

The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project is committed to providing an inclusive, friendly and respectful culture for:

- All those who use our services
- Our volunteers
- Our staff
- Other stakeholders
- The wider Mile Cross and surrounding community

We recognise the positive value of diversity, promoting equality, fairness and inclusion, and challenging discrimination.

We welcome our legal duties not to discriminate as both a service provider and an employer. We aim to go beyond the narrow scope of simply following the line of the law and ensure that we are following best practice, fundamentally making equality, inclusion, fairness and diversity core tenets of everything that we do.

We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, which we wish to encourage and harness to both see the organisational benefits that these can bring, and to make us evermore approachable to as many different groups as possible.

1.2 The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of race, colour, sex, gender identity (transgender) disability, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, marital /partnership or family status, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, social class, educational background, employment status, working pattern, trade union membership, pregnancy or maternity or any other factor.

2. Scope

This policy relates to all aspects of work undertaken by the Mile Cross Children's Phoenix Project, including employment and recruitment and selection, meeting the needs of those we support and service delivery, dealing with volunteers, suppliers, supporters and other associated third parties, and in any public appearance or communication originating or associated with the centre.

3. Legal Obligations

3.1. In valuing diversity, the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Centre is committed to go beyond the legal minimum regarding equality.

The **Equality Act 2010** harmonises and strengthens and replaces most previous equality legislation. The following legislation is still relevant:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended)

3.2 The Gender Recognition Act 2004 gives transsexual people full recognition in their acquired sex in law for all purposes. A person's transgender status cannot lawfully be disclosed without his/her consent. Information about transgender status is special category data within the meaning of GDPR and therefore can be processed only in limited circumstances. This applies to employment records.

4. Meeting the needs of those we support and the local community

4.1 We are committed to treating all local residents and other service users equally and fairly and to not discriminating unlawfully against them. We will also, wherever possible, take steps to promote equal opportunity. We will ensure that service users and the local community:

- Are able to access the service in ways that suit them
- Are given help that is relevant to their problem and situation
- Are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination
- Have their needs listened to, and met wherever possible.

4.2 The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project is committed to meeting the diverse needs of service users, those who attend the centre and local residents. We will take steps to identify the needs of people in our community and develop

policies and procedures accordingly. We aim to ensure that the services we provide are accessible to all. We will take into account, in particular, the needs of those with a disability (including mental health problems) and those who are unable to communicate effectively in English, including those who are deaf, who use BSL and who are hard of hearing. We will ensure that all our meetings and events are held in venues that are accessible to wheelchair users. When there are more than 40 people at an event, we aim to use a PA system and a hearing loop. When we organise outings for our service users, we will provide free places for carers of members who can only attend if they bring a carer. We are committed to ensuring any resident of Mile Cross is able to attend our activities, so we will reassess our access requirements to meet the needs of new residents. We will consider whether particular groups are predominant within the Mile Cross and surrounding community, and devise appropriate policies/procedures to meet their needs. Such groups include: men and women, carers, young people, older people, members of religious groups, ethnic groups or nationalities and LGBTQIA+ people. We also consider it important to consider which groups are present in the local area, but constitute minorities. As a centre that is for all of the community, we will ensure that these groups are also reached out to, and that our policy and procedures will reflect this also.

4.3 As an organisation and a venue, we will seek to reflect the diversity of the local community in the events that we put on, ensuring that various nationalities, religious groups and identities are able to use our centre as a place of gathering and celebration. The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project should be open to new ideas, and particularly prioritise opportunities for residents to share their cultural heritage with one another. Inclusion and respect are integral values for our organisations, and every resident of Mile Cross should be made to feel equally welcome and included at all meetings and events.

However, it is also important to our organisation that any group who uses the centre is not involved in promoting any of the discrimination that fundamentally opposes the values of the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project, as outlined in this policy. The centre reserves the right to refuse room hire to groups or individuals who have been known to promote discrimination, as it is important for the organisation to uphold these principals in its third party associations.

5. Employment (paid staff)

5.1 General Statement

As an employer, the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them. This will, for example, include arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotions and transfers, grievance and disciplinary processes, selections for redundancy, references and any other employment related activities.

5.2 Recruitment and Selection

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- We endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable
- Employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit
- Where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from all sections of society and especially from those underrepresented in the workforce
- Selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate
- Where appropriate and necessary lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups
- Any third parties acting for the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project in respect of employment are made aware of the requirements not to discriminate and act accordingly.

