**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Providing Personalised Care for Children**

* WSCC children’s homes welcome all children and will aim to build on their individual strengths, while also offering them a chance to try out new experiences in a safe and planned way.
* Every child who lives, or spends time, in a WSCC children’s home will receive care that is personalised to their individual assessed needs.
* The child’s Support Plan will take into account their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability and their previous experiences.
* Every child will have a personalised Support Plan and daily records that reflect their individual needs, strengths and experiences and enable staff to provide support that is focused on each child’s assessed needs.

**Staff responsibilities**

* All residential staff will complete Equality and Diversity training and are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory.
* Staff will also proactively promote diversity in the home through their day to day activities, and encourage children to learn about others who they perceive are different to them.
* The Registered Manager will be required to monitor the range of children and young people placed in the home in respect of their ethnicity, gender and disability in order to support the positive representation and identity of a diverse group of children.

**Legislation**

* The Equality Act (2010) sets out nine Protected Characteristics that describes the groups that are protected by law from being discriminated against on the grounds of belonging to any group having one or more of these characteristics. These are as follows:
* Age
* Disability
* Gender reassignment
* Marriage & civil partnership
* Pregnancy and maternity
* Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
* Religion or belief (or lack of)
* Sex
* Sexual orientation
* The Act also extends to cover types of discrimination:
* Direct discrimination - where someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic
* Associative discrimination - this is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic
* Discrimination by perception - this is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic, just be perceived to.
* Indirect discrimination - this can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.
* Harassment- this is behaviour that is deemed offensive by the recipient.
* Victimisation - this occurs when someone is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or grievance under this legislation.

**Our commitment to Personalised Care**

* WSCC children’s homes are committed to ensuring that every child receives care that is personalised to their individual needs, and that the principles of equal opportunity exists across its entire community.
* We will:
* Ensure that every child is treated gently, fairly and with respect
* Recognise that children have individual needs, and that we each understand that treating children equally does not always involve treating them all exactly the same
* Recognise that for all our children extra support is needed to help them to achieve
* Make sure that people from different groups are consulted and are involved in our key decision making
* Ensure no one experiences harassment, discrimination or less favourable treatment owing to any personal (protected) characteristic
* Ensure that our premises are a safe, secure and stimulating place for everyone at all times
* Challenge any behaviour, actions or conduct that we perceive to infringe on principles of equality and diversity

**How we embed a culture of Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

* WSCC children’s homes will ensure all candidates applying for posts are assessed on their skills, experience and suitability for the role, irrespective of their personal (protected) characteristics.
* Staff will ensure that training and awareness raising around issues of equality, diversity and equal opportunities is included within the induction of all new staff and within the education curriculum for children.
* Each new or updated policy will be assessed for its impact on equality, diversity and equal opportunities before being completed and clearly disseminated to staff as required.
* The management team will ensure their performance management and supervision functions will be used to reinforce positive messages.
* Staff will ensure careful consideration is given to how and what we communicate, the language chosen and the methodology chosen to convey messages across the organisation.
* A zero tolerance approach remains in place for any breach of this policy or the fundamental concepts that underpin by any member of staff working within the residential service.
* We will ensure a range of foods are available that cater for individual preferences and requirements taking into account any restrictions.
* We will ensure any images, posters, and learning materials we use or display are respectful and adhere to the principles of equality, diversity and equal opportunities.

**Reference Points;**

WSCC Treating People as Individuals

Behaviour at Work

WSCC Standards of Conduct

Staff Expectations

Countering Bullying and Peer Abuse