

Policy on Equality and Diversity September 2009

Our vision

Our Vision, and that of our members in the Voluntary Community & Faith Sector, is that **all young people in Surrey** have the opportunity to **achieve their full potential** and become good citizens through:

- Belonging to a group
- Enjoying fun activities
- Staying safe and healthy
- Being recognised for their achievement

Our policy

As an employer Surrey Youth Focus (SYF) is committed to being an equal opportunities employer that reflects the diversity of the Surrey community it serves. We will try to ensure that the Trustee Board reflects the diversity of Surrey Youth Focus membership, including minority and disability groups. We want all Trustees, staff and volunteers to feel respected and valued for their contribution. The purpose of this policy is to ensure we provide equality and fairness in all our employment, activities, and services.

To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment, whether paid or unpaid, and not to discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief or age.

Every employee is entitled for a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment will be tolerated.

Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce, board and volunteers will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

As an Advocate

Externally, as an advocate for young people we will oppose stereotypical or unfactual views about young people, but rather present a balanced view about their achievements, needs and challenges.

We will speak out against any forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

Training

Equalities/ Diversity training

Staff are expected to attend an Equalities/ diversity course every 5 years, and within one year of joining SYF if they have not had training within the previous 3 years.

Interviewing skills training

Anyone undertaking selection interviews must have had Interviewing Skills training within the last 5 years either through SYF or their own organisation.

Monitoring and review

The policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed and reported on annually by the Chief Executive, who will then report progress to the Management and Finance Committee and to the full Trustees meeting.

Action Plan 2009/10

Advocacy

There are serious issues for young people during this time of recession.

Action: The Chief Executive will produce quarterly monitoring reports to Trustees on the impact of the recession for young people, starting in September 2009.

Membership

As an umbrella or infrastructure body, we want to expand our membership both geographically and by type of organisation to reflect that diversity amongst our member organisations. In particular this means actively seeking out disability organisations, BME organisations, and those generally in the east of the county where we are under-represented (see map of members on website).

Action: The Member Services Manager will report annually on progress in increasing membership amongst Disability, BME and eastern area organisations, starting with a baseline report to Trustees in March 2010.

Family Friendly Employer

Surrey Youth Focus wishes to present itself as a family friendly employer and believes that this flexibility encourages the best out of staff and volunteers in achieving business plan and operational objectives

Action: To this end the Chief Executive will develop a Flexible working policy by December 2009 in consultation with staff and Trustees.

Confidentiality/ employee records

Personal details of staff pay, performance appraisals and other personal information are readily accessible to all staff using the shared files. There is no private information. This **may** have the merit of transparency and open access, but is unacceptable and needs to be changed urgently.

Action: The Chief Executive in discussion with staff and Management and Finance Committee will develop and implement a policy and practice about the storage of confidential information by March 2010.

Approved by Trustees on.....

Appendix: The Statutory Framework

The following lists the relevant legislation as at May 2009 (Source: Equalities and Human Rights Commission at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com.uk>)

Another useful reference site is the Government's Equalities Office at <http://www.equalities.gov.uk>

Equal Pay Act 1970
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Race Relations Act 1976
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Human Rights Act 1998*
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Civil Partnership Act 2004
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
Equality Act 2006**

Notes:

*The Human Rights Act 1998 made human rights a part of UK domestic law, and now courts here in the United Kingdom can hear human rights cases. Human rights are based on core principles like dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy.

They are relevant to day-to-day life and protect your freedom to control your own life, effectively take part in decisions made by public authorities which impact upon your rights and get fair and equal services from public authorities.

They help you to flourish and fulfil your potential through:

- being safe and protected from harm
- being treated fairly and with dignity
- living the life you choose
- taking an active part in your community and wider society.

**Discrimination in employment is unlawful on the following grounds: age, disability, race, religion and belief, gender, sexual orientation.

You should be aware of the possibility of discrimination in the following areas:

- Recruitment and job advertisements
- Pay, benefits and workplace conditions
- Pregnancy, maternity and parenthood
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.