

Family Action has been a leading provider of services to disadvantaged and socially isolated families since its foundation in 1869. We work with over 45,000 families a year by providing practical, emotional and financial support through over 100 services based in communities across England. A further 150,000 people benefit from our educational grants and information service.



Social Worker

Grade D £21,731 - £23,935 p.a.

Full-time, 37 hours per week

Location: The North Birmingham team is based at Kings Chambers, 197-201 Streetly Road, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7AJ

Birmingham Family Action has been working in partnership with Birmingham Children's Services for a considerable period of time. We are now providing an intensive model of working with families that is both preventative and inclusive, working closely with families and ensuring the best outcomes are achieved for children and their parents.

You will be working as part of a team to provide a service to families referred through the local Children's Services teams, and will offer short-term focused work for up to 10 hours per week with families where there are complex concerns.

You will have a social work, or equivalent, qualification and have experience of working with families where there are complex concerns. You will also have experience and understanding of methods of family support and preventative work, and proven skills in assessment and decision making.

Appointments are subject to Family Action receiving an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau which we consider acceptable.

For an application pack and further information, please visit www.family-action.org.uk/workingwithus or send an A4 self-addressed envelope to Debbie Groves, North Birmingham Family Action, 197-201 Streetly Road, Erdington B23 7AJ or email: debbie.groves@family-action.org.uk

Closing date: 1 October 2010. Interview date: 18 October 2010.

Family Action offers good working conditions, a comprehensive training programme and a final salary pension scheme. We welcome applications from all sections of the community.

supporting families since 1869

Working Towards



Investors in Diversity

September 2010

Dear Enquirer

Social Worker
North Birmingham

Thank you very much for your enquiry for this post.

I have pleasure in enclosing the following:

1. Application Form
2. Job Description/Person Specification
3. Summary of Terms & Conditions of Employment
4. Information about the Service/Department/Family Action
5. Family Action's Equality & Diversity Statement
6. Family Action's Ethical Policy
7. Family Action's Safeguarding Policy
8. Family Action's Code of Conduct
9. Addressed Envelope (this will only be provided to applicants who have requested postal packs)

Given the nature of our work, we are sure you will understand that we expect Family Action staff to promote and comply with our Equality & Diversity Statement and our Ethical Policy, and to actively promote and ensure the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. All appointments in our services, and some other appointments, are subject to Family Action receiving an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau that is satisfactory to us.

Please return your completed application form to Debbie Groves, North Birmingham Family Action, 197-201 Streetly Road, Erdington, B23 7AJ. Or please e-mail it to Debbie.groves@family-action.org.uk

The closing date for the receipt of completed application forms is 5pm, Friday, 1st October 2010.

As a charity, Family Action tries to minimise its recruitment costs and consequently it is our policy to contact short-listed candidates only. If you do not hear from us within 6 weeks of applying, I regret to advise you that your application will not have been successful on this occasion.

I look forward to receiving your completed application form by **1st October 2010**.

Thank you very much for your interest in Family Action.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Groves
Administrator
Enc.



**Job Description
Social Worker
North Birmingham**

LOCATION: Kings Chambers, 197-201 Streetly Road, Erdington,
Birmingham, B23 7AJ

RESPONSIBLE TO: Project Manager

GRADE: Grade D

HOURS: Full time 37 hours per week.

FUNCTION:

To provide an intensive family support service, based on a model of working which offers short term, focussed work for up to 10 hours per week with individual families. The work is focussed specifically on work with children and families where there are complex concerns.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. To provide an intensive family support service which ensures that children's needs for care and security are met within the family whenever possible.
2. To work in partnership with local statutory and community services including Birmingham Children's Directorate, Health, Probation and other specialist services for drug, alcohol and domestic abuse and violence. This will include working within the local Safeguarding Board Children's procedural framework.
3. To provide reports for case conference and court as required and work with current systems for referral and reporting, ensuring at all times confidentiality and professional boundaries are maintained.
4. To assist with the collection of national and local data in respect of own work and preparation of quarterly reports for funders.

5. To work with the Project Manager to develop the Family Support Workers professional practice and ensure the work of the team meets required and agreed standards.
6. To represent Family Action at multi agency forums in particular safeguarding meetings and be prepared to take on the Lead Professional role within the Common Assessment Framework system..
7. To support the team in evaluation of assessment work and the involvement of service users in this process.
8. To participate in National and Local Family Action Support Groups, and undertake training where appropriate.
9. To ensure you have an understanding (appropriate to your role) and comply with Family Action's procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
10. To comply with Family Action's Diversity & Equality Policy and our Ethical Policy in every aspect of your work and positively promote the principles of these policies amongst colleagues, service users and other members of the community.
11. To comply with Family Action's Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy and to protect your own and others' health, safety and welfare.
12. To work flexibly as may be required by the needs of the service and carry out any other reasonable duties as required.



**Person Specification
Social Worker
North Birmingham**

1. A social work qualification and registration with the General Social Care Council.
2. Experience of working with families where there are complex concerns
3. Experience and understanding of statutory frameworks working with children and families where there has been abuse or neglect
4. Knowledge and experience of assessment work, including the DOH Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and the Common Assessment Framework and awareness of current national developments.
5. Experience and understanding of methods of family support and preventative work and an ability to work with a wide range of children, families and partner agencies.
6. Proven skills in assessment and decision making, along with an ability to plan, prioritise and work under pressure
7. Ability to adapt to new models of work and support staff in a changing context as well as a willingness to learn and develop through supervision and training
8. Ability to be self servicing and competent using computer programs, word, excel, etc
9. Commitment to working in the voluntary sector
10. Commitment to continual development of equal opportunities policies and practice. A commitment to further development of anti-discriminatory practice and policies
11. Willing and able to work out of hours when necessary.

SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

1. The salary scale for this post is Family Action Grade D, which is £21,731 to £23,935 per annum pro rata. A location supplement of up to £3,331 per annum pro rata may also be payable
2. The post will be offered subject to the receipt of references satisfactory to Family Action, an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau satisfactory to Family Action and occupational health clearance.
3. Employment is subject to a probationary period of six months that may be extended by Family Action. During this probationary period you must satisfy Family Action of your suitability for the post.
4. Annual leave is 23 days rising 1 day per year to 30 days per annum pro rata by annual increments for full time staff. Applicants with more than 23 days annual leave may negotiate their annual leave within the 23-30 days range. Public holidays will be given in addition. Part time staff will receive annual leave and an entitlement to public holidays on a pro rata basis.
5. Sick leave entitlement is two weeks full pay including SSP during the probationary period. After probation but during your first two years in employment your entitlement will be one months' full pay and one months' half pay per annum. Entitlement increases further with service.
6. Family Action offers all permanent staff aged between 18 and 60 years the opportunity to join its pension scheme on satisfactory completion of their probation. Family Action's Pension Scheme is a final salary scheme providing retirement benefits of 1/70th pensionable salary for each year in membership of the Scheme. Employee contributions are presently 7% of salary. The Scheme provides life cover of three times pensionable salary as well as children's and partner's pensions. Normal retirement age is 65. The Family Action Scheme is contracted out of the State Second Pension Scheme.
7. Notice to terminate this appointment will be 1 week by either party during the probationary period and thereafter 4 weeks by either party.
8. Staff may join any Trade Union of their choice. Family Action recognises UNISON and Unite for collective bargaining purposes and both have negotiating rights on behalf of all staff.



History

Family Action started life as the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in 1869. It was founded by Octavia Hill, and its early supporters included William Gladstone, Lord Lichfield, Cardinal Manning, John Ruskin, Lord Shaftesbury, and Beatrice and Sydney Webb.

COS successfully mixed financial help and direct social work services, at the same time campaigning for policy changes.

It led social change, and much of the work we see today in our health and social services was started by COS. In April 1870 it opened England's first labour exchange and later set up tuberculosis dispensaries, after-care committees, meal centres and thrift clubs. It founded the Institute of Hospital Almoners and started the School Care Service to deal with social problems affecting schoolchildren, the Invalid Children's Aid Association to care for physically handicapped children and, in 1938, it opened the first Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Society was renamed the Family Welfare Association in 1946 and rebranded to Family Action in September 2008.

On 1 June 2006 Family Action took on a large number of services previously run by the charity Family Service Units (FSU). The two organisations have always been closely aligned in philosophy and values; like Family Action, FSU was at the forefront of the development of modern social work and had a strong history of influencing change in social policy. In 1965 the Child Poverty Action Group was formed as a result of the activity of FSU workers. In the 1980s FSU became one of the first organisations to involve their service users in decision-making, and in 2002 they developed specialist support services for the children of drug or alcohol abusers.

As a result of the merger, Family Action is able to offer a greater variety of services and support to the country's most needy families. We now operate approximately one hundred services across England, supporting over forty-five thousand children and families. As the single largest charity working with disadvantaged and socially excluded families in the country, we now have an even stronger voice to influence social policy on their behalf.

1.1 Family Action Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct applies to all staff and volunteers and seeks to ensure that Family Action's expectations of its human resources are as clear as possible. It is intended to avoid misunderstandings, which might give rise to disciplinary action including summary dismissal.

Staff and volunteers must:

- Ensure they have an understanding (appropriate to their role), and comply with, Family Action's procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in line with Department for Children, Schools and Families "Guidance for Safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people". <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00311/>
- Work well and diligently to support the aims and values of Family Action including its Equal Opportunities Policy and to comply with relevant professional standards as well as the policies and procedures of Family Action.
- Declare immediately to the Human Resources department any convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings or pending ones. Details of these will only be retained if considered relevant.
- Take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety.
- Treat all those they come into contact with at, or through, work in a professional manner and with appropriate courtesy.
- Deal properly with property and money of Family Action or FWE (Family Welfare Enterprises Limited) or its service users and money that shall be deposited in their custody by a third party for Family Action, its service users or FWE.
- Carry out those tasks, duties and responsibilities that fall within their job descriptions or tasks reasonably allocated to them from time to time.
- Promote and maintain the good name and reputation of Family Action and FWE.
- Report any business interests of themselves their family or friends at the very earliest opportunity to the Chief Executive, where such business is being or is likely to be conducted with Family Action or FWE or which may give rise to a conflict of interest in the performance of their duties.

- Uphold and comply with such Family Action and FWE policies and procedures as may be issued from time to time.
- Staff and volunteers must not:
 - Abuse their position of power or responsibility in relation to other staff, volunteers, service users or other contacts of Family Action or FWE.
 - Solicit, or use the name or reputation of Family Action or FWE to obtain any preferential treatment, benefits, gifts or money from service users or contacts of Family Action or FWE for personal gain or the gain of their relatives or friends.
 - Engage in inappropriate relationships with, or inappropriate contact with the users of its services, including personal and sexual relationships.
 - Receive any preferential treatment, benefits, personal gifts in kind or money from any service users or other person contacted at or through work other than in strict accordance with any guidelines, policies, rules or procedures specified by Family Action or FWE from time to time.
 - Make use of the property or equipment of Family Action or FWE other than for the purpose(s) for which it is intended.
 - Enter contractual arrangements on behalf of Family Action or FWE without specific authority. Where there is authority, never to enter Family Action into commitments for more than 5 years in relation to equipment, services or property without specific authority from the Director of Finance & Administration and (in relation to services) the Director of Family & Community Care.

