

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths

Equal Opportunities Policy

1. The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID)

- 1.1 FSID aims to prevent sudden infant death and promote baby health. In order to achieve this FSID:
- funds research
 - supports families whose babies have died
 - disseminates information about cot death and baby care to health professionals and the general public.

2. General Statement of Policy

- 2.1 FSID believes that the organisation should not discriminate on the grounds of gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, colour, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or economic status.
- 2.2 FSID recognises that the promotion of equal opportunities is essential to ensure the continued quality of the services that this organisation provides.
- 2.3 Our commitment to equal opportunities is not just a question of fairness and morality but is based on the fact that equality in employment is a matter of good practice.

3. Commitment to this Policy

- 3.1 This commitment to a policy of equal opportunities encompasses all aspects of:
- Employment
- recruitment
 - terms and conditions
 - staff development
- Service Delivery
- Volunteers
- External Affairs

4. Employment

4.1 Potential Employees

It is unlawful to discriminate against people in advertising and selection and in the conditions of the job offer, for example, whether a temporary or permanent position is offered.

4.2 Present Employees

It is unlawful to discriminate unfairly in the provision of training and staff development, facilities, opportunities for promotion and the application of policies and procedures which would result in less favourable treatment or the application of discipline or dismissal.

5. Service Delivery

5.1 FSID staff will strive to extend this commitment of equality to everyone who comes into contact with the organisation, including, for example, those who:

- telephone, write in or e-mail
- attend our events
- access our publications and our website
- receive our support and information services
- apply for/receive our research grants
- fundraise on our behalf
- take part in our training

6. Volunteers

6.1 FSID will not discriminate in its recruitment and development of volunteers.

7. External Affairs

7.1 Those representing FSID externally must ensure that they adhere to this Equal Opportunities Policy, for example, when:

- speaking to the media
- making presentations
- making written submissions e.g. articles
- attending meetings
- answering queries from the general public

8. Cultural and Religious Needs

- 8.1 Where members of staff have particular cultural or religious needs which may conflict with existing work requirements, FSID should consider whether it is reasonably practicable to vary or adapt these requirements to enable such needs to be met.
- 8.2 Sympathetic consideration should be given to employees requesting either the accumulation of annual leave or unpaid leave in order to visit relations overseas.
- 8.3 Similarly it should be noted that members of certain religions may request the opportunity to observe prayer time and other religious rites.

9. Disability

- 9.1 FSID will not discriminate against present or potential employees with disabilities because of a reason relating to their disability if such treatment cannot be justified. FSID will not discriminate in recruitment, promotion, access to training and development, disciplinary action or selection for redundancy.
- 9.2 Disability is defined as any physical, mental or sensory impairment, which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 9.3 FSID will also consider whether reasonable adjustments can be made to employment arrangements or premises which may disadvantage a disabled employee or applicant.

10. Promoting Equality

- 10.1 FSID's policy and philosophy regarding equal opportunities will be promoted through the following channels:
 - FSID News
 - Notice boards
 - website
 - induction training for new staff and volunteers
 - publicised during recruitment process

11. Responsibility for Implementation and Monitoring of Policy

- 11.1 All of FSID's employees, volunteers and Trustees have a responsibility to respect, act in accordance with, support and promote this Equal Opportunities Policy. Obligations include:
- not persuading or seeking to persuade an employee or volunteer to practice discrimination
 - not to victimise an individual on the grounds that they have made a complaint or provided information about instances of discrimination
- 11.2 Employees, volunteers and Trustees are expected to have a high standard of conduct and behave in a way that reflects well on FSID, this includes treating others (including other employees, users and contacts) with dignity and respect.
- 11.3 Everyone has a responsibility for fulfilling FSID's commitment to equality and diversity. In support of these commitments we strive to go beyond the actions of individuals and integrate our aspirations and goals into all levels of our planning process – at a project level, at the level of regions and for the organisation as a whole.
- 11.4 The existence of an equal opportunities policy is not, in itself, enough to ensure genuine equality of opportunity. It is also necessary to implement the policy and to try to measure the success or failure of its implementation. Effective monitoring and review is carried out regularly.
- 11.5 Employees of FSID who fail to follow any aspect of the Equal Opportunities Policy may face disciplinary action using existing disciplinary procedures

Policy produced by: The Council of Trustees

Policy adopted: March 2002

Reviewed: March 2007

Next review: March 2012

Supplementary statement for volunteer befrienders, and callers to the Helpline

Callers

Anyone with access to a landline, mobile phone or email can contact the Helpline between the hours of 9am and 11pm on weekdays, and 6pm and 11pm on weekends and Public Holidays, for confidential, evidence-based baby care advice, or bereavement support. If a parent or any potential caller is hesitant or unable for any reason to use the phone or email on their own part, we welcome the initial contact being made by a third party. If the caller speaks a language other than English, FSID can link them to a suitable supporter in a local bereavement service.

Regional staff run supportive, whole-family, days for bereaved parents in their area, to enable them to get to know each other and to find out about the potential for support from FSID's befriender and Helpline service.

From 9am to 6pm the Helpline is answered by a paid Helpline Advisor. From 6pm to 11pm the Helpline is answered by a trained volunteer bereaved parent.

A phonecard is available to bereaved parents to enable cost-free contact with the Helpline from a landline. This card can be provided following an initial referral from a third party.

Any person who may have difficulty speaking or listening on the phone may prefer to contact via email.

All emails are answered on the nearest working day following receipt, by a Helpline Advisor during office hours.

To ensure a consistent response to all callers, the Helpline Advisors and the volunteer befrienders undertake an approved initial training, and ongoing training sessions are offered throughout the year. In addition, a biannual skills revalidation exercise is undertaken.

Volunteer befrienders

All volunteer befrienders must be parents bereaved by sudden infant death, and at least three years must have elapsed since the death of their baby or child. They are expected to undertake and complete the prescribed preparatory training, which takes place over a weekend at an agreed venue. This may be anywhere in the country according to the convenience of those undertaking the training.

Any special physical or dietary needs can be met, and cost of travel, accommodation and out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed, by FSID. Such expenses for an accompanying person in the case of special need will also be met.

Once operational on the Helpline, volunteer befrienders work from their own homes. Calls are automatically diverted, enabling the befriender's number to remain confidential.

Befrienders may choose not to join the telephone Helpline rota, but to befriend exclusively by email. A specific purpose FSID email account will be set up for the befriender in this case.

All befrienders will be reimbursed by FSID for any costs incurred in the course of agreed volunteering activities, including training for and support and supervision of, such activities.