

EQUALITIES POLICY

This Policy has five parts:

- Statement of Intent
- Policy on Service Delivery
- Policy on Employment
- Policy on Governance
- Monitoring and Responsibility

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Amaze exists to support parents and carers of children with special needs. Amaze believes that the views of such parents and carers should be central to the decision making about their child's care, support and education. Amaze works to encourage good communication and partnership between parents and carers and service providers, including education, health, social care and other agencies. Amaze is committed to equality and equality of opportunity, and to tackling discrimination in all its forms. Amaze sees this as central to the organisation's core values, as well as those of its service users and within the local community.

Amaze recognises that groups and individuals in society may be disadvantaged or experience discrimination because of the following actual, perceived or associated characteristics:

- race or ethnicity
- belief or religion
- sex or gender
- sexual orientation
- transgender or gender reassignment status
- marital or civil partnership status
- disability (including mental health)
- age
- pregnancy and maternity
- caring responsibilities.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect and can take place at institutional, group and personal levels. Amaze believes that discrimination is unacceptable and is committed to recognising and counteracting discrimination in its service delivery and employment practice.

POLICY ON SERVICE DELIVERY

Amaze will aim to make its services as accessible as possible by staffing the telephone helpline at advertised times and, where possible, offering an evening service. Amaze will also, where appropriate, offer home visits to parents and carers. Amaze will make its information leaflet available in the main community languages in Brighton & Hove. Amaze will access and provide interpreting services where necessary and whenever possible.



Amaze will have regard to readability in all its publications and ensure that the website meets good practice standards for accessibility.

Amaze will aim to ensure that daytime workshops, conferences or meetings are held during school term times during the school day, and are supported by a crèche or reimbursement of childcare costs wherever possible. Such events will be held at venues that are easily accessible by public transport and whenever possible, are accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility and/or sensory difficulties. It will also endeavour to hold some workshops and events in the evening in order to accommodate working parents and carers.

Amaze will monitor and evaluate its services including both quantitative and qualitative monitoring and will actively seek the views of its users in a variety of ways appropriate to the context.

Amaze has a specific commitment to promoting equality in relation to disability and caring responsibilities. Amaze will continue to promote the voice of parent carers and the social inclusion of disabled children and young people. This will include support for the Parent Carers Council, involvement in local and national consultations and representation on local strategic bodies.

Tackling discriminatory and anti-social behaviour

Amaze will tackle discriminatory comments and behaviour in a way that demonstrates that they are inconsistent with the principle and implementation of its equality policy. Amaze will ensure that staff and volunteers are supported in challenging service users who make discriminatory comments by stating directly to the perpetrator that such behaviour and/or comments are regarded by Amaze as unacceptable.

Amaze will investigate any concerns or complaints that service users may have regarding discrimination by its staff and/or volunteers. Where appropriate, Amaze will offer service users the opportunity to make a formal complaint which will then be investigated as outlined in the Complaints Policy and appropriate action taken, if necessary. The Complaints Policy is available on the Amaze website and from the Amaze office.

Amaze staff will be offered the opportunity to access appropriate training to enable them to fulfil the requirements of this policy.

Right to withdraw services

In some circumstances Amaze reserves the right to withdraw services, for example when a service user is persistently discriminatory or threatening in their language or behaviour. Trustees and managers will support staff and acknowledge that individual members of staff have the right to decide when a particular situation has become serious enough for a service to be withdrawn. In this instance the following procedure should be followed:

- Staff and volunteers should give a verbal warning that the behaviour and/or comment is unacceptable and must cease. The service user will be informed that continuation of this behaviour could result in their support being withdrawn.



- If this verbal warning does not lead to the behaviour ceasing, the member of staff or volunteer may temporarily withdraw the service. The Chief Executive should then be consulted and the service user may be given a written warning that the service will be withdrawn if the discriminatory behaviour continues.
- If this fails, the service can be withdrawn either for a specified period or permanently. This decision must be confirmed in writing by the Chief Executive and the trustees informed.

POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT

Amaze is committed to creating and maintaining a supportive working environment based on mutual respect and trust, celebrating and valuing diversity within its community of staff, volunteers and service users, as well as in the wider community. Amaze will aim to promote equality of opportunity and to challenge and strive to eliminate discrimination. All job applicants are considered on the basis of merit, abilities and potential; no applicant should receive less favourable treatment due to any or any combination of the ten characteristics listed on the first page of this policy. Amaze has a separate policy document to be read in conjunction with this Equalities Policy on **Recruitment and Selection Procedures**, which is available at the Amaze office on request and outlines our approach to positive action in the employment of parent carers.

It is a term of both the Contract of Employment and Volunteer Agreement that employees and volunteers familiarise themselves with the Equalities Policy and co-operate in its implementation and enactment. Staff and volunteers are entitled to use the Grievance Procedures referred to in the Contract of Employment and Volunteer Agreement in cases of perceived discriminatory behaviour by other staff/volunteers. The full Grievance Procedure for staff is available from the Amaze office on request.

POLICY ON GOVERNANCE

Amaze will aim to ensure that its trustees and management committee reflects, as far as possible, the diverse community served by Amaze. In particular, parents and carers will especially be encouraged to become trustees in line with the Amaze ethos of being a parent-led organisation seeking to empower parents and carers of children with special needs. Representatives of major funders and other interested statutory and voluntary agencies are also welcome to participate in the management committee.

MONITORING AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Equalities Policy is implemented and adhered to; s/he also has overall responsibility for monitoring its effectiveness through monitoring recruitment, complaints and grievances (as outlined above), as well as any other apparatus s/he may put in place for so doing. The Chief Executive will report on the effectiveness of this policy to the trustees at the organisation's Annual General Meeting.

Further copies of this policy can be obtained from Amaze, Community Base, 113 Queens Road, Brighton BN1 3XG, and will be made available, upon request, to any staff member, trustee, volunteer or service user who wishes to read or refer to it.