

# **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy**

## **(Updated July 2018)**

### **1. Commitment**

Children in Scotland recognises that the promotion of equality, diversity and human rights is fundamental to good governance and management practices, and that this practice supports Children in Scotland to achieve its strategic outcomes.

We are committed to creating a culture in which equality, diversity and human rights are actively promoted and discrimination is not tolerated and as such; understands our legal duties outlined within the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010.

Promoting equality, diversity and human rights is one of the cornerstones of Children in Scotland 's functions and we strive to ensure their principles are embedded throughout our policies and practice.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All Children in Scotland Board, staff and all job applicants
- All Children in Scotland volunteers and volunteer applicants
- All young people, accessing Children in Scotland services
- All activities provided by Children in Scotland staff and their recipients including professionals
- All those affected by activities provided by Children in Scotland including parents, carers and the wider community

### **3. Key Principles of the Policy**

The key principles upon which this policy is based are:

- Fairness – We believe in and encourage fair and equitable treatment for all our staff, volunteers, young people, partners and users of our services.
- Diversity - We consider diversity of staff, volunteers and service users a highly valuable asset.
- Dignity and Respect– All our staff, volunteers, partners and service users deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of background or personal characteristics.
- Inclusion and Accessibility – Staff, volunteers, partners and service users should have the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the services of Children in Scotland, without experiencing unnecessary barriers.
- A child's rights-based approach. To support a Childs' Rights Based Approach to our work, we have developed Principles and Guidelines for meaningful participation and engagement with children and young

people which can be found on our website here: [Principles and Guidelines for Meaningful Participation and Engagement of Children and Young People](#)

## **4. Understanding Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

### **Equality**

Equality is not about treating everyone the same. Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where they were born, what they believe, how they identify or whether they have a disability.

Equality recognises that historically, certain groups of people with particular characteristics have experienced discrimination.

### **Diversity**

Diversity recognises that everyone is different and that we need to understand, value and respect differences, as well as seek to include individuals and groups with different backgrounds, experiences, values and beliefs.

A diversity approach aims to recognise and value differences amongst staff, volunteers and service users and seeks to support them to achieve their full potential. A diverse staff and volunteer team brings with it a wide range of skills and experiences which enhances our ability to deliver high quality services and achieve our strategic outcomes.

### **Human rights**

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world, from birth until death. They apply regardless of where you are from, what you believe or how you choose to live your life.

They can never be taken away, although they can sometimes be restricted, for example if a person breaks the law, or in the interests of national security.

These basic rights are based on values like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and independence. Human rights are not just abstract concepts; they are defined and protected by law.

In practice this means treating individuals with fairness, respect, equality, dignity and autonomy whilst safeguarding the rights of the wider community when developing policies and procedures or carrying out our functions.

## **5. Responsibilities for Children in Scotland**

### **Eliminating Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation**

Children in Scotland does not tolerate harassment, victimisation or unjustifiable discrimination on the grounds of *age, disability, gender identity and expression, marital and civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation*, or any other protected characteristic. A core principle of this is that all staff, volunteers, partners and service users within Children in Scotland or accessing our services should receive fair treatment.

In addition, all staff, and volunteers are expected to instil and uphold the principles of equity, diversity, dignity respect, inclusion and accessibility within their practice. We will also apply these principles to our partnership work and engagement with stakeholders including professionals, parents and carers and community members.

### **Going beyond tackling discrimination: promoting equality, diversity and human rights**

To support practice that seeks to promote equality and diversity Children in Scotland is committed to meaningful partnership work with other organisations and will seek partnerships with organisations with specialist knowledge required in order to meet needs of particular groups.

Children in Scotland is committed to progressing human rights and to realising children and young people's rights in Scotland. This means enabling all young people to exercise their rights, embedding this approach into our practice, and holding professionals and public bodies to account where young people's rights are not being met.

### **Responsibilities for staff, volunteers & service users**

- All staff and volunteers are expected to accept and support the principles of equity, diversity, dignity, respect, inclusion and accessibility within their practice. Discussions regarding staff and volunteer practice are expected to be embedded into support and 1 to 1 practices.
- All staff and volunteers are expected to take reasonable steps or measures to ensure that all young people, parents, community members and stakeholders are included in Children in Scotland services and activities. (For information relating to Children in Scotland's child rights based approach see Principles and Guidelines for meaningful participation and engagement with children and young people which can be found on our website here and in our Practice Guidelines in the

## Children and Young People folder

- All managers are expected to embed the principles of Children in Scotland's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy into their project planning and evaluation systems; as well as support staff and volunteers with their practice and concerns related to equality and diversity principles and practice.
- All managers to ensure that any allegations or discriminatory behaviour or practices are correctly investigated and appropriate action taken in line with Children in Scotland's Grievance Policy and Complaints procedures.
- All managers to support staff and volunteers' learning and development related to equality, diversity and human rights through 1 to 1 meetings and relating training and development activities.
- All Children in Scotland leadership, management and working groups are responsible for paying due regard to this policy when making decisions and carrying out their business.
- Children in Scotland's Board is its governing body and as such trustees are responsible for the organisations legal duties in relation to the Equality Act (2010) as well as fulfilment of the principles set out within our Equality and Diversity Policy.
- When entering into a contractual relationship with any partner or supplier, Children in Scotland will clearly set out its expectations in respect of equality and diversity.
- Young people, professionals, parents and carers and any visitors to our offices are expected to be respectful our staff and volunteers and to one another. Any abusive behaviour or derogatory comments will be challenged.

## **6. Monitoring and evaluation**

The successful implementation of this policy will be measured as part of Children in Scotland's evaluation processes. Staff and volunteer equalities monitoring data will be collected and reviewed on an annual basis as part of this process.

Data regarding service users/young people's needs - which can include aspects pertaining to protected characteristics - will be held safely, for a reasonable amount of time in line with Children in Scotland's Data Protection Policy.

## **7. Breaches of the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy**

Breaches of this policy by any staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and fairly, and may lead to disciplinary measures. Where appropriate, Children in Scotland may consider limiting or withdrawing the provision of services to individuals and where warranted will contact Police Scotland.

- If any employee or volunteer considers that this policy has been breached, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.
- If any young person feels that this policy has been breached, they should contact their Children in Scotland contact person in the first instance or any staff member they would feel comfortable discussing this information with.
- A parent or carer, community member, professional or any other stakeholder should be directed to speak to any member of the leadership team or to email [info@childreninScotland.org.uk](mailto:info@childreninScotland.org.uk) Details on our complaints procedure can be found on our website: [Children in Scotland Complaints procedure](#).

Allegations of bullying, harassment or victimisation of any service user, staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately under the relevant procedures.

## **8. Review**

This policy will be reviewed in response to legislative changes, or every three years by the HR & Office Manager.

## **9. Supporting policies and procedures**

There are several Children in Scotland policies that connect to our Equalities and Diversity Policy and these should be read in conjunction with the following (contained within the staff handbook):

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Harassment
- Child Protection Policy and Guidelines
- Principles and Guidelines for meaningful participation and engagement with children and young people
- Data Protection Policy & Procedure
- Complaints procedure
- Freedom to speak procedure (formerly Whistleblowing procedure)