



## **Equal opportunities policy**

This policy applies to PSC staff, volunteers and service users.

Parenting Special Children is committed to provide equality of opportunity for all parent/carers who have children and young people with additional needs.

PSC believes that the organisation's activities should be open to all parent/carers who have children and young people with additional needs. We also aim to ensure that all who wish to work in, or volunteer to help with our organisation, have an equal chance to do so.

PSC is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

We believe that an equal opportunities approach must be embedded in the culture of the organisation. It is what we do and how we do it – our practice – that defines where we stand in relation to equal opportunities. It is not position statements or written documents that do this, although they have their place.

We do not believe that organisations can ever claim to have got everything right with their approach to equal opportunities. There are always new perspectives on discrimination to be explored, new forms of oppression to be challenged and new ways of challenging them. To meet these challenges, we aim to develop a learning organisation. In such an organisation, all people feel free to raise issues of equality; training and learning from each other are highly valued, monitoring and evaluation are prized tools and freedom to admit mistakes and celebrate successes are of central importance.

### **Discrimination**

Unfair discrimination in our society takes many forms. It may be direct and based on overt prejudice. It may be indirect and based on lack of awareness and understanding. It may be ingrained in the operational culture of organisations, in the sense that the McPherson Report defined institutional racism.

PSC is fundamentally opposed to all these types of discrimination and seeks to ensure that in all its activities it does not take place against individuals or groups for any of the following reasons:

- gender\*
- age\*
- social and economic class
- employment status

- HIV status
- physical or mental disability\*
- political belief
- religion or belief\*
- gender reassignment\*
- race\*, colour, nationality or national origin
- marital or parental status\*
- sexual orientation\*
- unrelated criminal conviction
- position as a carer
- status as a refugee/asylum seeker
- pregnancy and maternity\*

*PSC recognises the additional legal status of the protected characteristics contained within the Equality Act 2010 – marked with an \*.*

PSC also recognises and seeks to ensure that employees, volunteers and service users are not discriminated against or suffer harassment because of an association with another individual who has a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic.

Political beliefs which, in themselves, promote prejudice and discrimination (e.g. neo Nazism) are not tolerated by PSC. The relevance of unspent criminal convictions is determined at the discretion of the Board of Trustees.

PSC's commitment to oppose discrimination and promote equality of access to services places an obligation on all staff, volunteers and trustees. It is the aim of PSC to create a welcoming and safe working environment for staff, volunteers, from diverse communities and to acknowledge the benefits of diversity.

PSC will take positive action to challenge disadvantage and discrimination and to promote diversity and full access to opportunity in all areas of its work and structures. By 'positive action' we mean measures undertaken with the purpose of achieving full access to opportunity for people and groups that face the consequences of past or present discrimination or disadvantage.

## **Accessibility**

It is our intention to make our organisation genuinely accessible to parent/carers from all sections of the community within the boroughs of Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire who have children and young people with additional needs.

PSC will ensure that all visitors to our offices and events are not discriminated against, harassed or victimised when accessing our premises or venues and we will make reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities.

When selecting venues for events or training PSC will consider the following and make reasonable adjustments:

- how people enter
- how they find their way around
- signage
- how information is provided
- how tables and counters are laid out and designed
- accessible toilet facilities.

## **Employment and volunteering**

The trustees will seek to promote opportunities to join the organisation – as staff, volunteers or trustees – widely so as to encourage a composition of the Charity which reflects the local community.

PSC aims to ensure an effective but fair recruitment process which follows equal opportunities principles.

Applicants for employment and voluntary work by PSC will have access to a copy of this policy.

PSC will not tolerate its staff, volunteers or partners to be subjected to harassment by another staff member or any third party whether they are service users or other partners and will monitor policy and staff feedback to minimise the risk and take action should an incident occur.

Any member of staff who feels they have been subjected to harassment should raise the matter through the grievance process in accordance with the PSC Grievance Procedure.

Employees will not be subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he or she made a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or because he or she is suspected of doing so, or being about to do so.

PSC considers harassment by a member of staff to be a disciplinary offence in accordance with the PSC disciplinary policy.

In the case of harassment by a volunteer the matter would be dealt by offering supervision and training to the volunteer or, where appropriate, ceasing the relationship between PSC and the volunteer, in accordance with the PSC Volunteer Policy (to be drafted).

## **Parent/Carers**

The organisation recognises that many different types of parent/carers successfully love and care for children. As such PSC will take each parent/carer's needs into account, on all occasions, and endeavour to ensure equal access to the full range of PSC services.

Our aim is to show respectful awareness of all the major events in the lives of the parent/carers who access support from our organisation and to welcome the diversity of backgrounds from which they come.

## **Discriminatory Behaviour/Remarks**

These are unacceptable within the organisation.

The response will aim to be sensitive to the feelings of the victim(s) and to help those responsible to understand and overcome their prejudices. Unlawful discrimination by an employee of PSC is a disciplinary matter in accordance with the PSC Disciplinary Policy. In the case of discrimination by a volunteer the matter would be dealt by offering supervision and training to the volunteer or, where appropriate, ceasing the relationship between PSC and the volunteer, in accordance with the PSC Volunteer Policy (to be drafted).

## **Language**

Bilingual/multilingual children and adults are an asset. They will be valued and their languages recognised and respected within the organisation. Where possible, we will involve parents in translating information and activities or work alongside partner organisations who can offer translation.

## **Parenting support courses and events**

The time, place and conduct of meetings will be publicised in advance to ensure that as many families as possible have an equal opportunity to be able to access courses and events. We will provide courses and events in a variety of locations and times in order that as many families as possible are able to access them.

## **Complaints**

If parent carers are, at all, dissatisfied with the provision they should contact the CEO of the Chair of Trustees. We will do our utmost to resolve the issue and will be monitoring and evaluating the success of the organisation on a regular basis to ensure that all its users are satisfied.

## **Associated PSC documents and policies**

This policy has been developed from the previous PSC Equal Opportunities policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following PSC policies and procedures:

Grievance Procedures  
Disciplinary Policy  
Recruitment Policy (to be drafted)  
Volunteer Policy (to be drafted)

### **Resources used to draw up this policy**

This policy was drawn up with reference to:  
The RVA Equal Opportunities Policy  
Equality Act: Guidance for Charities, (The Charity Commission, 2013)

### **Review of this policy**

This policy will be reviewed by the PSC board of trustees every two years, or sooner in the event of any relevant change in legislation.

This policy was adopted by the trustees on July 2016

Review date: July 2018

ENDS