaints in relation to discrimination will be sensitively but thoroughly investigated.

PAC will take any complaint made under this policy seriously, and staff that will not be penalised for raising a complaint, even if their complaint is not upheld, unless it is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Staff who have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act must let their Line Manager know so that reasonable adjustments can be considered.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed against its effectiveness in supporting PAC's commitment and the employment law framework on an annual basis.