FAMILY ACTION SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY



1. POLICY STATEMENT

Family Action recognises the importance of its support services to families, children, young people and adults and its particular responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of those who are vulnerable or at risk.

This requires us to:

- Listen to, value, encourage and support those we work with
- Provide clear internal procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse, and ensure their implementation
- Provide effective management for staff students and volunteers through supervision , support and training
- Adopt a code of conduct for staff
- Include continuous risk assessment within our work with service users
- Recruit Safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Share information about child and adult protection and good practice with service users , staff, students and volunteers
- Develop and maintain effective information sharing with statutory services and other agencies, involve children and their parents, as well as vulnerable adults, as appropriate
- Work collaboratively with local safeguarding children's boards and safeguarding adults services.

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, students and volunteers. Any allegation or concern about abuse **must** be responded to. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the protection of vulnerable adults is everybody's business although our individual roles in the process may be different.

All work undertaken by Family Action will be subject to continuous risk assessment and comply with Family Action's Risk Policy and Procedures.

All services will have a designated person, usually but not always the manager, with particular knowledge and experience of child protection. Any concern for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must be discussed with the line manager , without delay and further action taken as necessary.

Family Action believes that the welfare of children is paramount and that **ALL** children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse, regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, language, religious belief or sexual orientation.

A child for the purposes of this policy, as defined by the Children Acts 1989 & 2004, is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged over 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness: and who is or who may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself Against significant harm or exploitation.' No Secrets DoH 2000.

Family Action staff, students and volunteers will follow their Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Procedures which take precedence over Family Actions Safeguarding Procedures, if there are any significant differences.

Every effort will be made to ensure that staff, students and volunteers recruited to work for Family Action are suitable to do so. Those who are responsible for appointing staff will be trained in safe recruitment practices. All references will be robustly scrutinized and other checks sought at the appropriate level e.g. CRB, ISA, POVA etc. The recruitment process at all stages will seek to determine an applicants suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Family Action is committed to training all staff, students and volunteers in this policy and procedures and code of behaviour, as part of the induction process. It requires all those working with children and young people and vulnerable adults to address safeguarding within the Social Care Induction Programme, and to undertake Safeguarding Training within their probationary period. In addition they will be required to undertake either refresher training or more advanced training (as appropriate) bi- annually thereafter.

FAMILY ACTION DIVERSITY STRATEGY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT AND PRACTICE DELIVERY POLICIES



DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY STRATEGY

Background

Family Action values difference:

- ◆ We believe that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions.
- ◆ We seek to encourage and harness these differences to make our services relevant and approachable.
- ◆ We will draw upon the widest possible range of views and experiences in order to understand and meet the changing needs of our users, staff, volunteers, students, partners, funders and supporters.
- ◆ We recognise that our service users are themselves diverse in need, origin, character, capability and belief, and that they are all able to contribute to the development of the services they use.

Family Action's Values Driven Approach to Diversity

Family Action embraces diversity as a core value for the organisation. Family Action's approach to diversity is based on the concept that people should be valued as individuals not just for moral and social justice reasons, but also because a visible commitment to diversity makes it easier to attract and retain funding for our work and staff and volunteers for our projects. We recognise that people from different backgrounds bring fresh ideas and perceptions, which can make Family Action's work more efficient and improve services for users. This approach reflects and underpins Family Action's Ethical Policy, which should be read alongside this strategy.

Family Action believes that managing diversity successfully will help it nurture creativity and innovation and tap hidden capacity for growth and improved competitiveness. It has therefore adopted a policy of positive action to redress perceived imbalances in its own make-up, procedures, pay and conditions and to increase the representation of ethnic minorities and disabled people in all grades, particularly the more senior ones. It is committed to ensuring equality of access to training and personal development opportunities for all staff and volunteers.

Family Action believes that it is important to increase access to its services by being approachable and responsive to the needs of potential users and respectful to their background, capabilities and beliefs. It seeks to achieve this by taking positive action to make itself more reflective of the diverse nature of its users, to seek out unmet areas of need and meet them with the help of users, community groups, partners and

potential funders.

Equality and Diversity

Diversity is not simply a mechanistic approach to compliance with equal pay, equal opportunities, working time, race relations and disability discrimination legislation. Family Action believes that an effective diversity strategy can counteract prejudice against a wide range of personal differences, for example: academic or vocational qualification, accent, age, caring responsibilities, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, physical, mental and learning abilities, physical appearance, political affiliation, previous mental health problems, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, spent or irrelevant convictions and trade union or non-trade union membership.

In accordance with our Ethical Policy, Family Action does not tolerate prejudice in any of these areas, whether covered by the law or not. Indeed the opposite is true; Family Action believes that all individuals and families who have experienced discrimination or are socially excluded have a right to the help they need to participate fully and equally in the community. Family Action sets out to provide that help and is committed to eliminating discrimination of any kind. Beyond this, Family Action is committed to working for social inclusion for all excluded groups and to challenging the structural and attitudinal causes of discrimination and social exclusion.

Implementing the Strategy

Family Action will implement this strategy by taking positive action internally and externally:

Internally, Family Action will:

- Publicise this strategy and our Ethical Policy, and insist on adherence to them.
- Do our best to increase the recruiting of people with disabilities or from ethnic minorities (where they are underrepresented regionally or by grade):
 - For disabled applicants we will adopt the Positive about Disability commitments and offer guaranteed interviews for all candidates who meet the minimum criteria.
 - Where ethnic minorities are under-represented, we will target advertising, specify Genuine Occupational Requirements where membership of an ethnic minority group is a genuine and determining requirement of the job, offer additional training and mentoring for existing employees from under-represented groups and encourage them to apply for promotion.
- Attempt to eliminate any residual discrepancies in staff pay, grading and conditions of employment.
- Offer flexible working whenever possible to meet staff needs.

