

Northamptonshire Children's Trust

Equalities Forum Terms of Reference

Last updated 3/12/20

Purpose

This group has been established to provide support and education to all staff in Northamptonshire Children's Trust in relation to raising awareness of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice.

The objectives of the group are as follows:

- To provide members with the space to share personal issues in relation to the areas of inequality, discrimination and oppression both within and out of the work place.
- For members to support and advocate for each other in relation to the issues of inequality, discrimination and oppression.
- To discuss issues of inequality, discrimination and prejudice in relation to service delivery and practice
- To educate members and others in relation to anti discriminatory and anti oppressive practice and for this to be included as a part of continuous professional development. To include all aspects of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 ie age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- To help shape and take forward strategy, initiatives and actions to improve equality and to tackle discrimination and prejudice in the workplace and in the delivery of our services.
- To provide feedback on themes identified to senior leaders and the Children's Trust workforce

Membership

The membership of the group is defined as any member of staff working for Northamptonshire Children's Trust and will include a senior (Strategic Manager or above) member of staff in attendance at every session. It is recognised that attendance will be sporadic and inconsistent given the nature of the work and people's commitments, however the group needs to maintain a regular attendance of at least 6 people per session to be viable. Regular attendance is encouraged.

Membership is encouraged from those with lived experience or a particular interest in the protected characteristics detailed above.

Practical details

The sessions will be confidential to those who attend unless agreed otherwise or the safety of a member is in question. There is an agreed procedure in relation to reporting of concerns in place (see below) and will be made clear to all so as to build trust and confidence in the group which will facilitate sharing and support. No minutes of the session will be taken however anonymous notes will be taken by facilitators as used as identified below.

The group will meet every two months 2 hours initially via zoom to be reviewed once restrictions lift further.

The group will be led by a senior member of staff and co-ordinated by staff from the Social Work Academy leadership team and administrator.

The administrator will keep a confidential record of meeting attendees to enable meeting joining instructions and meeting related documents to be circulated to attendees. Any emails sent to the meeting attendees will be sent using the bcc function to maintain confidentiality. The meeting attendee list will be provided to senior management only with agreement of attendees or if required to follow up with an individual in the event of them raising a serious concern (see below).

Each session will offer an opportunity to check in and bring issues to discuss followed by a themed focus designed to facilitate further discussion and education of members.

Data on numbers who attend the meeting and brief feedback of the themes and progress of the group will be shared at the Equalities steering group, the Senior Leadership Team, the Children's Trust Board and with the Children's Trust workforce. This information will also be used to inform training and development work required in the workforce.

The above terms of reference are not exhaustive and can be added to at any point and should be reviewed on a yearly basis.

Reporting of concerns:

All colleagues attending the Forum are reminded of the Resolving Workplace Concerns Policy, the Respect at Work Policy and Procedures and the Whistleblowing Policy. These policies and procedures are in place to support employees in relation to any concerns they have.

If an issue is raised during the meetings that is of serious concern, the individual raising the concern will be contacted after the meeting by a facilitator or senior manager who was in attendance at the Forum to discuss this further and to ascertain the appropriate action required in line with the policies and procedures stated above.