

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Date**: 9 October 2017

**Review Date:** 8 October 2018

All children, staff, parents/social workers, volunteers and others deserve the right to:

• Be treated equally, as individuals and not the same

• To be provided with an equal opportunity to succeed

• To feel equally valued and have a good sense of self worth

• To work/live in a anti discriminatory environment

At Omega Care Group we aim to ensure that no child, job applicant or employee is discriminated against, either directly or indirectly on ground of race, gender, age, marital status, physical or learning disability, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, political persuasion, language, ability or current employment status.

This applies to recruiting, training, promotion and other aspects of Omega Care Group service, for staff and volunteers, the only exception being where legal or contractual restrictions on employment prevent Omega Care Group from adhering to the policy e.g. any offence that is known or shown on a person’s disclosure or by gross misconduct.

All members of the provision will respect those that they come into contact with, by ensuring that they offer them equal opportunity of care, supervision and support. We also recognise that many different types of family successfully love and care for their children. Each child will be treated with equal concern according to their individual needs, and it is our aim to show respectful awareness of all major events in the lives of children and families in the provision, and welcome the diversity of the background from which they come.

**To achieve this we will:**

• Acknowledge many festivals which are celebrated in our area and/or by the families involved in the provision.

• Without indoctrination, we will encourage and help children become aware of different festivals which are celebrated by their own families and others.

• Staff will seek appropriate, accurate advice and information when answering questions and talking about cultures or festivals that they do not fully understand.

• Children that share their festivals at home with their families will be provided with the opportunity to share this festival and celebrate with the rest of the group. Children will also be offered the opportunity to bring in foods, clothing, and stories from home to show the rest of the children a little diversity to life.

**The lead professional for equal opportunity & diversity is:** **Alex Aresti**

**Duties of the lead professional:**

• To promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination when it occurs.

• To empower staff, parents/social workers and children to identify and challenge discrimination from whatever source.

• To support staff, parents/social workers and children who make a complaint of discrimination, by providing training by a method and at times that meet the different needs of workers.

• To communicate policies in relevant and accessible ways

• To ensure policies and practices do not contain inherent bias in favour of one group in society over another.

• To monitor and report progress against action plans.

• To review the policy annually.

**Accessibility**

Omega Care Group believes that all children and their parents/social workers have the right to expect and receive equal treatment and this is in line with our admissions policy.

To ensure the maximum accessibility to its provision, it is the policy of Omega Care Group to establish links with outside agencies e.g. Child Development Centre, Local Children’s Safeguarding Board, Health Visitors, SEN team etc. The service will monitor the extent to which various sections of the community use its provision and when necessary will make reasonable adjustments so that it can meet the needs of groups that have previously not been reached. By establishing strong links with the children’s centres in the area, Omega is confident that if any groups are not being reached, they will be identified and the necessary steps made to ensure their inclusion.

All members of staff are made aware that there is an unequivocal legal obligation to provide equal opportunity to all children, parents/social workers, voluntary workers, staff, and others with whom the provision comes into contact

A copy of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy statement will be available to all parents/carers, visitors, via the Policies folder. All Omega Care Group staff will be issued with this Equal Opportunity and Diversity Policy, and they will be required to demonstrate in the performance of their duties that they subscribe unreservedly to its principles. The management/lead professional will undertake to review this policy in line with government legislation.

**Parental/social worker involvement**

Parents/social workers are central to children’s lives and, in the interest of children’s welfare, Omega aims to provide care which is consistent with that at home. Parents’/social workers’ wishes and child rearing practices will be respected and complied with, as we understand that children’s needs and parents’ wishes may derive from a cultural source, or from medical reasons, or quite simply because that is what the parents want for their child.

In line with the policy we will always seek to inform and involve parents/social workers if a child has suffered or has acted in a way that has been hurtful or upsetting to another child or member of staff, at the earliest opportunity, as we positively welcome parental/carer involvement and support. Any discriminatory behaviour either to or by a parent/carer will be dealt with immediately, pointing out to the person concerned that this behaviour cannot be accepted. In all instances training and/or support will be offered to all parties.

**Education and resources**

At Omega Care Group we aim to enable all children to access a high standard of learning through play whilst providing equality of opportunity. This is achieved as follows:

• Each child will be treated with equal concern according to their individual needs.

• Resources will be chosen to give a balanced view of the world and an appreciation of the rich diversity of our multiracial society.

• Materials will be selected to help children develop their self-respect and to respect other people by avoiding stereotypes, derogatory pictures or messages about any group of people.

• When planning for provision meetings/activities, the needs of people with disabilities will be taken into consideration.

• Medical, cultural, and dietary needs will be met.

• Positive behaviour will be rewarded

• Children will be encouraged to develop self-esteem by appropriate praise.

• Positive images of people of various racial origins and family make-up will be displayed (e.g. girls and women as well as boys and men, people with disabilities and various family groupings; one parent families, step parent, grandparents, parents of different racial origin, two mothers and two fathers)

• Objects such as cooking equipment and clothing used in various social and cultural groupings will be available.

• Written material in various languages will be available, where possible.

