

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

**Reviewed and adopted April 2016**

### **1. SIGNAL Family Support ('SIGNAL FS')**

SIGNAL FS is a parent support organisation established for the support and benefit of individuals who have a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families. Support is given in the form of activities, information and for all of our membership. SIGNAL FS is administered by a Management Committee ('the Committee') made up of volunteers with bought in administrative support. Income is raised from members' subscriptions, fundraising activities, donations and grants. This policy has been drawn up to reflect the purely voluntary nature of SIGNAL FS and should be read in conjunction with the Constitution.

### **2. DECLARATION OF INTENT**

This policy is intended to cover our members, volunteers, the management committee and our own employees.

**2.1** SIGNAL FS is committed to taking action to fight unlawful discrimination in every aspect of its work. All volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy and are advised that discrimination, abuse or harassment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation will not be tolerated. SIGNAL FS will also not discriminate because of financial or employment status

**2.2** So far as maybe practical the Committee will use their best endeavours to ensure that the composition of the Committee reflects the cultural and ethnic composition of the membership with the aim of promoting a broad-based representation. It is acknowledged that, because of the voluntary nature of SIGNAL FS, the members of the management committee and active volunteers are generally self-selecting.

### **3. HIRE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS**

A written job description and person specification shall be prepared in respect of any contract for the provision of services which may arise. The Committee shall ensure that no restrictions in the form of direct and indirect discrimination, as detailed in section 2.1, have been imposed before selection procedures commence. All service providers are asked to show evidence of their commitment to equal opportunities and an awareness of specific issues relevant to SIGNAL FS members by signing this policy.

### **4 SUPPORT FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

All Committee members and other volunteers assisting at any time with the effective functioning of SIGNAL FS can approach members of the committee for support. If a volunteer feels isolated, provision should be made for support from other members of SIGNAL FS.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

The committee will refer to, and act in accordance of, all relevant existing equality legislation and endeavour to access and incorporate any new or revised regulations when they are found to be applicable to SIGNAL FS as a voluntary charitable group.

This is a list of acts that may be relevant:

- Equality Act 2010
- Gender Recognition Act 2004

And will also abide by the

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998 (due to the management of sensitive information)

## **6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY IN SUPPORT DELIVERY**

**6.1** SIGNAL FS is committed to ensuring equality of access to all of its activities and events. The Committee aims to provide genuine equality of opportunity in support we offer and will take steps to ensure that no person or family who fulfil the membership requirements shall be denied access to our activities or events on any of the grounds detailed in paragraph 2.1, subject to the over-riding duty of the committee to protect the privacy and welfare of our members, as outlined in the SIGNAL FS data protection policy.

**6.2** The committee will aim to ensure that all of its support we offer, activities and events will be provided in line with this equal opportunities policy and:

- That there is no direct or indirect discrimination against any group mentioned in 2.1 in the availability and access to the support offered and that support delivery is reviewed annually.
- That informal consultation will take place from time to time with members and reasonable and practical steps are taken to include any groups found to be excluded thus far in future decision making.
- That information on support, activities and events is published in SIGNAL FS's newsletter, online, by post and by means of leaflets which are made available to all members.
- That all committee members accept responsibility for the overall implementation of this policy.
- That all volunteers, service providers and administrative support staff act in accordance with this policy.
- That, where the committee is made aware of financial hardship, discounted fees are made available to the relevant member(s), including reductions in the annual membership fee.

## **7 COMPLAINTS**

Informal complaints about the implementation and/or operation of this policy should be addressed to a member of the Management Committee who should raise the issue at the next convenient meeting of the MC. Formal complaints should

be made in writing and addressed to the Chair. The complaint will then be reviewed in the management committee with a reply being sent to the complainant within 2 months of receipt of the complaint

## **8. REVIEW**

The Committee will monitor and review the effectiveness of this equal opportunities policy annually.

Please sign to show your agreement below:

*I, the undersigned, understand that involvement in SIGNAL FS as a volunteer, trustee, service provider or employee requires full compliance with this policy at all times:*

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Witnessed: