(16) Equal Opportunities and Race Equality

It is the policy of the Kent Shared Lives to work in ways that promote equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice.

This policy document sets out the Equal Opportunities Policy of Shared Lives under three main headings:


1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES
Shared Lives:
- Recognises that particular individuals and groups are discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, marital status, disability or age.
- Is committed to equality of opportunity in all areas of its work and structure, and in particular will take positive action in the area of employment, Shared Lives host approval and access for adults and their hosts.
- Will ensure that the organisation continues to reflect upon its practice in order to identify areas of inequality and work towards greater equality of opportunity
- Will challenge discrimination through positive action.
- Will seek to ensure that all the services and opportunities it offers are accessible and available to all.
- Will work to ensure that all advisory groups approved Shared Lives hosts, the approval panel, staff and terms of conditions of employment reflect the needs and interests of all people including those from minority, disadvantaged and discriminated groups.
- Will seek to ensure that managers, advisory groups, the approval panel, approved Shared Lives hosts and staff members uphold and apply these principles.

2. SHARED LIVES OBJECTIVES

Recruitment and employment practices for staff and Shared Lives hosts
Shared Lives will seek to ensure that all prospective employees and Shared Lives hosts are able to compete for positions in an equal way. Shared Lives will endeavour to make sure that applicants represent a wide cross-section of community interests. Shared Lives will monitor advertising, application, short-listing and selection procedures to ensure that they support this aim. Training, support of staff and approved hosts and conditions of service will all help to promote equality of opportunity.

Membership of the approval panel
Shared Lives will seek to ensure that membership of the independent approval panel is widely representative of the community it serves and will
positively encourage membership from adults, parents.hosts and minority, disadvantaged and discriminated groups.

**Service provision**
Shared Lives will seek to ensure that the services it provides are accessible to all who fall within the objects of Shared Lives and will take initiatives to promote new services where unmet need is identified.

**Use of buildings**
Shared Lives will endeavour to ensure that the buildings it uses, for permanent or occasional use, are designed to enable access by all people and are sensitive to people’s beliefs.

**Information and communication**
Shared Lives will seek to ensure in publications and throughout its service provision that written and verbal information is clear and accessible and that communication is effective. Shared Lives will take positive action to ensure clear and effective communication with all the people using its services including those who have limited communication or for whom English is not their first language. Shared Lives will seek to promote sensitivity in the use of spoken and written language.

**Monitoring and evaluation**
Shared Lives will seek and implement effective methods of monitoring and evaluating its Equal Opportunities policy and practices this monitoring should be sensitive to the fact that some people are not “out” about their sexual orientation at work.

3. **CODES OF PRACTICE**
**Recruitment of hosts**
**Objectives**
Shared Lives will seek to ensure that all prospective Shared Lives hosts are treated equally with regard to their consideration for approval by Shared Lives.

Shared Lives will endeavour to ensure that recruitment methods reach as wide a range of people as possible and that applicants represent a wide-cross section of community interests.

Shared Lives will monitor advertising, applications and assessment procedures as part of the monitoring and evaluation of its compliance with its Equal Opportunity and ace Equality policy. .

Shared Lives will endeavour to ensure that the training and support offered to Shared Lives hosts and their conditions of service promote equality of opportunity.
**Advertising**
Advertisements will be placed in as wide a range of publications and locations as possible within the limits of budgetary constraints in order to reach as many people as possible.

The wording of advertisements will make clear to applicants that Shared Lives is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applicants from all sections of the community.

Adverts will be clearly written and avoid jargon.

**Kent County Council Equality and Diversity policy statement**
We believe and recognise that the diversity of Kent's community and workforce is one of its greatest strengths and assets. The different ideas and perspectives that come from diversity will help the council to deliver better services as well as making Kent a great county in which to live and work.

As a major employer and provider of a wide range of services, we are committed to and will challenge inequality, discrimination and disadvantage for everyone who lives in, works in and visits Kent.

Working closely with all its statutory partners, including social enterprise, business and the voluntary sector, we are committed to achieving the highest possible standard of service delivery and employment practice.

We strongly believe that Kent's community and workforce should not face discrimination, or receive less favourable treatment, on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

This statement is as contained within Kent County Council's website as at January 2015.