- Regularly review practices and procedures to ensure fairness and compliance with legal requirements.
- Review our premises and services to ensure accessibility and safety for all and fund, where possible, any necessary improvements.
- Seek, recognise and value the contributions of all staff, volunteers and students.
- Provide relevant training to staff, volunteers and service users to support the implementation of this strategy.
- Treat breaches of this policy as misconduct which could lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if serious, to dismissal.

Externally, Family Action will:

- Regularly review community needs and current and potential service provision on a local and regional basis to ensure that, where possible, no needs are left unmet.
- Regularly seek users' and potential users' views on our service provision with a view to maintaining continuous improvement, including improved accessibility for people with disabilities of all kinds.
- Consult with academia, partners, funders and potential funders on new openings and initiatives in order to develop and fund innovative approaches to the provision of holistic social and family care.
- Review the make-up of our user and potential user population with a view to reflecting that make-up in Family Action's own.
- Challenge discriminatory attitudes in our service users and seek to promote anti-discriminatory attitudes and behaviour.
- Sign up with Jobcentre Plus to the 5 'Positive about Disability' commitments.
- Work towards Investors in People recognition initially at the local level and then, as soon as possible thereafter, at the strategic whole-organisation level.

Evaluating the Success of the Strategy

Family Action will ensure its strategy produces the desired results by evaluating progress against key targets and objectives. In particular, it will measure progress on an annual basis by:

- Reviewing performance in equality of access and anti-discrimination practices during Phase 1 of the Family Action Service Quality Review process (May to June).

- Reviewing performance in team diversity and equal opportunities during Phase 2 of the Family Action Service Quality Review process (July to September).
- Monitoring overall staff diversity and progress in meeting recruiting objectives.
- Monitoring the percentage of staff that has completed annual diversity training.
- Reviewing performance against the 'Positive about Disability' commitments.
- Monitoring progress in achieving Investors in People recognition and, post-recognition, in achieving continuous development against the standard.
- Reviewing this strategy and Family Action's Ethical Policy regularly to take account of developments in best practice and the law.

The Organisation Development Manager will submit a report on progress to the Quality Steering Group, Senior Management Group and the Audit Committee of the Trustee Board annually in November.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Family Action intends to ensure that equal opportunity in employment becomes a reality in practice and not simply a paper commitment. Family Action will seek to implement a programme of positive action to make this policy fully effective.

APPLICATION

Family Action's commitment to Equal Opportunities is endorsed by its Trustee Board and Directorate and extends to all employees and applicants for employment, those working on a voluntary basis and to its students. Moreover its services shall be delivered in an equitable and fair manner and the dignity of clients respected at all times.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

Family Action's policy is being developed within the framework of existing legislation. The relevant legislation includes:

Equal Pay Act 1980 (as amended 1983)

This Act established the right of women and men to equal treatment in relation to contractual terms and conditions of employment when they are employed on the same or broadly similar work, or on work which, though different, is of equal value.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended 1986) and Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of sex or marital status, or to apply requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular sex or marital status where these cannot be justified. It also applies to discriminatory employment advertising and makes it unlawful to apply pressure to discriminate or to aid discrimination by another person.

Race Relations Act 1976

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origin, or to apply requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately disadvantageous effect on people of a particular racial group, and which cannot be justified on non-racial grounds. It also applies to discriminatory employment advertising and makes it unlawful to apply pressure or discriminate or to aid discrimination by another person.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Amendment Regulations 2003

This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate directly on the grounds of disability, where disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Harassment and victimisation are also unlawful. The Act applies to both employment and service provision and both employers and providers have a duty to ensure accessibility and make any reasonable adjustments necessary.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) and (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

These Regulations make it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on the grounds of religion, belief or sexual orientation in relation to employment. Harassment and victimisation are also unlawful.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

This Act provides that if a convicted person completes a specified period without being convicted of further offences, the conviction can be regarded as 'spent'. These sentences then do not have to be revealed and may not be used as grounds for exclusion from employment or promotion. Certain occupations are not covered by the Act.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE LEGISLATION

If these legal requirements are contravened, both the Family Action and the individual concerned will be rendered liable to legal proceedings. However, if the

employer can prove that it has taken the necessary steps to prevent acts of discrimination, only the individual would be considered liable for that unlawful act. This applies primarily to the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986. It is essential that all people bound by this policy are aware of their obligations under the law, as ignorance is no defence.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS POLICY

This document refers to four categories of discrimination which are defined as follows:

Direct Discrimination results from treating a person less favourably on the grounds of sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

Indirect Discrimination arises where a condition or requirement, although applied equally to the above groups listed in the Policy, has the effect of excluding, penalising or treating less favourably any of these groups, and cannot be shown to be justifiable and will be to the detriment of those who cannot comply with it.

Victimisation occurs if a person is given less favourable treatment than others, because she/he has exercised or intends to exercise her/his rights under the policy or the relevant legislation (e.g. bringing proceedings or helping someone else to bring proceedings).

Harassment is defined as any behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, directed at an individual, that violates their dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It can still be harassment if the comments are not targeted at an individual, but are part of a general culture.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy commits Family Action, through its Trustee Board in partnership with the Director and all staff, to work to eliminate discrimination in its employment practices. The following areas are being or will be given particular attention:-

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Will be regularly and systematically reviewed so as to ensure that no more than the essential minimum requirements are laid down, that the language used is non-discriminatory, and that skills acquired in areas other than in employment will be given full consideration.

