



FRASAC EQUALITIES AUDIT 2023

*Insights for improving accessibility and inclusion in
service provision*

Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre (**FRASAC**) commissioned Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE) to carry out an equalities audit of its services, in order to better understand how to improve

This report summarises the main findings and key recommendations, based on a snapshot carried in 2023.



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Introduction

The Equalities Audit carried out by FCE has the following objectives:

- Assisting FRASAC in delivering its service with compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Understand how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) practice is embedded
- Recommend areas for development or improvement.

To do this, FCE carried out over three months, between March and June 2023 the following:

- a review of policies and procedures
- an analysis of the client base, and recording systems
- an informal survey about EDI practices
- an equalities snapshot of the staff team
- additional interviews (anonymous) to explore specific themes in depth

Return rates were 86% for fully completed EDI questionnaires and 76% for fully completed Equal Opportunities questionnaires. 5 follow-up interviews were carried out, with the main topics discussed were EDI policy and practice at FRASAC translated into experience as a member of the staff team and, on reflection, for service users.

Key observations and recommendations

- There is a **clear positive intent of being client-led and accessible.**
- Practical experience, skill and confidence building are the next natural steps for improvement.

Recommendations are to:

- Develop EDI practice as a simple extension of person-centred approach.
- Implementing a clear Equality and Diversity Policy for inclusion of service users and staff team (employees and volunteers), complementing the Equal Opportunities policy.
- Implement core EDI training at induction and regular stages during employment to help develop shared understanding.
- Create opportunities to increase equality awareness / lived experience, and an engagement with equality groups (e.g. disabled people, minority ethnic people, people experiencing poverty)
- Develop inclusive communications by building on existing good practice, e.g. develop service leaflets/communications through practical understanding of inclusive communication and liaising with equality groups with lived experience of communications barriers (BSL, languages, plain language, easy read)
- Improve accessibility, or agree workarounds to address inaccessibility of premises.

- Develop an internal resource base (e.g. collection of useful guides, tips, informal ‘inclusion learning’ team) to support at organisational level all staff in inclusive practice.
- Create a priority outreach programme of engagement with equality groups (e.g. disabled people, minority ethnic people, people experiencing poverty)

Recommendations based on policy snapshot (30/6/23) and summary of actions taken in response:

Recommendation	Our actions from recommendations	Timescales / Frequency
Develop EDI practice as a simple extension of person-centred approach	<p>A refresher of Equality Act 2010 training, with more focus on inclusive policy and practice.</p> <p>Feedback from one person: ask on final evaluation form “how can FRASAC make your experience with us more inclusive?” this has been noted for future reference when we review the MS Evaluation Forms.</p>	<p>All staff have completed refresher in Equality Act 2010 training on our training platform “Citation”, this was completed by November 2023, and will continue to be refreshed annually.</p> <p>This will be updated in April 2024 when the new MS Forms for the new period are released.</p>
Implementing a clear Equality and Diversity Policy for inclusion of service users and staff team (employees and volunteers), complementing the Equal Opportunities policy.	<p>Policy created and sent to FCE.</p> <p>Staff were not aware we had an Equal Opps policy – we will have a space on the team meeting agenda annually to look at Equality and Diversity- “creating a shared understanding about reasonable adjustments or taking positive action to improve access for service users”</p>	<p>Completed November 2023. Policy is now live.</p> <p>To discuss in Team Meeting in January 2024, then annually.</p>
Implement core EDI training at induction and regular stages during	Equal Opps eLearning training is completed at induction on Citation. There is no renewal	Completed and on-going. Refresher is now annually.

<p>employment to help develop shared understanding.</p>	<p>date – however, this could be refreshed annually as a reminder to staff/volunteers. Staff/volunteers will complete the eLearning annually and, in the same month, it will be brought to the team meeting for discussion.</p>	
<p>Create opportunities to increase equality awareness / lived experience, and an engagement with equality groups (e.g. disabled people, minority ethnic people, people experiencing poverty)</p>	<p>Shared Learning sessions and training have included: <u>Training:</u> Autism awareness Anti-Racism LGBTQIA+ & Trans-Awareness (NHS) <u>Shared Learning:</u> SHAKTI Includem</p> <p><u>Other ideas:</u> Link in with the local mosques to hire rooms, leave leaflets.</p> <p>Gain further knowledge from other organisations to signpost, as we might not be the right organisation for them.</p> <p>Update Resources document which is on the staff SharePoint.</p> <p>Utilise social media to work with other agencies.</p> <p>Update website to have a section on BAME sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivors – to incorporate female, male and young people • LGBTQIA+ Survivors • BME Survivors <p>We will also add links on the website to Contact Scotland for deaf support and Fife Law Centre.</p>	<p>Completed November 2023.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Contact being made with Fuzzy Limes with proposal for new section for BME. To be completed December 2023.</p>

