

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



Foster Care Link recognises that there are groups in society that face disadvantage and discrimination. As an organisation that specialises in providing services to these groups, it will strive to counteract this through a policy of equal opportunities for all in relation to all Foster Care Link activities and services.

Foster Care Link's equal opportunities policy seeks to ensure that, within the framework of the law, no potential client, participant in a Foster Care Link activity, foster carer, foster child, foster panel member, employee or member of the public visiting Foster Care Link's premises receives less favourable or discriminatory treatment on grounds such as gender, marital status, disability, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or any other form of discrimination not aforementioned but applicable under UK and EU laws. Our policy is to comply with all the legislative and statutory requirements as specified in the Equalities Act 2012 and all other relevant Acts and Amendments to these Acts of Law.

Foster Care Link maintains a separate Diversity Policy, which operates alongside this policy. The Diversity Policy sets the ground rules for the valuing of diversity and application of equal opportunities in operational matters for the agency such as:

- Matching of Children with Foster Carers
- Challenging Discrimination Faced by Foster Children
- Promoting Equality for Foster Children
- Foster Care Link's Support for Carers and Children
- Foster Carer Training

In turn, many other policies and procedures of Foster Care Link also touch on the subject of equal opportunities and valuing diversity as this is a consistent theme for the agency in many spheres and part of the core ethos of the organisation.

This policy sets out the core objectives and principles adopted by Foster Care Link to achieve equality of opportunity:

## **1. ACCESS TO SERVICES**

- 1.1 To ensure that all people have equal access to services provided by Foster Care Link and are not treated less favourably on grounds that cannot be justified.

## **2. PUBLIC WORKING**

- 2.1 To ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the existence of Foster Care Link and that they are not prevented from participating fully in and benefiting from relevant activities and services on grounds that cannot be justified.

## **3. FOSTER CARERS, FOSTER CHILDREN AND ALL USERS OF THE SERVICES**

- 3.1 To ensure that all foster carers, foster children and all users in any capacity are given equal access to all the services, facilities and opportunities that Foster Care Link has to offer.
- 3.2 To ensure that all foster carers, foster children and all users are treated fairly by Foster Care Link and that no person receives less favourable treatment on grounds that cannot be justified.

## **4. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES**

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



- 4.1 Foster Care Link will seek to ensure genuine equality of opportunity in all aspects of its activities as an employer:
- 4.2 Before advertising any post a detailed job description will be drawn up or an existing one reviewed and updated.
- 4.3 All job descriptions will state that prospective employees are expected to have regard to Foster Care Link's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 4.4 All vacancies will be advertised as widely as possible to ensure that as many sections of the community are reached as possible.
- 4.5 All applicants will be judged solely on job related, relevant criteria. Reasons for short listing or rejecting candidates will be recorded. Wherever possible unsuccessful applicants will be given the reason for the rejection
- 4.6 That a separate equal opportunities in employment policy is maintained to further this section of the policy which also meets all relevant Acts of Law (see above) including the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.

## **5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF FOSTER PANEL MEMBERS**

- 5.1 Foster Care Link will try to attract individuals to Foster Care Link as Panel Members who reflect the communities in which Foster Care Link has bases and the wider community as well as its supervision and approval needs.
- 5.2 All Panel Members will be issued with a copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy and will be expected to carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with it.

## **6. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS**

- 6.1 Foster Care Link will operate a policy of recruitment of participants to any of its projects that will encourage as wide as possible involvement in them taking account of the criteria on which the projects are funded e.g. where a project is established specifically for women foster carers then only women will be recruited for that project (within the framework of the law).
- 6.2 Otherwise recruitment will be in accordance with the general principle embodied in the general statement at the beginning of this policy

## **7. EMPLOYMENT OF CONTRACTORS AND FREELANCE STAFF**

- 7.1 Foster Care Link will operate a policy of employment of contractors and suppliers which will seek to ensure that all contractors and suppliers operate equal opportunity policies that support those of Foster Care Link.
- 7.2 Freelance Staff will be appointed on the basis of their ability to carry out the tasks expected of them and on no other criteria that cannot be justified.

## **8. ACTION ON EQUALITY**

- 8.1 Access: Foster Care Link recognises that physical access to its facilities is not yet suitable for wheelchair users and the provision of toilet facilities for disabled users is also not available. Foster Care Link seeks to rectify this problem when it moves

# EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



premises, and will endeavour to make the necessary changes as soon as it is feasible.

- 8.2 Race, Gender, Disability and Other Grounds: Foster Care Link will continue to strive to treat all persons who wish to be involved in Foster Care Link's activities in a fair manner and will counteract discrimination through positive action where possible in respect of health, safety, and general welfare and the environment at its sites.
- 8.3 Language: Foster Care Link recognises that many users of its specialist services may not be fluent speakers and readers of English, but may be fluent in other languages. To counter this, we will offer our materials translated into other languages including Urdu, Hindi, Turkish, Gujarati, Pashto and Bangladeshi. We will endeavour to offer this in response to the needs as and when identified. We will also offer the services of interpreters whenever necessary. Foster Care Link will also seek to employ staff that can speak community languages spoken by carers and children placed (within the framework of the law). Our staff currently speak community languages including Urdu, Gujarati, Bengali, Hindi and Arabic.