Recruitment and Selection

All advertisements will carry the following statement:

Family Action welcomes applications from all sections of the community irrespective of sex, marital status, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability,

age or sexual orientation.

Advertisements will be placed in a wide range of media and the local Job Centres and drawn to the attention of existing staff, so as to attract applicants from all sections of the community. Steps will be taken to ensure that any applicants with disabilities are given the help they require both to attend interviews and to carry out the duties of the job if appointed. The Head of Human Resources is charged with liaison with the Department of Employment for advice and support on possible aids, adaptations, and other support.

Family Action's application form has been revised to eliminate non-essential information and selection will be in accordance with objective, job-related criteria. The person appointed will be chosen on his/her merits and abilities, as related to the person specification.

Family Action will endeavour through written instructions, and appropriate training and supervision to ensure that those responsible for staff selection have an understanding of Equal Opportunities in Employment and do not discriminate unfairly. Interviewers shall ask objective questions related to the requirements of the job and will avoid seeking irrelevant information about the candidates' domestic arrangements or caring responsibilities.

References are taken up on all successful candidates, including those already within the organisation. They will be written and open i.e. available for internal candidates and successful external candidates to see and any telephone contact will be properly recorded, and confirmed in writing if possible.

Feedback will be provided to those unsuccessful candidates who seek it, and internal candidates, particularly, advised how to remedy any gaps in their experience, skills and presentation for the future.

Regular analysis will be carried out to ensure that Family Action's recruitment procedures are effective in reaching all sections of the community. Personal details provided for this purpose will be kept entirely confidential and will form no part of the selection process. Nor will they be put to any other use.

These procedures will apply equally to all staff on temporary, part-time and fixed term contracts. No waiting lists will be kept and no one person acting alone may engage staff.

Training and Development

Family Action will

- Provide the training required to implement this Equal Opportunities in Family Action Diversity and Equality Policies Aug 08

- Employment Policy
- Ensure that all employees will have equal and direct access to training and development opportunities regardless of sex, race, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, religion and age.
 - Evaluate all training provision, both internal and external to ensure that it complies with this Equal Opportunities Policy.

Terms & Conditions of Employment

Observance of Family Action's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy is a condition of employment.

The interpretation and application of all conditions of service will be monitored to ensure that they are consistent with the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Personnel Policies and Procedures

Personnel policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality of opportunity within Family Action.

Dismissal and Redundancies

Family Action will ensure that:-

- Employees responsible for selecting other employees for redeployment, dismissal and redundancy will not discriminate in the process or selection on the grounds stated in Family Action's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Dismissal and redundancy decisions are not made on the basis of sex, race, disability, colour, ethnic and national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, religion or age.

Disciplinary Procedures

Family Action will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and any worker alleged to have harassed or victimised another employee will be subject to the Family Action's disciplinary procedures which could result in dismissal.

Individual Rights

No aspect of this policy affects an employee's statutory rights to refer a case to an industrial tribunal or any other body which deals with the enforcement of the legislation described above.

Family Action EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY FOR PRACTICE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

1. Introduction and Basic Principles
2. Policy
 - 2.2 Policy – Staff
 - 2.3 Policy – Direct Work
 - 2.4 Policy – Volunteers
 - 2.5 Policy – Students
3. Monitoring and Reviewing the Policy
4. Procedures and Guidelines
5. Publicising Services
6. Planning New Services
7. Planning and Supervision

1. INTRODUCTION AND BASIC PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Family Action's Declaration of Interest states the Association's commitment to oppose racism, sexism, and all forms of discrimination faced by people because of their ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, class, nationality and religious or political beliefs. It further states that measures will be introduced to combat all direct or indirect discrimination in its provision of services.
- 1.2 These guidelines are intended to take forward this commitment focusing on the issues that need to be borne in mind in service provision.
- 1.3 The Family Welfare Association's equal opportunities practices are based on an understanding that, because of a history of discrimination in society and the continued existence of prejudice, positive action will be necessary on the part of Family Action to enable users of services who have experienced disadvantage to take up services on offer. Good practices will incorporate positive action into the mainstream, enabling particular needs to be met within the ordinary context of the work.
- 1.4 The agency is actively committed to the recruitment and support of employees, service users, students and volunteers from disadvantaged groups.
- 1.5 These policies, procedures and guidelines are intended to provide some basis for good practice. They are neither exhaustive nor straight forward, but should help to further our efforts. They will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 This policy document will apply to all people working in the agency, whether paid staff, committee or board members, working as volunteers or placed as students.
- 2.2 It will be the responsibility of Family Action managers to ensure that all those working in the agency have access to this Policy Document.
- 2.3 This document's primary function is to focus upon anti-discriminatory practice and service delivery. It is therefore intended that it should be implemented alongside the Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Document.

2.2.0 POLICY – Staff

- 2.2.1 All staff are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour. It is recognised that staff vary in their sensitivity and awareness of equality and discriminatory matters. Family Action's Ethical Policy describes the behaviour expected of staff.
- 2.2.2 Family Action recognises that staff teams will struggle to deal effectively with the significant differences that exist e.g. gender, race, sexual orientation, disability etc. Assistance and support will be offered to staff to deal in the best possible, most creative and sensitive manner with the conflicts and difficulties that will emerge.
- 2.2.3 In situations where it is believed that a member of staff has not maintained the expected standards of conduct, their line manager and their colleagues have a responsibility to address this issue with them. For instance, where a member of staff uses abusive or offensive language, it should be indicated to them that this is not acceptable and the reasons for this should be discussed with them. If any member of staff is unable or unwilling to change their language or behaviour and persistently behaves in an insensitive and abusive manner, then, they will be subject to the disciplinary code or grievance procedure.
- 2.2.4 Supervisors of staff will ensure that the agency policy regarding anti-discriminatory practice and equality of access to services is understood by them. Managers should include Diversity as a regular agenda item in meetings and in supervision.
- 2.2.5 It is recognised that staff will need support when subject to incidents of abuse. It is expected that such incidents will be taken up by managers and workers will be supported to take that action without inappropriate delay but also creatively and sensitively. However, this will depend on the degree to which the worker is the direct target of verbal or physical abuse and the extent of it. Senior staff will provide support, either by listening, providing back-up or through direct involvement.
- 2.2.6 The agency will offer training and support to ensure staff feel confident to deal with oppression, racism and discrimination when this is observed or experienced. This issue is covered more fully in Section 7.

