



TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL

# Services for Children, Young People and Families

Children in care

Children's homes

## Equality and Diversity

(Children's Homes)

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# Equal Opportunities

Throughout its work, Trafford Council is committed to reflecting the full diversity of the community it serves and to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone. We accept that the Council is not free of unintended institutional discrimination. We will work to eradicate it.

The residential service aims to ensure equal access to our services by all citizens on the basis of need and to provide services in a manner that is sensitive to the individual whatever their background.

We will ensure that our workforce reflects the community it serves. We will take positive action to realise our equality of opportunity policy.

We are committed to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Colour, ethnic origin, nationality, national origin or race
- Gender
- HIV status
- Marital status
- Religion or belief
- Responsibility for dependents
- Sexual Orientation
- Unrelated criminal convictions

It is the responsibility of every employee of the children's homes to uphold and implement equality.

We believe in openness and equality in our dealings with each other and in the way we provide services.

Every individual is entitled to dignity and respect.

The care for the children, families and carers of our services goes hand in hand with care for our employees.

We aim to ensure that all groups and individuals within the community are given full opportunity to benefit from the services we provide.

No child, parent, family member, potential foster carer or employee will be discriminated against because of age, colour, disability, ethnic or national origins, race, gender, being a

gay man or a lesbian, changed gender, marital status, political or religious beliefs, or trade union activities .

The children's homes services are committed to equality for children and their families and will take action to ensure that any services that discriminate and disadvantage any group on the basis of the above will be changed.

All children and their families are entitled to equal access to services which do not discriminate on the grounds of religion, ethnic origin, linguistic background, culture, gender, disability or sexual orientation. This does not mean that all children and their families will receive an identical service but rather that services will recognise and respect their particular differences and meet their particular needs.

No child or family who qualifies for services should be refused or receive a diminished service because that service is not designed to meet their particular needs. It is illegal to discriminate or offer a less favorable service to people belonging to the following groups, who are protected by legislation: race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief.

Religion, ethnic origin, linguistic background and culture are of importance to the developing identity of all children.

It is important that social work practitioners record the race /ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexuality, age, language spoken and disability of the children and families we are involved with on the case files. Assessments, planning, provision and the review of services should take into consideration equality and diversity and what they mean for the child and family we are providing services to. As part of this process practitioners should seek children's and families' wishes, feelings and views.

## **Religion**

The right of children and their families to practice a particular religion, or no religion, will be respected and upheld. This principle will underpin all of our work with children and their families.

Children in care should whenever possible be in placements which share the same religious background as themselves. Where, in the children's homes, this cannot be achieved, carers must be willing to encourage and facilitate the child's religious observance.

Children and young people should be supported to observe their religion and celebrate their religious festivals. Details must be obtained and arrangements made for children to attend services, religious classes, and say their prayers. Any stipulation in relation to diet or dress as part of religious observance must be provided.

## **Ethnic Origin**

All children should be able to feel pride in their ethnic origins. Many children and their families coming into the children's homes may have low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority and low aspirations because of their previous experiences.

Workers and carers involved with these children and families should be sensitive to their feelings and make efforts to affirm their value and worth. Black and minority ethnic children and their families' self-esteem, aspirations and expectations will often have been further damaged and depressed by their experiences of racism. They may also feel justifiably suspicious or fearful of white organisations. It is essential that children's homes are able to counteract rather than confirm their fears and feelings, by providing services that are sensitive to and understanding of their needs and which provide positive affirmation of their racial origins.

## **Linguistic Background**

Language and the ability to communicate effectively form an important part of a person's identity and their self-esteem. If children or their parents/carers speak English as a second language, they will need an interpreter or translator. Children must never be used as interpreters. Where children and parents/carers are literate in a different language, important documents, and in particular signed agreements, must be translated into the language in which they are literate.

## **Culture**

The term culture may be used to describe the moral values, behavioural norms, lifestyle and social pursuits espoused by a family and taught to their children. A shared religious belief, ethnic background, language, history or economic background will often lead to similar cultural norms and expectations.

