

## Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 40

### Equal Opportunities

All people have the same human rights. However the Harrow Shared Lives Scheme recognises that some individuals and groups can sometimes be discriminated against, for example, on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV/AIDS, marital status, or age. We are committed to working in ways that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice in Shared Lives (SL) arrangements and in the community and in the recruitment of workers and SL Carers in this service.

#### How would this happen?

As part of their induction, SL Carers and workers in this service will receive information and training about the legislation relating to equal opportunities and about your rights to: -

- live a meaningful and fulfilling life;
- achieve all you can;
- be valued for who you are, including your ethnic background, language, culture and faith;
- be treated equally;
- take part in ordinary living;
- access services and resources available in the community;
- live in an environment that is free from bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- complain without fear of being victimised.

Workers and SL Carers are encouraged to be aware of their own behaviour and attitudes. Their personal development is promoted through regular review/appraisal of their work and individual training plans. Working practices are kept up-to-date

through ongoing monitoring, supervision and training and through learning from experiences and complaints and continually striving for improvement.

We make sure that anyone who is interested in SL arrangements can access information by providing this in plain English and in a variety of other languages and formats when required. The criteria for who can be offered SL arrangements are explained in our Statement of Purpose and arrangements for accessing the service are explained in our written policies and procedures for Referrals, Assessment of Needs, Matching and Introductions. SL arrangements are not suitable for everyone but the decisions about this are based on whether we can meet a person's needs rather than on their individual differences.

Applications to become a SL Carer are actively encouraged from a wide range of people and we advertise in different ways in order to reach a cross-section of community interests. Assessments aim to find evidence of whether the applicants have the experiences and competences required for this role. This includes having awareness and understanding of a multi-cultural society, so applicants are asked about their attitudes and values, their commitment to support people as equal members the community and their ability to encourage them and others to behave without prejudice or unacceptable discrimination. Approval decisions are based on information and evidence from the assessment and depend on whether the applicants can meet the needs of people requiring SL arrangements.

The Approval Panel consists of people who are or have been making use of SL arrangements or who are or have been SL Carers. Other members are recruited according to their particular areas of expertise and the relevance to Shared Lives, with the aim of having a useful cross-section of experiences. Decisions about suitability are based on potential members' knowledge and experiences relating to Shared Lives. We aim to recruit members that reflect the population in the geographic area and/or the specialisms of this service.

When matching people who have been referred for a SL arrangement with available SL Carers, a range of issues will be considered in order to find the match that is most likely to be successful. The most important issue will be whether the SL Carer can meet the needs of the person but other factors will include their ethnic origin, religion, health, gender, age, interests, links to the community and plans for the future, for example.

Applications to work in this service (whether paid or voluntary) are also welcome from a wide range of people. Written job descriptions and person specifications explain the essential and desirable experiences, skills and qualifications for the job. Recruitment will depend on references and completion of other safety checks as well as on the candidate's employment history and qualifications.

As part of evaluating whether we are being effective in promoting equal opportunities we monitor our referrals, advertising, applications and assessment statistics and procedures. In order to do this we may ask you to complete an equal opportunities form. We also have active links with community workers and/or organisations

working with minority and discriminated against groups in order to promote fair access and make sure the service is responsive to individual needs.

Our office premises are accessible to all people and special equipment or reasonable adaptations can be provided for workers when necessary e.g. Braille computer, adjustable desk, etc.

**See these other policies and procedures and documents for further information on:**

- Standards of conduct and practice
- Making choices and decisions
- Communication
- Harassment and bullying
- Recruitment and assessment of SL Carers
- Recruitment and employment of workers and managers in the service
- Working with volunteers
- Training and development
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Daily life and inclusion in the community
- Religious and cultural customs
- Complaints and concerns
- Statement of Purpose
- Referrals
- Assessment of needs
- Matching
- Introductions
- Approval Panel
- Consultation and participation in running the service
- Continuous improvement in the service

- Supporting and reviewing SL Carers