

Peeples Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy

1. Statement of principles

In Peeples we value the diversity of backgrounds and cultures within our community. We respect the variety of ways in which parents and carers support children's learning.

Peeples aims to promote equality in the provision of our services and to develop practices which remove barriers to participation and promote social inclusion.

We recognise that groups and individuals within society face direct and indirect discrimination, which limit choices and options. We are committed to challenging discrimination and stereotyping (often about gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, class, religion and age) in all aspects of our work.

Peeples aims to be an equal opportunities employer, offering a supportive working environment where staff respect each other.

Peeples respects human rights as set out in the European Convention and the Human Rights Act. Human rights are basic rights and freedoms which all humans are entitled to, including the right to life and liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equality before the law.

2. Aims

Peeples aims to:

- avoid and challenge discrimination in a constructive way in all aspects of our work. This will include associative discrimination, perceptible discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.
- promote equality in the provision of our services and in our employment practices
- develop practices and promote initiatives which remove barriers to participation and actively support equality and social inclusion
- make Training and Qualification activities accessible to all learners by supporting external body guidance and working with learners
- act in accordance with the provision of relevant equalities legislation including the Equalities Act 2010 which sets out the following "protected characteristics":
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- ensure that our employment practices do not discriminate against employees or potential employees on any of the above grounds except where this can be objectively justified by the needs of the job (see Peeples Recruitment and Selection policy)

To promote equality of opportunity, Peeples managers will ensure that:

1. A clear structure exists within which the implementation of the above aims can be discussed and reviewed
2. All staff are aware of and committed to upholding the equal opportunities and diversity policy
3. Relevant information and updates on equality and diversity working practices are disseminated throughout the organisation on a regular basis.

3. Equality and Diversity Strategies

3.1 Human Resources management

Our objectives are:

- a diverse workforce which reflects the community we are working in
- an objective and fair selection process which does not discriminate directly or indirectly against disadvantaged/minority groups
- staff who gain job satisfaction and are highly motivated leading to high performance and staff retention
- application of equal opportunities in our dealings with all people who do work for Peeples whether as employees, secondees, casual workers volunteers or self employed consultants
- a positive image for Peeples with all its client groups as an equal opportunities employer

The strategies we will employ include:

- clear guidelines for staff recruitment (see section A3.2) – with special attention to the content of person specifications and where posts are advertised, e.g. using a range of community venues and minority group networks
- clear guidance to job applicants on recruitment procedures
- maintaining of a register of people interested in working for Peeples and working actively to ensure this reflects the diversity of the community – primarily to identify people to send job details to alongside open advertisement
- a supportive, clear structure for voluntary workers
- pro-rata entitlement to all forms of leave for part-time staff
- open access to information for all staff – e.g. minutes, newsletters, information about training, employment policies, induction procedures
- provision of “reasonable adjustments” to enable people with disabilities to be employed (or continue to be employed) by Peeples wherever such adjustments are considered “reasonable” (as defined by Disability Discrimination Act)
- clear management structure/supervision
- opportunities for all staff to develop the skills and knowledge needed in their jobs
- opportunities to express interest in new areas of work which provide relevant development opportunities for staff

3.2 Resources

Resources will be designed and selected so that that they:

- reflect positively a range of cultures, lifestyles and abilities as a part of everyday life
- portray positive age and gender roles
- provide for the special needs of individual children e.g. hearing impaired, partially sighted
- provide for needs of families whose first language is not English
- provide for the needs of individual children in particular circumstances e.g. books dealing with death, parental materials, separation.
- are as accessible as possible to participating parents e.g. in different languages and a range of formats.

3.3 Partnership with Parents, Carers, Families

- We work in partnership with parents, carers and families to ensure that information is communicated clearly both verbally and in written format.
- We operate an open door policy and we welcome and value the views and opinions of our parents, carers and families.
- The Children's Centre aims to create a warm and friendly environment where parents, carers and families feel able to communicate their opinions freely.

3.4 Peeple programme delivery

In delivering programmes to families, we will seek to ensure that:

- group and setting session plans are flexible enough to take into account a wide range of learning styles
- session materials (books, tapes etc) are appropriate and responsive to the range of backgrounds, abilities and cultures of families attending
- the curriculum is available, through home visits, to families unable or unwilling to attend group sessions.
- parents/carers are treated as partners in the project

As part of our visits and recruitment programme, we will:

- Engage bi-lingual support workers where appropriate
- Offer information about Peeple in different languages
- Ensure home visits are sensitive to variety of cultures and backgrounds
- Be proactive in researching and consulting parents and community groups about the needs of different groups within the community
- Equip practitioners with information and training about different languages, cultural values etc.
- liaise with user/support groups for people with disabilities
- liaise with providers of services e.g. pre-school teacher counsellors, health visitors, hearing impaired service

The Equal Opportunities Policy Statement will be displayed in all Peeple premises venues.

3.5 Peep Pre-school

When delivering services at the Peep Pre-school, we will ensure that:

- All members of the community are eligible to apply for Pre-school places
- We reflect the diversity of members of our society in our publicity and promotional material.
- We provide information in clear, concise language, whether in verbal or written form.
- We ensure all parents are made aware of our equal opportunities policy through having access to our parent policy folder.
- We work to inclusive principles and practice, ensuring that all Pre-school users are treated with respect. We work with the individual needs of families and the local community.
- We help children and families learn about a range of food and cultural approaches to mealtimes and eating and to respect the differences among them.
- As a staff team we will challenge and take action against any discriminatory behaviour by staff members, parents or other organisations using the centre. Any remarks or behaviour that is regarded as unacceptable in or around the premises will be dealt with in line with Peeple policy and procedures
- We encourage parents/carers to take part in the life of the Pre-school and to contribute fully, through news letters, volunteering, membership of the advisory group.
- For families who speak languages in addition to English, we will develop a means to ensure their full inclusion.

3.6 Equality and diversity training

Equal opportunities and diversity policy 2018

Central to Peeple is the recognition of parents'/carers' role in their children's learning. Staff training encourages:

- unconditional acceptance for all families attending groups/ participating in Peeple activities
- awareness of celebrations, religious festivals, variety of cultural attitudes, social mores
- informed decisions about resources to use in group sessions e.g. content of books which may be culturally offensive
- asking families (rather than making assumptions) when uncertain of aspects of their practice
- constructive ways of challenging behaviour or language which discriminates against groups or individuals
- a sensitive and respectful approach to families during home visits.

General awareness-raising for staff on equal opportunities issues takes place within a variety of forms:

- Induction
- existing Peeple Practitioner training/meeting schedules
- one-off training events
- management/working area meetings
- Whole staff development sessions

3.7 Information management

We will monitor on a regular basis:

- the range of ethnic backgrounds and languages spoken in the local community
- languages spoken at home by parents
- involvement of families in Peeple by race/ethnic groups, gender of parent/carer attending Peeple, children with special needs/disabilities
- staff by race/ethnicity, gender and disability
- staff recruitment by race/ethnicity, gender and disability

Policy last reviewed May 2018