2.3.0 **POLICY – Direct Work**

2.3.1 All staff must have a commitment to providing a sympathetic and sensitive response to all members of the public who approach the agency.

2.3.2 Direct work will be provided in many different settings and in a variety of ways. However, in all cases, the point of first contact will be crucial in creating an environment in which people feel supported, whether by telephone or face to face.

2.3.3 Consequently, it is essential that at this stage the agency philosophy and Equal Opportunities Policy is publicly proclaimed. An anti-discriminatory practice statement should be on display for public view.

“Family Action is committed to Diversity and Equality. We do not accept discriminatory, abusive or racist language or behaviour.”

Staff within each service setting will be expected to develop the statement, in order to identify with it and make it appropriate to their setting.

2.3.4 During the assessment and contracting stage the following matters should be discussed and considered with service users:

- Issues of identity of service user(s) and staff.
- Whether service users have a choice of worker, bearing in mind such issues as language, culture, previous history of oppression or abuse.
- Practical issues of timing, access, resources needed to take up the service (see Planning Services).
- How the work will be structured (e.g. time limited, subject to review).
- How this will be negotiated, so that users can be empowered to share in the decisions.
- What users can do if they wish to complain. The procedure for each office will be clearly and publicly stated for all users.
- User's access to files/case notes. All users have full access to their files in consultation with their workers.
- How users can be supported e.g. a friend, adviser or advocate at review/evaluation/interviews, availability of interpretation.
- Confidentiality of the work, the extent and limits of this (e.g. in cases of child abuse).

- The agency's commitment to dealing with discrimination and oppression, and how it will form part of the work.
- Publicity leaflets on Equal Opportunities Statement will be displayed and will be discussed in the interview where appropriate.
- All written reports on clients should be written thoughtfully to ensure that they are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

2.3.5 All staff are to receive Diversity and Disability Awareness training.

2.3.6 Each service should regularly review its practice in the light of these policy guidelines. Family Action recognises that this is a continuing process.

2.3.7 The methods and speed with which these issues are dealt may vary, but only according to differences of setting and the complexity of successfully engaging potential service users, not due to any discriminatory practice.

2.4 **POLICY – Volunteers**

2.4.1 All recruitment information for volunteers will include the agency's commitment to Diversity and Equality.

2.4.2 At initial interview and in volunteer agreements, Equal Opportunities policies must be addressed with volunteers: there needs to be recognition that volunteers may not have developed their thinking to the same extent as paid staff.

2.4.3 The agency/volunteer co-ordinator must ensure that volunteers receive training in equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice. This will include specific training sessions and regular agenda items in supervision.

2.4.4 Volunteer co-ordinators must ensure that client/volunteer/co-ordination identity is discussed and its relevance understood.

2.4.5 The co-ordinator and the agency must ensure that volunteers have adequate support to deal with discrimination or oppression in their work. The complaints procedure will be outlined in the initial contract.

2.4.6 Volunteers who fall below the expected standards of behaviour with clients will be required to consider their behaviour and volunteers who appear unable to behave in a more appropriate and sensitive manner will be subject to the disciplinary procedure outlined in their initial contract.

2.5.0 POLICY – Practice for Students

2.5.1 Practice Teaching procedures will include anti-discriminatory practice.

2.5.2 All agency information to students and colleges will include the Statement of Intent and details of the agency's commitment to equal opportunities.

2.5.3 At initial interviews and in learning agreements for placements the respective responsibilities of all parties (the agency, the practice teacher, the college and the student) regarding equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice will be addressed.

2.5.4 Practice Teachers and all training staff must be aware that placement choices and selection can either value or devalue student's identity and must ensure that supervisor/student identity is discussed and made explicit.

2.5.5 Practice Teachers must ensure that all students have adequate support both to deal with oppression if experienced in the placement (i.e. in the work, the team, the supervision) and to question their own possible discriminatory thinking and practice.

2.5.6 This support will include opportunity for discussion in supervision and in meetings, training in agency policy and guidelines and establishment of complaints procedure by which students may address grievances to practice teachers, and the agency without risk of it affecting their assessment.

3 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE POLICY

3.1 Opportunity will be made for staff, volunteers, students and users and carers to propose improvements, make criticisms and ensure that these reach the Director of Services and other senior managers to enable the Association to revise the document.

3.2 These guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Family Welfare Association Organisation Development Manager to introduce any required amendments or additions.

3.3 In each setting staff will be expected to discuss and monitor equal opportunities issues and this policy on a regular basis. It is recommended that a nominated member of staff should be responsible for collating any information discussed and for sending it on a regular basis to the Organisation Development Manager.

3.4 Further consideration will be given to introducing a series of objective criteria by which performance and progress in equal opportunities can be measured and evaluated. For instance, we may need to review the way access to Family Action services is achieved and to what extent this is occurring on an equitable basis.

In some cases, the work of Family Action's services is circumscribed by particular externally specified criteria about the uptake of a service, and in

those situations, specific responses, which allow for specified criteria will have to be adopted.

