

## Equality and Diversity

IPA continually strives to achieve equality of opportunity for all, throughout the delivery of our direct services and internal management practices.

IPA is committed to equality of opportunity and does not tolerate discrimination on grounds of age, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity or religious belief.

IPA is committed to promoting equality and diversity and promoting a culture that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights, constructive challenge and creativity to enhance the way we work. IPA aims to be an inclusive organisation, where diversity is valued, respected and built upon, with the ability to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the communities it serves.

IPA is committed to taking positive action to fight unlawful discrimination in every respect of its work. IPA aims to help everyone involved in its services to counteract and eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination. This covers all aspects of our work including decision-making, employment practices and direct service provision.

IPA is also committed to compliance with relevant equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010, Codes of Practice and relevant best practice guidance. This policy pursues and builds on the statutory position to ensure effective policies and practice of promoting equality.

## Equal Opportunities

All IPA projects and sites will aim to provide a welcoming and caring environment that promotes and reflects cultural and social diversity and is equally accessible to all.

Staff should ensure that positive and non-stereotypical images are displayed and reflected in resources. The selection of equipment and resources will include consideration of the potential for diversity to be reflected in their use.

The Lead Worker on site is responsible for ensuring that the Equal Opportunities policy is implemented and that its effectiveness is regularly monitored.

They will be responsible for ensuring that:

- Attendance and monitoring records contain equalities data, which are fed into monitoring systems.
- All staff receive appropriate training.
- The Equal Opportunities policy and its implementation is consistent with current legislation and guidance.
- Appropriate action is taken wherever discriminatory behaviour, language or attitudes become apparent.

All policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure they do not impact in a discriminatory manner or in any way against its commitment to equal opportunities.

### Celebrating diversity:

We combat discrimination by embracing a culture of celebrating diversity in the workplace, and in all of our projects:

- We welcome staff and services users from all ethnic groups, cultures, religions and family groups to our services
- We welcome adults and children with disabilities
- We welcome adults and children who have English as an additional language
- We aim to give positive images of other cultures using various methods including celebrating different festivals and incorporating multicultural play into themes and activities
- We provide a good selection of multicultural toys and equipment; pictures and photographs of people from other countries and cultures
- Parents and volunteers are encouraged to come and tell stories or sing songs from their own country or in their own language

### Our aims are that:

- Each individual, both employed by us and users of our services, be recognised and appreciated
- Each individual is assessed and appropriate provision made
- Each individual will have access to all activities, regardless of ability
- Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation will not affect any individual's access to the full range of activities and opportunities

Staff will plan and organise for the different needs of children and adults. This will enable all to develop their skills and knowledge to their full potential with personal high standards of achievement.

### What is Discrimination

There are several types of discrimination;

- **Direct discrimination** is less favourable treatment on one or more of the following grounds; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- **Indirect discrimination** is where an employer has practice or policies that, intentionally or not, have had the effect of disadvantaging employees or service users.
- **Victimisation** is when a person is subjected to a detriment because they have done something, or it's believed they have or may do something, with reference to the discrimination legislation. Examples include making allegations of discrimination against another person.
- **Harassment** is defined as unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (see the first bullet point above), which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

It is important to note that the victims of harassment do not have to possess a 'protected characteristic'. Legislation prohibits harassment based on association and perception, and employees and service users can also complain of behaviour they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

In reality, discrimination can take many forms, from failure to consider making reasonable adjustments for a disabled job applicant or a service user, to the bullying and harassment of employees or service users on any of the above grounds.

Under discrimination legislation there is a presumption that employers are responsible for discriminatory acts carried out by their employees in the course of their employment, whether done with or without the employer's knowledge. It is therefore necessary for all IPA workers to implement equal opportunity policies and ensure that they are applied. In addition, Lead Workers on IPA sites should take every reasonable step to ensure information, support and training is given in order that employees are made aware of the correct approach for dealing with fellow employees and service users.

**It is the duty of all managers to ensure the workplace is discrimination free.**

Refer to the Anti-bullying and Harassment policy for further details on how we respond to discrimination.