

Equality & Diversity Policy

(1) Context

Equality and Diversity are key to how the Continuum Group operates and central to our philosophy and corporate strategy. We are more than ever responsible for working with partners to draw up long term care strategies to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of all young people in our care. Throughout this policy we will maintain our core principle of **Unconditional Positive Regard**. Our policy is built upon the following principles;

- commitment to consulting the young people in our care to identify their needs and redesign our services in accordance with those needs, especially those who have traditionally lived with disadvantage and discrimination
- recognition that fairness is paramount to the principles of **equal opportunities and diversity**, which means that we will develop policies and practices that positively challenge inequalities, aiming to ensure that all young people and employees are treated fairly and that service users do not experience discrimination
- recognition that discrimination can be institutional, requiring constant vigilance to ensure that the organisation operates in a fair and responsible manner, considering the needs of the community as a whole

(2) Legislative Framework

The Continuum Group will develop policies and work programmes which will reflect current **equal opportunities legislation and statutory requirements** in respect of the following ;

- Gender (Equal Pay Act 1970 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975)
- Race (Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000)
- Disability (Disability Discrimination Act 1995)
- Harassment (Protection from Harassment Act 1997)
- Human Rights (Human Rights Act 2000)
- Employment (Employment Act 2002, Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003, Religion or Belief Regulations 2003)
- Age (Age Discrimination Act 2006)

(3) Continuum Group Policies

The Continuum Group's values and aims are outlined within this **Equality and Diversity** policy. We are also committed to integrating considerations of equality into all our corporate and departmental policies and procedures. We will reflect principles of equality in the company's strategic direction through our corporate plans and service developments.

As an employer we recognise the importance of following good employment practices and we aim to develop a workforce that is representative of the community we serve. In order to achieve a more representative workforce we will continually monitor its composition and positively promote proportional representation through the recruitment process. We will also ensure staff awareness of **equality and diversity** issues through induction and training.

As a service provider we will continue to work to provide high quality services that are appropriate and accessible to all our service users. We will deliver services that recognise and build on the strengths of young people and their families irrespective of their culture, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and backgrounds. To achieve this we will;

- undertake appropriate consultation with young people in line with our policies of inclusion and participation
- monitor our Complaints, Comments and Compliments policies and procedures
- ensure, where necessary, translation and interpretation services are made available, along with appropriate means of communicating with young people with a disability
- ensure that service users who are placed outside their own communities do not encounter further disadvantage due to their circumstances
- make certain that Continuum Group homes and schools are adequately resourced so that local communities are not disadvantaged by our service users accessing local community resources

As an overall principle we will constantly strive to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

(4) Effective Implementation

To ensure the effective implementation of this policy we will undertake the following measures;

- a. Implement the Continuum Group **Equality and Diversity** training programme
- b. Ensure all our communications are structured to encourage the understanding and promotion of **equality and diversity** by all staff
- c. Make use of the Quality, Health and Safety Manager, the Regulation 33 and 34 processes and external agencies to provide feedback and a framework for improvement
- d. Review the **Equality and Diversity Policy** annually to ensure it remains up to date and relevant
- e. Evaluate the success of our policy, plans and actions regularly to ensure they are appropriate for use in accordance with Ofsted and DfE standards and criteria, in conjunction with our service users and their families
- f. Ensure we achieve the highest standards of care and protection for all service users in compliance with the requirements of our regulatory bodies