4 PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

- 4.1 In our work there will be times when either verbal or physical abuse or offensive comment or actions are directed either against staff or against other individuals because of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, class or marital status.
- 4.2 These guidelines outline what staff, students and volunteers should do in the event of such an incident.
- a) It must be borne in mind that the urgency and speed of response will depend on i) the seriousness of the matter, and ii) whether the individual is adequately supported.
 - b) Verbal abuse which is not an immediate threat to the security and safety of the person should be addressed as quickly as possible, preferably at the time of the incident.
 - c) In any event, it should be reported to the immediate supervisor at the earliest opportunity, in writing or verbally. They can then jointly decide on further action (if any) to be taken. If they cannot agree on a decision, the Regional Manager or next in line manager must be consulted.
 - d) It may be of value to share the incident with the team, indicating how it was managed and what was learnt from the experience.
 - e) Serious verbal abuse or threatened or actual physical abuse, affecting the safety and security of the worker and/or others must be reported immediately to the supervisor or an available senior worker. This worker, in consultation with the Regional Manager, should decide on immediate action. This may mean a joint interview with the abuser, or calling in additional help (e.g. the police). The Regional Manager or next in line manager is responsible for ensuring proper agency back-up for any necessary action.
 - f) Once the immediate situation has been dealt with, the worker and supervisor in consultation with the Regional Manager must decide on more long-term action. This may include restrictions or conditions upon offering future service or legal action, or further advice.
 - g) If users of the service persist in behaving abusively, or if the abuse is acute, then it may not prove possible for the delivery of the service to continue. This should be a last resort, and, how it is transacted, will depend on the setting. It should always be discussed in supervision and with the Regional Manager.
 - h) Where incidents of abuse occur, staff must advise their immediate manager. Consultation "up the line" should occur where necessary. In any event, a brief

report to the Regional Manager should be made to enable monitoring and any wider learning.

- i) In the event of serious abuse, a written report must be made to the Regional Manager and copies sent to the Director of Services or the Director of the relevant other department. It must explain the incident and the action planned or taken. Any difficulties or disagreements must be noted. At all stages advice from senior management should be sought if felt necessary.
- j) Staff, volunteers, students or service users who are not satisfied with the outcome must be given access to the Family Action grievance or complaints procedures.
- k) All workers subjected to abuse are assured that requests for help are not seen as reflecting on their performance. Family Action recognises that discrimination is both personal and institutional and that individuals are affected differently. In dealing with these incidents, all parties are learning from the shared experience.
- l) However, from time to time because of (a) the personal; (b) the issues arising in the work, or (c) the work itself, it may be necessary to supplement established arrangements. In such circumstances, Family Action will provide advice and/or resources to assist (e.g. outside consultation, training etc).

5. PUBLICISING SERVICES

- 5.1 Posters and leaflets will be widely available in both traditional community locations (libraries; town halls etc.) and in specialist community settings (neighbourhood centres; voluntary agencies, GP surgeries, adult education centres, clubs and societies of potential users).
- 5.2 Posters and leaflets will be checked for appropriate language and images. Technical languages will be avoided where there is an alternative. Stereotyped images and languages will not be used. For example, the preferred use of words such as partners/couples instead of “marital”, of “users” rather than clients.
- 5.3 Where possible, information and leaflets should be available in the language of the local population, the service should strive to recruit staff fluent in these languages or employ interpreters wherever possible, to facilitate communication. Leaflets should publicise this. Consideration should be given to making information available via tape to the visually impaired as well as to those whose first language is not English.
- 5.4 Pictures/photographs representing the service will show positive images of all groups, particularly people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The same principle applies to pictures or posters displayed in offices.

6. PLANNING NEW SERVICES

6.1 When new services are being proposed and developed, there will be wide consultation particularly with potential users and carers about the service design. Consultation will ensure the interests of minority ethnic groups, women's groups, groups who represent lesbians and gay men, disabled people, the elderly and people from different nationalities are taken into account.

6.2 Consideration will be given to the following:

- The times at which the service will be available. This will include the possibility of out of hours appointments. In addition, holidays of different cultural, religious and ethnic groups will be noted.
- The place where the service will be available – this includes the possibility of home visiting, when access to the office is impossible or limited, due to age, disability, children or poor health.
- The profile of persons who will provide it – where possible staff, students and volunteers should reflect the profile of the community in which they work.
- The profile of potential users – this entails statistical breakdown according to race, age, gender, nationality and disability.
- Whether crèche facilities will be available.
- Whether transport is necessary.
- The language/first language of potential service users and whether translators or interpreters are available. This includes the visually and hearing impaired as well as ethnic minorities.
- The fact that funding problems and financial consideration may restrict access to some facilities and the extent to which some of these aims might be achieved.
- These shortcomings will be explicit and published. Decisions on the above should ensure maximum access to the service.

6.3 The service will establish continuous methods of monitoring, with regard to both profile of users and processes of referrals, assessment and ongoing work.

7. PLANNING AND SUPERVISION

7.1 Family Action will provide training required to implement its Diversity and Equality Strategy.

7.2 Additionally, the agency will ensure that all employees and volunteers have direct access to training and development opportunities regardless of sex, race, disability, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, sexuality, marital status, religion and age.

7.3 Training is to be in response to identified individual or team learning needs.

7.4 Training for managers will give particular consideration to the management and supervision risk. The following areas are suggestions for consideration:

- a) Anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice and staff support and development
- b) Supporting workers and others who have been subjected to discriminatory abuse.
- c) Within an Equal Opportunities context, the development of skills required for dealing with anger, heightened aggression or violence and debriefing those who have been involved.

