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## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **General Statement**

The purpose of SCARF is to provide support and services to disabled children and their families, therefore extending equality of opportunity is at the heart of what SCARF does.

SCARF is committed to achieving equal opportunities in employment and the services it provides. No user of SCARF's services, member, employee, volunteer or job applicant should receive less favourable treatment because of :

- gender, including gender reassignment
- marital or civil partnership status
- pregnancy
- having or not having dependents
- religious belief or political opinion
- race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, being an Irish traveller)
- disability
- sexual orientation
- age
- or any other criterion not relevant to the point at issue.

As an employer and provider of services to the community, SCARF accepts the responsibility to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination wherever it occurs. This document sets out the main consequences of this commitment and the action to be taken in order to achieve equal opportunities.

It is the responsibility of all Trustees, Committee members, members, staff, volunteers and service users to ensure that no member, service user, volunteer or employee receives less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds stated above.

SCARF recognises that there is a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to implement an equal opportunities policy. This policy applies to applicants for employment, volunteers and members of the organisation alike.

SCARF recognises that some members may, because of their disabilities, say or do things which would be otherwise unacceptable and incompatible with the Equal Opportunities Policy. SCARF will do all it can to challenge such behaviour in a sensitive and appropriate way.

## **Equality Commitments**

The aim of this policy is to communicate the commitment of the Trustees, Committee and members to the promotion of equality of opportunity in SCARF.

SCARF is committed to:

- promoting equality of opportunity for all members, service users, employees and volunteers
- promoting a good and harmonious environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no form of intimidation or harassment is tolerated
- preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- fulfilling all our legal obligations under the equality legislation and associated codes of practice
- complying with our own equal opportunities policy and associated policies
- taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate

## **Responsibility**

The Committee of SCARF has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. However, all employees, volunteers and members have a duty to ensure that the policy works in practice.

SCARF will bring to the attention of all employees, job applicants, volunteers and members the existence of this policy and will provide such training as is necessary to ensure that the policy is effective and that everyone is aware of it.

## **Dealing with Complaints**

Members, volunteers or employees who believe that they have suffered any form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation are entitled to raise the matter through the agreed procedures (attached). All complaints of discrimination will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that members who make complaints will not be victimised. Any complaint of victimisation will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Victimisation will result in disciplinary action and may warrant dismissal.

Issues should be raised with the relevant SCARF event coordinator (eg Youth Group Leader or Sibs leader) or Secretary as appropriate, who will then bring them to the Chair and Secretary for discussion and an appropriate response (see attached appendix).

### **Recruitment**

SCARF will ensure that job descriptions, person specifications and application forms reflect only the requirements of the job and do not imply sex or other stereotyping.

A copy of the SCARF Equal Opportunities Statement will form part of all application packs.

### **Training**

Subject to the requirements of doing their job, employees and volunteers will be encouraged to go on courses relevant to their present job and personal development.

### **Monitoring and review**

Progress on equal opportunities will be monitored by the Secretary and the SCARF Committee will review the policy annually.

### **Other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with SCARF's policy on Child Protection, particularly in its description of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for both children and adults.

*This policy was adopted by the Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011 and last reviewed/updated July 2014.*

**Procedure**

