

Equality & Diversity Policy

Statement

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT) is committed to celebrating diversity, positively promoting equality, fostering equal opportunities, and tackling discrimination in all it does.

NSPCWT operates on the basis that:

- All individuals and groups will be treated with respect and valued equally.
- We are committed to recognising the range of people who are Carers, and to promote positive and non-stereotyped images of carers and caring.
- No one, whatever their needs, should be disadvantaged in contact with NSPCWT.
- We will endeavour to make ourselves accessible to everyone.
- We will aim to maximise accessibility at all our meetings and events.
- We will monitor our membership and outreach programme appropriately for diversity and endeavour to address any gaps.
- We will regularly review our policies and procedures to ensure they comply with legislation and good equalities practice.

Core Principles

NSPCWT Directors, representatives and volunteers will adhere to the following core principles at all times:

- Harassment based on race, disability, age, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, family make up, pregnancy, maternity or marital status is not tolerated and will be challenged if encountered.
- No representative, Committee member or volunteer will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their race, disability, age, gender, region and belief, sexual orientation, family make up, pregnancy and maternity or marital status.
- The Data Protection Policy ensures that information regarding an individuals personal details remain confidential.
- We will actively promote equality and encourage the reporting of discriminatory incidents, so that we can take action to reduce the frequency of incidents and support the victims of such behaviour.
- All hate crime by any NSPCWT representative, director or volunteer will be reported to the Police.

Specific Principles

NSPCWT Directors, representatives and volunteers will adhere to the following specific principles while organising and undertaking their duties:

1. Race

- a) NSPCWT is keen to actively promote racial equality in all its work, by reaching out to as many diverse, ethnic and cultural communities as possible. This means ensuring that the views and priorities of members from all ethnic minority groups are actively sought and reflected in NSPCWT's work.
- b) NSPCWT will commission interpreters and translation services when needed, so that non-English speakers are not excluded from meetings and events, and to encourage people who have limited knowledge of English to be able to participate.
- c) As part of our commitment to openness, we will consult widely when developing and evaluating the services of NSPCWT, to ensure ethnically diverse views are taken into account.

2. Disability

- a) The Equalities Act (2010) says a disabled person is someone who has “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”, which therefore covers a wide range of physical, sensory and mental disabilities including chronic mental health problems and learning difficulties.
- b) NSPCWT will seek to identify and remove any policies and practices that disadvantage people with disabilities in its work.
- c) NSPCWT will endeavour to only use accessible public buildings.
- d) NSPCWT will take all practical measures (e.g. providing BSL interpreters, information in large print, etc) to ensure that meetings and events are accessible to all participants, and to encourage people with access difficulties to be able to participate.

3. Age

- a) We will challenge any age discrimination both within the organisation and any experienced by Directors, volunteers or representatives whilst undertaking NSPCWT duties.
- b) NSPCWT will ensure that consultation and participation in decision making involves people across all age ranges.
- c) We will offer a range of working patterns to our representatives and volunteers and participation opportunities to our members, recognising the importance of work/life balance and family and caring commitments, for members of all ages.

4. Gender (sex and gender reassignment)

- a) NSPCWT will consider institutional gender discrimination and how to remove it. In line with current legislation this includes a person who describes themselves as a 'man, woman, transgender or undergoing gender reassignment'.
- b) We will ensure that consultation and participation in decision making involves people of all genders.
- c) We will offer a range of working patterns to our representatives and volunteers and participation opportunities to our members, recognising the importance of work/life balance and family and caring commitments for men and women.

5. Religion and Belief

- a) Legislation on discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief covers any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. It does not include any philosophical belief or political belief, unless that belief is similar to a religious belief.
- b) NSPCWT will respond sensitively to balancing service needs against issues such as requests for absence for religious observance, and any forms of dress that affect their ability to do their volunteering effectively.

6. Sexual Orientation

- a) Legislation on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation covers homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual and transgender people.
- b) NSPCWT are clear that a person's sexual orientation has no bearing whatsoever on their ability or suitability to participate, volunteer or represent NSPCWT. NSPCWT extend beyond the legislation to include intersex people.

7. Pregnancy and Maternity

NSPCWT are clear that pregnancy and maternity including breastfeeding has no bearing whatsoever on a person's ability or suitability to participate, volunteer for or represent NSPCWT.

8. Family Makeup or Marital Status

NSPCWT is keen to actively promote the range of people who are parent carers in all its work, by reaching out to as many diverse families and communities as possible. This means ensuring that the views and priorities of all members from all different family and parental types are reflected in the work of NSPCWT, including but not limited to, married, in civil partnership, unmarried, divorced or single parents, including families adopting and/or fostering.

9. Recognition of Caring Duties and Family Commitments

- a) NSPCWT will take regard of the barriers to, and the needs of individuals, by remuneration of reasonable transport and childcare costs for attendance at NSPCWT meetings and events.
- b) The time, skills and expertise of parent carer representatives volunteering on NSPCWT work programme and Committee will be reimbursed in line with the Remuneration Policy.

Reporting, Recording and Responding to Discrimination

1. Reporting Incidents

- a) NSPCWT Directors, representatives and volunteers encountering an incidence of discrimination or harassment based on race, disability, age, gender, region and belief, sexual orientation, family makeup or marital status during their work must not accept it and explain that at NSPCWT people must be treated with respect. It must also be reported to the Chair / CEO.
- b) Any individual or group who feel they have been discriminated against or harassed by a NSPCWT member, volunteer, representative or director should report it to the Chair/CEO.

2. Recording Incidents

- a) NSPCWT will ensure any occurrence of discrimination or harassment is kept and adequately recorded as an incident, in line with the Risk Management Policy, and is acted upon.

3. Responding to Incidents

- a) Any member of the public that NSPCWT works with who acts in a discriminatory or harassing manner will be challenged on the unacceptability of their behaviour and will be asked to cease such behaviour whilst undertaking NSPCWT activities. Should a person persist with such behaviour, they will be asked to leave that activity and possibly NSPCWT. NSPCWT will report incidents of hate crime to the Police.
- b) Any complaints of discrimination against any NSPCWT representative or Director shall be investigated and heard by the CEO (or replacement post holders if a complaint is about the CEO, as necessary)
- c) At the hearing, both the person making the complaint and the person complained against can bring a representative to support them.
- d) The CEO (or replacement post holder) will be empowered to take any decision, and if the complaint is upheld, will act as follows:
 - Representatives will be asked to give an undertaking never to consciously behave in a discriminatory way again, and training offered. Should the person persist with such behaviour or action they will be asked to leave their representative role and if necessary, NSPCWT
 - Volunteers will be counselled by the CEO as to the unacceptability of their behaviour, and training offered. Should the behaviour persist, the volunteer agreement with NSPCWT would be revoked.

- e) If the complaint is of a serious or criminal nature, the CEO is empowered to contact the relevant outside agencies to take the matter further as necessary.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually unless equality legislation changes beforehand, or should NSPCWT begin to employ staff.