Culture usually has many positive aspects. It gives a pattern and predictability to life which makes children feel settled and secure. It teaches children ways to behave and a code of discipline which means they will be accepted in the wider community. It gives children a sense of history and of their "roots" and is important in forming a positive identity. It helps children gain knowledge and appreciation of musical, visual and culinary arts.

## **Gender**

Girls and boys receiving a service at the children's homes should receive equal opportunities and encouragement to pursue their talents, interests and hobbies. Sexist stereotypes of behaviour must not be imposed or condoned. When working with gender we will take account of issues around stereotyping, and ensure young people are treated fairly, and that equality of opportunity between males and females is promoted.

## **Disability**

Where we are working with disabled children, we will assess that disability, and consider how this impacts on the child and others they live with. This will include responding to their communication needs and available resources, such as Braille, audio information, widget, Pecs, etc. Risk assessments with disabled children will seek to identify and address potential risks around their disability. We will take into account the child or young person's chronological age in care planning, and whether social activities, hobbies, interests are age appropriate.

# Sexual Orientation

A number of young people to whom we offer services will be lesbian or gay or unsure of their sexual identity. Gay or lesbian young people in receipt of our services should be able to expect acceptance by, and sympathetic understanding from, staff of their sexual identity. This aim should apply equally to those young people who express uncertainty about their identity. We will ensure that we support and protect young people with potentially sexualized behaviours, for example young people placing themselves at risk by frequent and indiscriminate sexual relations due to emotional needs.

## Useful information and links

### Age

Useful website links:

- [ACAS website](#)

### Disability

Getting a job or education, getting between home and work, going out to enjoy ourselves are activities most of us take for granted. But for too many disabled people these ordinary aspects of life remain difficult to achieve. Removing the barriers that exclude or disable people who have impairments can bring about change that can make a real difference to the people we serve. The scheme and its action plan have been developed as a result of working with disabled and deaf people over the past two years and more.

### Employee support

- [Access to work](#)
- [Consider yourself to be a disabled employee?](#)

Useful website links:

- [The Disability Equality Duty website](#)
- [The Stammeringlaw website – UK disability discrimination law and stammering / stuttering](#)

### The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent on 8th April 2010. This Act brings together a huge range of previous equality legislation.

- [Equality Act - Second Briefing](#)

## Gender

The Council's Gender Equality Scheme shows how we are meeting the general duty on local authorities within the Equality Act 2006 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The Scheme sets out how we are working to ensure that there is equality between men and women at work, and in the way we deliver services.

## Human rights

The following information is meant as a basic introduction only to human rights. The interpretation and implementation of the Human Rights Act can be very complex and further legal advice and guidance should always be sought in the event of any breach or challenge.

The European Convention on Human Rights was drafted by the Council of Europe (including the UK) after World War II. The Council of Europe was set up as a group of like-minded nations to defend human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law and to make sure the atrocities committed during the war would never be repeated.

The Human Rights Act came into force in October 2000, and made the Convention rights enforceable in UK courts. Prior to this, as the Convention rights were not a full part of our own law, anyone using the Convention usually needed to take a case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. This means that is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people make up a proportion of our service users and staff. As a public body it is vital that we ensure our services are fair and accessible to all. In respecting the individual we aim to break down the barriers that LGBT communities may face. Working towards this goal Trafford Council has been proud to support, and will continue to develop, a number of working practices and events.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and strengthens the main equality legislations of the past including the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2007. Public bodies cannot discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions.

Trans individuals are covered under Gender Equality legislation and further information can be found in that section of our internet. A person's gender identity does not relate to their sexual orientation, however as a number of events include Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans communities together, and some common issues are shared, a lot of the information in this page will include focus on both sexual orientation and gender identity.

Useful website links:

- [ACAS website](#)
- [Stonewall website](#)
- [ACAS - A Guide for Employers & Employees - Sexual Orientation in the Workplace](#)

## Religion and belief

Useful documents:

[ACAS - A Guide for Employers & Employees - Religion or Belief in the Workplace](#)

Useful website links:

[Interfaith website](#)