

BAPT Equal Opportunities Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the commitment of The British Association of Play Therapists to equal opportunity both in its responsibilities as a professional association and as an employer. This policy seeks to provide a framework of good practice and specific responsibilities with regard to:

- recruitment and selection
- terms and conditions of membership or service
- standards of conduct
- training and education
- monitoring.

The British Association of Play Therapists is committed to a programme of action designed to make this Policy effective. To ensure that this policy is operating effectively the Association maintains voluntary records of employees' and applicants' ethnic background, gender, disability and religion. Ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provides the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROMOTING EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

1.1 The Association, Chair, members of the Board of Directors, Sub-committee members and working parties

The Chair, Board of Directors, sub-committee members and working parties will have responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of the policy throughout the Association. The Association will ensure that equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice is embedded within our policies and practice guidelines.

The Association will:

- make available to members its written policies, practices and procedures on equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- send the Equal Opportunities Guidelines and policies, procedures and practices to new members
- inform all members of changes to, and developments of its policies, practices and procedures
- monitor the policies and functions of the Association, to ensure that it does not discriminate unfavourably. All policy and planning development will explicitly assess the impact of potential decisions on our membership
- review the training needs of employees to ensure that training promotes equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practices in their work
- expect its members to follow its policies, practices and procedures and where appropriate will consider whether to institute disciplinary proceedings against any member who wilfully disregards them
- take steps to deal with incidents of discrimination sensitively, within a reasonable timescale and with transparency and honesty
- provide such support as is reasonably possible in the circumstances, to any employee or member who is the subject of unlawful or unacceptable discrimination by the Association in the course of his/her membership or employment
- the training needs of Directors, sub-committee members and staff will be kept under review to ensure as far as possible appropriate up-to-date understanding and knowledge in applying/implementing this policy
- identify a spokesperson on the Board of Directors who will be responsible for highlighting and monitoring issues related to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice

All committees and working parties will:

- inform themselves of, and comply with, relevant and up to date equal opportunities legislation
- endeavour to ensure that they reflect their constituency in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and religion and other protected characteristics
- set equal opportunities objectives, and record progress in meeting these
- if they become aware of a potentially discriminatory act, discuss with the person against whom the act was directed whether they wish to consider, or wish the committee or working party to consider, referral to the Complaints Committee for further investigation
- monitor the ethnicity of members and users of Play Therapy services involved in, or affected by, complaints or disciplinary action and analyse the subsequent results.

1.2 Individual members

Members will ensure that they:

- are aware of the Association's equal opportunities policies, practices and procedures and will co-operate with these
- participate in equal opportunities training
- do not harass or discriminate against others
- regularly review the ways in which they undertake their work in order to ensure that standards of practice are being applied to all users of Play Therapy services in a non-discriminatory manner
- provide access to review and complaints procedures
- inform the Chair of any incidents where they consider that discrimination by the Association, its members or employees may have occurred.

1.3 Academic and professional training in Play Therapy

The Association will:

- ensure that the content of accredited training courses is reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that issues relating to equal opportunities are considered.
- seek active participation and contribution from a representative group of people when arranging conferences
- encourage the provision of relevant training materials in the area of equal opportunities
- encourage individual courses to ensure that equal opportunity issues are considered
- Members running accredited and other training courses should seek to identify and utilise relevant expertise in equal opportunities related subjects (e.g. in other professions; users of services) and in ethical standards of practice.

2. SELECTION AND MONITORING

The Association aims to implement an effective monitoring and evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of this policy based on accurate and comprehensive information.

The Association will:

- monitor the composition of committees and working parties by gender, ethnicity, disability and religion
- monitor applicants wishing to become members of the Association by gender, ethnicity, disability and religion
- update existing records, assess the present position, and monitor progress in achieving objectives
- ensure that sub-committees are recording how this policy is being implemented in their area.

Membership criteria will be kept under periodic review to ensure that they are justifiable on non-discriminatory grounds. The membership criteria are essential for the effective practice of Play Therapy, and the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the Association, including the protection of the users of Play Therapy services.

Membership criteria will be applied fairly and without prejudice to all applications for Membership. Membership will not be withheld or terminated on the basis of any protected characteristic identified within the Equality Act 2010. Applicants will be informed of the decision and its grounds in writing, and a record of the decision will be kept for a minimum of 12 months from the date of the letter.

As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for full membership of the Association, the British Association of Play Therapists Ltd complies fully with the DBS processes and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP OR SERVICE

The Association will ensure that no discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics occurs in relation to the application of terms and conditions of membership or service.

4. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Association will:

- review policy periodically to ensure that it remains appropriate to the aims of the Association and adheres to current legislation
- ensure that the equal opportunity policy and decisions are monitored and recorded
- aim to raise awareness and improve knowledge of equal opportunities issues among members and employees.

5. BREACHES OF POLICY

The British Association of Play Therapists takes seriously any alleged breaches of the Equal Opportunities Policy. Where this concerns a Full or Student member of the Association, consideration will be given to referring this for further investigation under the Professional Conduct Procedure. Where the alleged breach concerns an employee of the Association (or someone who though self-employed is in effect undertaking business on behalf of the Association as if an employee) the alleged discrimination should be raised as soon as possible with the Board of Directors, via the Chair and will be dealt with under the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure.

Definitions of Discrimination

For the purposes of this policy the definitions of discrimination shall be those within the Equality Act 2010.

Protected Characteristics are the characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010 as the grounds on which discrimination is unlawful. The Act identified the following protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief) sex and sexual orientation

Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic they have or are perceived to have, or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination occurs when a person applies a criterion or practice which puts people with a particular protected characteristic at a disadvantage when compared with people who do not share that characteristic; the application of such a practice or criterion cannot be justified by the service provider.

A disabled person is anyone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Harassment is defined as unwanted behaviour that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates a degrading, humiliating, hostile, intimidating or offensive environment.

Victimisation is defined as subjecting a person to a detriment because they have done a protected act or there is a belief that they have done a protected act. i.e. bringing proceedings under the Equality Act 2010; giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Act; doing any other thing for the purposes or in connection with the Act; making an allegation that a person has contravened the Act.