• The six areas of learning, Problem solving, Reasoning & Numeracy, Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Creative Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Communication Language and Literacy and Physical Development will be available.

• Information, written and where possible spoken will be clearly communicated in as many different languages recognised and will be respected at the provision.

• Bilingual/multicultural children and staff are an asset. They will be valued and their languages recognised and respected at the provision.

**Employment terms and conditions**

Omega Care Group’s terms and conditions of employment and access to benefits will not differentiate between personnel directly or indirectly, on grounds that constitute discrimination.

**Recruitment and selection**

All posts available within Omega Care Group will have a job description and person specification indicating justifiable and transparent criteria for the job and must be advertised. Care must be taken in determining the most appropriate and accessible media in which to place advertisements and fair objective decisions will be taken.

**Selection and redundancy**

Omega Care Group will ensure that any criteria for redundancy will not differentiate against any personnel on grounds that constitute discrimination.

**Development and training**

Equal opportunities training will be included in the induction for new staff and Omega will continue to develop and deliver more in depth training on a range of equal opportunity issues, such as cultural awareness and disability awareness. All staff will be required to undertake regular equal opportunities training to keep updated with current best practice.

As development and training opportunities are often key to progression, managers must ensure that access to these is determined in a fair and equitable way in accordance with operational needs. Appropriate opportunities for training and promotion within Omega Care Group will be open to all employees and discussions at formal appraisal/regular supervision will be recorded.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring of the provision will be through Omega Care Group’s management. Service users will have the opportunity to access monitoring through suggestion boxes, staff meetings and parent/carer meetings.

**Legislative framework**

1. The Equal Pay Act 1970 – required that women should not be paid less money than men doing the same or similar work and introduced the notion of equal pay for work of equal value.

2. The Sex Discrimination Act 1975/1986/1999 – This Act makes it unlawful to treat someone less favourably than another person on the grounds of his or her gender or marital status. An amendment in the 1999 outlaws less favourable treatment against someone who has had a gender reassignment. The act covers both direct and indirect discrimination and includes the potential for circumstances where a person’s sex is a genuine occupational qualification. Positive action may be undertaken to ensure that equality of opportunity is maintained for underrepresented groups to apply for employment or the provision of targeted training.

3. The Race Relation Act – This Act makes it unlawful to treat somebody less favourably on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnicity, and citizenship, ethnic or national origin. The 2000 Amendment Act places responsibilities on public bodies to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to positively promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The act covers both direct discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. The act covers both direct discrimination and includes the potential for circumstances where a person’s race is a genuine occupational qualification. Positive action must be undertaken to ensure that equality of opportunity is maintained for underrepresented groups. This may include advertising in special interest press, encouragement for underrepresented group groups to apply for employment or the provision of targeted training.

4. The Disability Discrimination Act 1997 - This act makes it unlawful to treat somebody less favourable then another person in the ground of their disability, unless this can be abjectly justified. It also places specific responsibilities on the employee to make “responsible judgement” to a job, the environment, or through the provision of equipment in order to facilitate the employment of a disabled person. Positive action may be undertaken to ensure that equality of opportunity is maintained for the underrepresented groups. This may include advertising in special interest press, encouragement for underrepresented groups apply for employment or the provision of targeted training.

5. The protection from harassment Act – Under this Act is a criminal offence to act in such a way as to cause another person alarm or distress or to fear that violence will be used against them.

6. The Human Rights Act - This Act incorporates the provision of the European Law, making Convention of Human Rights into UK law, thereby guaranteeing certain rights and freedom to individuals. This includes the right to fair trial, and freedom from self-incrimination; the right to respect, from private and family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression; freedom assembly and association; and prohibition of discrimination.

7. The Children’s Act 1989 – The Act was a major breakthrough in English law, making it clear for the first time in legislation what many experts has been saying for some time. Good quality care and equal opportunities. Equal opportunities principles and practices must underpin the care for children. Children and young people and their Parents/Carers should all be considered as individuals with particular needs and potentials. All regulations, policies, guidance and procedures should take into account the wide diversity of all ages, needs, ethnic origins, cultures, and circumstances. When registering child minders and pre-school providers, the local authority must have the regard to the applicant’s knowledge of, and attitude to multicultural issues and people of different racial origins and their commitment and knowledge to treat children as individual and with equal concern.

8. The Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001 – The Act aims to improve educational choice and opportunity for disabled children and children with special educational needs and their Parents/Carers. The act applies to children with mobility impairments, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health conditions, epilepsy, aids, asthma, and progressive conditions such as multiple sclerosis. This Act makes it unlawful to treat anyone less favourably for a reason relating to disability. Fail to take ‘reasonable steps’ to ensure that disabled pupils or prospective pupils are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to their non-disabled peers.

**Policy statement**

Omega Care Group undertakes to ensure that all aspects of the provision, policies and procedures are kept under review and that they operate in a non-discriminatory manner. The management will ensure that any changes to this policy will be communicated to all employees. The management will ensure that all staff, parents/carers, voluntary workers and others are fully aware of the channels through which they lodge complaints and appeals on all matters.