5.3 Training and Development

We will ensure that all employees are encouraged to achieve their full potential. Selection for all training and career development opportunities will be purely on the basis of merit. Appraisals of performance will be conducted objectively and on time.

5.4 Meeting Individual Needs

The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will do its utmost to meet the needs of individuals at work, for example:

- Recognising caring and domestic responsibilities
- Working patterns - wherever possible, training courses and meetings will be planned to allow attendance by staff working non-standard hours/working patterns
- Disability - reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to remove barriers and enable disabled staff to carry out their roles.
- Religious practices - time off and suitable facilities for prayer will be provided wherever possible. Requests for annual leave to celebrate religious festivals will be accommodated wherever possible.

6. Volunteers

General statement

Volunteers contribute significantly to the diversity of the organisation. They can expect to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. They are likewise expected to treat others fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination. Due to the restrictions imposed by employment law, volunteers are not entitled to the same rights and protections as employees.

7. Implementing the Policy

7.1 The Equality and Diversity Officer is responsible for implementing this equality and diversity policy at the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project.

7.2 Responsibilities

All staff, managers, volunteers and trustees will be given a copy of an equality and diversity policy as part of their induction.

7.2.1 All Staff

At all levels of the organisation staff are expected to have read and understood this policy, to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles and requirements, to encourage the same level of behaviour in colleagues and to immediately report any breaches witnessed, whenever it is reasonable for them to do so.

7.2.2 All managers

Managers are responsible for promoting this policy and ensuring it is understood and complied with by all staff in their area, dealing with breaches and complaints (whether reported or not) seriously, speedily, sensitively and confidentially and contributing ideas for the advancement of diversity and inclusivity principles within the organisation. Managers are expected to be proactive in identifying circumstances in which elements of the policy can benefit individual members of staff and volunteers, and encourage and support team members in making use of such benefits.

7.3 Conduct and General Standards of Behaviour

All staff and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and considerate manner at all times. The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will not tolerate such behaviour as:

- Making threats
- Physical violence
- Shouting
- Swearing at others
- Persistent rudeness
- Isolating, ignoring or refusing to work with certain people
- Telling offensive jokes or name calling
- Displaying offensive material such as pornography or sexist/racist cartoons, or the distribution of such material via email/text message or any other format
- Any other forms of harassment or victimisation

The items on the above list of unacceptable behaviours are considered to be disciplinary offences within the Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project and can lead to disciplinary action being taken.

For more details about disciplinary and grievance matters and our model policy, please see our Disciplinary and Grievances Policy.

7.5 Complaints of Discrimination

The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, volunteers, service users or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the organisation's grievance, complaints or disciplinary procedure, as appropriate and the complainant will be informed of the outcome in line with these procedures.

We will also monitor the number and outcomes of complaints of discrimination made by staff, volunteers, clients and other third parties.

8. Monitoring

8.1 The Mile Cross Phoenix Children's Project will monitor and record diversity information about staff and volunteers, including trustees, on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and disability. However, this will only be done where explicit consent to record relevant special category data has been provided, under the provisions of GDPR.

8.2 Where it is possible to do so, and where doing so will not cause offence or discomfort to those whom it is intended to protect, we will monitor the sexual orientation and religion or belief of staff and volunteers so to ensure that they are not being discriminated against in terms of the opportunities or benefits available to them. Again, this will only be done if explicit consent to record special category data has been provided by the person in question.

We will store diversity monitoring data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Diversity monitoring information will be used exclusively for the purposes of diversity monitoring and will have no bearing on opportunities or benefits. Anyone who has provided their consent to record this data maintains the right to request the data we have from them (subject access

request), or the right to withdraw their consent. If this is the case, we will ensure to wipe all data that has been recorded that we no longer have consent to keep.

At least once a year, we will monitor all elements of:

- Recruitment and selection processes (including profiles of successful and unsuccessful job applicants)
- Promotion and transfer
- Training
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Take up of benefits (e.g. flexible working requests)
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Resignations, redundancies and dismissals

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed not less than once every two years, or more regularly if we identify any non-compliance or problem in the light of emerging legislation or best practice that could impact on this policy.

A report of the findings of the review, based on the data and other information collected and evaluated, will be presented to the trustee board annually, and appropriate action taken.