

Policy Statement

Home Start Bristol (HSB) is committed to the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act by developing an organisational culture that respects equality and human rights and welcomes and values difference in all aspects of its work. A commitment to equal opportunities and the fundamental rights of individuals is at the heart of our work.

To help us achieve this HSB has in place policies and procedures relating to staff and volunteers that are designed to uphold the rights enshrined in both the 2010 Equality Act and the 1998 Human Rights Act. Employees, trustees and other volunteers are therefore required to comply with all policies and procedures designed to ensure respect for equality and human rights. HSB ensures all its other policies and procedures comply with this policy.

Context & legislation

As an employer and service provider HSB is required to comply with anti-discrimination legislation. It is also firmly within our ethos and values as an organisation to ensure that all staff, volunteers, families, funders and other stakeholders are confident that we will treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect.

HSB is committed to offering equality in:

Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race, Religion and belief, Political opinion, Sex and Sexual orientation.

The policy also reflects HSB's commitment to the Human Rights Act 1998, the extension of the law on harassment and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Codes of Practice for Employment, Equal Pay and Services, Public Functions and Associations.

HSB is committed to a culture that does not tolerate victimisation, harassment or bullying. HSB will investigate and take action on any reports of practice, which trustees, staff, volunteers or families believe to be unfair or discriminatory.

All those involved with HSB are made aware that unfair or discriminatory treatment of another individual will result in the consideration of disciplinary proceedings and will normally be treated as serious misconduct warranting dismissal *or termination of involvement with HSB*.

Procedure

1. Trustees

1.1 Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the scheme meets its legal responsibilities, including those relating to equalities legislation. All trustees accept and work to the Equality, Fairness & Diversity Policy and monitor its implementation in the day to day work of HSB by receiving and analysing regular reports.

1.2 Membership of the HSB Board represents as wide a cross-section of the community served by the HSB as possible.

1.3 Opportunities are offered to volunteers to be represented on HSB's board

1.4 Opportunities are offered to families to be represented on HSB's Board.

1.5 Trustees endeavour to ensure that the time, place and conduct of meetings enable all members and potential members to have an equal opportunity to be involved.

2. Employment practices

Recruitment and selection

HSB follows the safer recruitment and selection procedures laid out in the Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy and in the Volunteer Recruitment, Management and Supervision Policy.

2.1 All job advertisements and job descriptions state that HSB is committed to equality of opportunity.

2.2 Job descriptions, person specifications and application forms are reviewed as each vacancy arises to ensure they are directly relevant to the post. Consideration is given as to whether the job can be shared and whether working hours can be flexible.

2.3 The person specification indicates which requirements are essential and which are desirable. Only essential criteria are considered in the first round of short-listing.

2.4 All vacant posts are advertised as widely as appropriate for the job. Application forms ask only for information relevant to the post including an Equality, Fairness and Diversity statement and monitoring form. Health questionnaires are not used until after a conditional offer of employment is made.

2.5 Monitoring forms are separated from the application before short-listing and used only after the selection process for monitoring purposes.

2.6 Reasonable travel expenses are offered to all applicants attending interviews.

2.7 Acceptance of the Home-Start Equality, Fairness & Diversity Policy is a condition of employment and all employees must work to this policy.

2.8 All successful applicants must be informed of the routes of access to the Board, the Quality Assurance standards and to the Grievance and Disciplinary Policies and procedures.

2.9 Appropriate consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of a member of staff within the scope of the Equality Act, providing the needs of HSB are met. This may include actions such as reasonable adjustment to the employee's working environment or flexible working patterns.

2.10 HSB is committed to ensuring that all employees have a workplace free from victimization, bullying and harassment, are made aware of the relevant policies and procedures and know how to report incidents.

3. Service provision

3.1 HSB keeps up to date information about the population in the community/area in which it works, including hard to reach and disadvantaged groups. It works to ensure that it builds appropriate relationships in order to offer accessible support, resources and involvement to every family that falls within its remit.

3.2 HSB endeavours to meet the individual needs of each family.

3.3 All families are given an equal opportunity to attend social events.

3.4 Toys and other equipment/material reflect as far as possible the diversity of our society.

3.5 The involvement of volunteers and families is encouraged and their views on the services offered are taken into account when drafting strategic and operational plans and making policy decisions.

3.6 HSB reviews and analyses its monitoring information in order to fulfil its aim of ensuring that employees, trustees and volunteers reflect the population in the community.

4. Access to services

4.1 The range of referrals or self-referrals accepted is only limited where Home-Start does not have the resources available to meet the number or complexity of cases.

4.2 HSB establishes positive links with a wide range of referring agencies in the area including those supporting hard to reach/disadvantaged groups. We accept appropriate referrals, the permission of the family having been obtained first.

4.3 HSB seeks to publicise the availability of its services to all sections of the community, including providing information about its services in user-friendly language and in appropriate languages other than English and by talks and presentations to groups and other agencies.

4.4. All publicity or information materials include positive images of people.

4.5 HSB is sensitive to the communication needs of individuals and families and aims to meet them wherever possible.

4.6 Every effort is made to select office and other premises which are accessible and do not restrict the participation of anyone in the activities of the scheme.

4.7 Consideration is given to the needs of individuals who may use the premises. HSB activities should be as accessible and inclusive as possible.

5. Working with volunteers

Although within the scope of the Equality Act volunteers do not have the same rights as employees, HSB will always treat its volunteers with equality and fairness and welcome diversity.

5.1 All volunteers are expected to accept and work to the Equality, Fairness & Diversity policy, a copy of which will be provided as part of the induction process.

5.2 Volunteers are recruited from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible, taking into account the composition of the catchment area.

5.3 Where appropriate, former users of HSB support may be enabled to become volunteers.

5.4 The individuality and difference of volunteers are respected and selection of volunteers will be based on the experience and skills of each individual.

5.5 Volunteers' expenses are paid promptly on receipt of relevant documentation.

5.6 Regular support and supervision is provided to all volunteers.

6. Training

6.1 Equality and Diversity is part of the volunteer preparation course and is also part of induction for trustees, board advisers and staff.

6.2 Trustees encourage all staff to participate in training to meet their development needs.

6.3 All training offered or sourced externally by HSB reflects this policy at all times.

6.4 HSB offers all volunteers the opportunity for ongoing training within the organisation or externally.

7. Monitoring

7.1 Performance in relation to this policy is monitored through the Home-Start Quality Assurance self-assessments and reviews.

7.2 Monitoring of current HSB data against relevant local demographics takes place to inform planning and targets.

Date of Board Approval: 15 September 2022

Signature of Chair:



Review date: September 2023

Revised in line with HSUK's current policy dated Nov 2019. Checked against HSUK policy Sep 2022