<p>Develop inclusive communications by building on existing good practice, e.g. develop service leaflets/communications through practical understanding of inclusive communication and liaising with equality groups with lived experience of communications barriers (BSL, languages, plain language, easy read)</p>	<p>All leaflets are online and can be access in multiple languages using Google Translate.</p> <p>Invite Hearing Link or Contact Scotland in for Shared Learning Contact Scotland (contactsotland-bsl.org)</p> <p>Find out more about Translation Services in Fife Fife Community Interpreting Service (fcis.org.uk) – invite for a Shared Learning</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Invite has been sent – awaiting confirmation.</p> <p>Invite has been sent – awaiting confirmation.</p>
<p>Improve accessibility, or agree workarounds to address inaccessibility of premises</p>	<p>This would be for staff on a case by case basis. We do make adjustments for clients for accessibility – for example, we may source an accessible venue for them.</p>	<p>As and when required.</p>
<p>Develop an internal resource base (e.g. collection of useful guides, tips, informal ‘inclusion learning’ team) to support at organisational level all staff in inclusive practice.</p>	<p>We currently have a live Resources Document on SharePoint, this will be updated to add an Inclusion Section, and have all the resources in one area.</p>	<p>Resources updated November 2023 to include BME signposting</p>
<p>Create a priority outreach programme of engagement with equality groups (e.g. disabled people, minority ethnic people, people experiencing poverty)</p>	<p>Services Manager is invited to “Get Together” event hosted by FCE.</p> <p>People First Scotland – (Learning Disability Org) Services Manager meeting with People First Scotland – they have a training program for adults with Learning Disabilities “Power Women” and would like FRASAC to attend a shared learning.</p>	<p>Monthly when required.</p> <p>Meeting arranged for November 2023</p>

	<p>SHAKTI returning to FRASAC to discuss who they refer men to.</p> <p>Links with Fife College for Freshers; we have a worker based in St Andrews university providing support; Our Prevention Worker provides workshops within the High Schools in Fife, including the DAS unit in some high schools, and we are going to be working specifically with a school who specialises in additional support for learning.</p>	<p>Contact with SHAKTI has been made – awaiting date for shared learning.</p>
<p>Make reporting process simpler and more accessible, e.g. through providing a simple guide or process tree on how to report and what steps take place following a report.</p>	<p>Guide for reporting is on the Disciplinary Procedure and is linked from the Equal Opps Policy. Will add to the procedure how to report a hate crime - Reporting Hate Incidents - Fife Centre for Equalities</p>	<p>Completed November 2023.</p>

Summary:

Through the training in Equality Act 2010 delivered from Citation eLearning, which will now be refreshed annually, and through carrying out the recommendations outlined in the report, Fife Centre for Equalities is pleased award FRASAC with the [Bronze Equality Pathfinders Award](#) in November 2023.