7.5 For all workers within the agency, the following training needs have been identified and will be met as resources allow:

- a) Diversity and disability awareness
- b) Creating an anti-discriminatory service/agency
- c) Challenging discriminatory thinking and behaviour
- d) Combating oppression and discrimination in a wider context
e.g. Race and Mental Health; Gender and the Justice System
etc.

Revised August 2008
MGB, ODM

FAMILY ACTION'S ETHICAL POLICY



VISION AND MISSION

Family Action's vision is that all families are free from disadvantage and social isolation. We believe that all families have the strength to overcome their difficulties – no matter how complex. Combining practical, emotional and financial help, we support each family according to their needs. We use this experience to campaign for a society free from disadvantage and social isolation.

VALUES

- ◆ We work holistically with families in the heart of their communities.
- ◆ We are resourceful and cost effective.
- ◆ We take action and campaign what we believe.
- ◆ We work collaboratively with families, our staff and partner organisations.
- ◆ We are innovative and adapt to changing needs.
- ◆ We empower families by building on their strengths.

We apply the National Occupational Standard for Social Work values to all our work:

- ◆ We are aware of our own values, prejudices, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest and their implications for your practice.
- ◆ We respect and promote: each person as an individual; independence and quality of life for individuals whilst protecting them from harm, and dignity and privacy of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities.
- ◆ We recognise and facilitate each person's use of language and the form of communication of their choice.
- ◆ We value, recognise and respect the diversity, expertise and experience of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities.
- ◆ We maintain the trust and confidence of individuals, families, carers, groups and communities by communicating in an open, accurate and understandable way.
- ◆ We understand and make use of strategies to challenge discrimination, disadvantage and other forms of inequality and injustice.

Family Action recognises the importance of its services to families, children, young people and adults and its particular responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of those who are vulnerable or at risk. This requires us to:

- ◆ Listen to, value, encourage and support those we work with
- ◆ Provide clear internal procedures for identifying and dealing with concerns about possible abuse and ensure their implementation
- ◆ Safely recruit, supervise and train our staff and volunteers
- ◆ Develop and maintain effective information sharing with statutory services and work collaboratively with local safeguarding boards

OUTCOMES

We build on families' strengths, supporting them to fulfil their potential and enabling them to make a positive contribution to their community. In doing so, we seek to provide three key outcomes for all our service users:

- ◆ **Social Justice and Fairness** – Our services and campaign activities should actively promote social justice and a society within which everyone has the right to participate and benefit equally. We will work with individuals and families in need in a way that reduces their marginalisation and promotes their strengths and abilities so that they can use all opportunities available to them. We are committed to being honest about all that we do. We will fundraise and advertise our services in ways that properly reflect the work we do and the values we hold. We will use our resources as efficiently as we can to achieve the best possible outcomes for our service users and funders, maintaining sufficient infrastructure to support our staff and services properly.
- ◆ **Partnership and Involvement** – Service users must be at the heart of all that we do. We will be understanding of and respectful towards their diverse backgrounds, capabilities and needs and celebrate their differences. We will involve them as partners at every level of the organisation so that they can influence planning, delivery, quality and evaluation of the work of Family Action. We will develop transparent models of partnership to enable staff and volunteers to build active and helpful partnerships in their work. We will promote honest communication across, up and down and outside the organisation so that Family Action can benefit from all available expertise. We will seek to reflect the diversity of our service users within Family Action's own organisational make-up.
- ◆ **Needs Met through Effective and Responsive Support** – We will work preventatively across the whole family life cycle, developing and using kinship understanding, to meet the wider needs of service users. We will intervene for the benefit of our service users in situations of complex need. We will adopt an evidence-based approach to innovation to guide us in developing our services to meet existing and new, emerging needs. We will only seek new work where we are satisfied that the service will be of high quality and lasting value to the people who will use it and where it will fit properly within Family Action's work span so that it can be fully supported and developed. We will monitor and evaluate all our services and continuously develop our quality review processes.

ETHICAL STANCE

Family Action expects all its staff, including volunteers and sessional staff, to work to achieve its vision and mission, apply its values and adopt the ethical stance described below:

- ◆ **Service provision is to be user-centred.** Users must be consulted about their needs and the appropriateness of the services we intend to provide. They must be encouraged and assisted in making independent, informed choices, and we

must not let our own personal beliefs get in the way of their choices. This applies particularly in such culturally sensitive areas as contraception, abortion, personal and sexual relations, domestic violence and the education and disciplining of children. In such areas, Family Action staff are to promote freedom of choice within the constraints of the law and the protection of the individual from violence, intimidation and harassment – we take safeguarding issues very seriously.

- ◆ **Service provision is to promote social justice and diversity.** All Family Action staff are to work positively to promote equality of access and eliminate discrimination in all its forms. To this end, we will not tolerate discriminatory attitudes or behaviour by our staff or membership of racist organisations. Staff are to promote anti-discriminatory attitudes and behaviour amongst service users and challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- ◆ **Service provision is to be evidence-based and outcome oriented.** All services are to be set up and managed so as to facilitate monitoring and evaluation and to be responsive to evidence about outcomes achieved. We expect Family Action staff to be honest about their own and their subordinates' performance and to seek to provide the best outcomes for their service users.
- ◆ **Service provision is to be honest, accountable, professional and open to scrutiny.** Family Action staff and volunteers are to adopt these values in their relationships with service users and other persons they come across in the course of their work, in their management of themselves and their time and their service's staff, volunteers and resources. Family Action staff must accept that convictions or cautions relating to offences indicative of personal dishonesty, inter-personal violence or sexual offences, even if spent, must be declared to management and may be deemed as evidence of unsuitability for employment within Family Action.