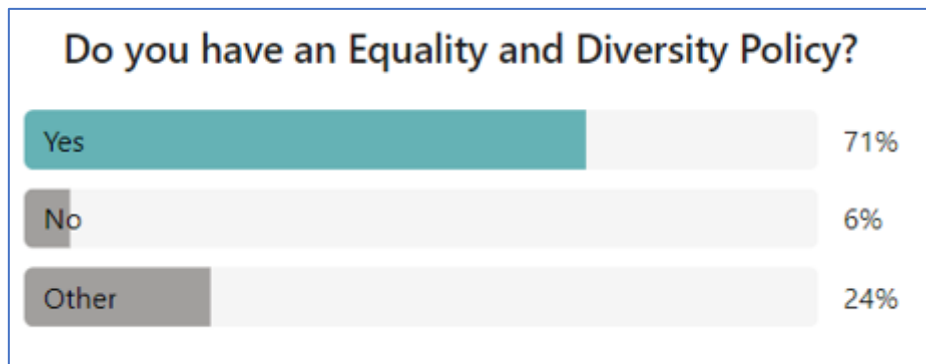


Employee Insights - EDI Questionnaires and Interviews

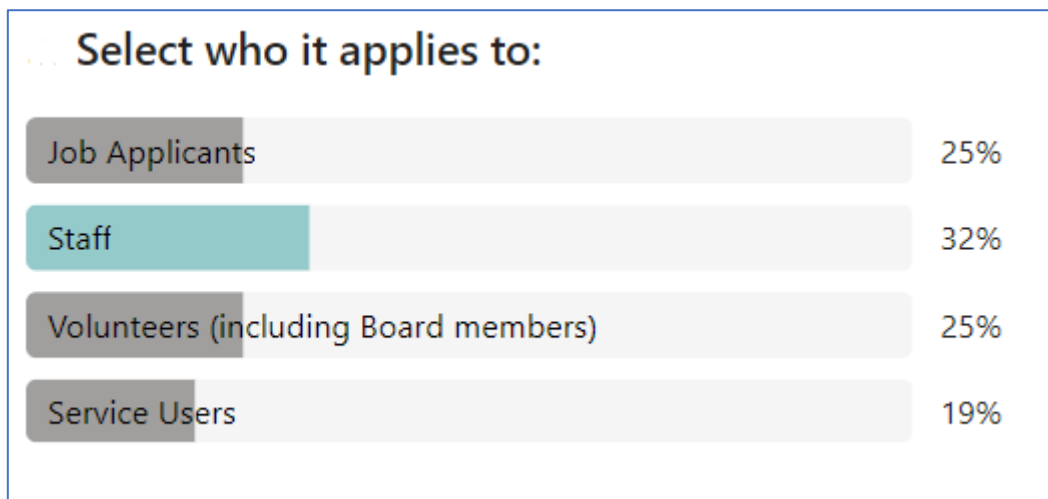
Section 1: Overall EDI policy and practice

1) Scope of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within organisation:

Based on the snapshot carried out, the key recommendation is to develop and implement an overall Equality and Diversity policy (or at least a position statement) to explain FRASAC's approach to inclusion and fairness in service access.

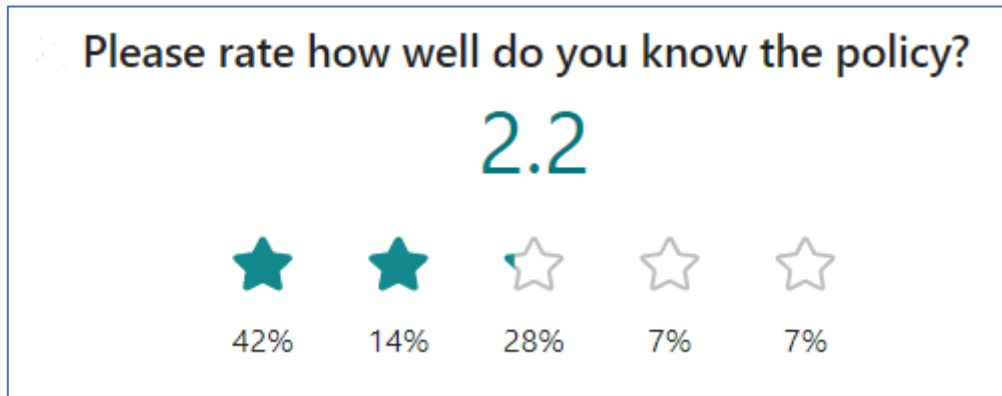


- This would work in parallel to the existing Equal Opportunities policy, which applies at the time of the survey to staff and volunteers only. At the time of the snapshot, there was a lack of clarity about the scope of the existing policy as 19% the team said the policy applies to service users.



2) Core knowledge about EDI practices:

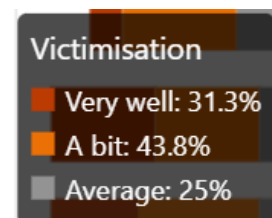
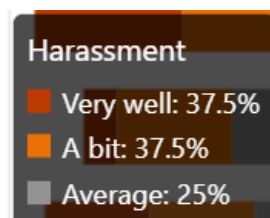
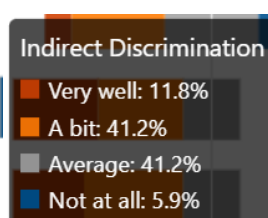
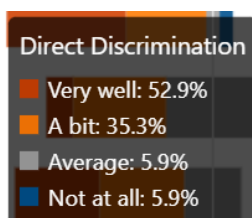
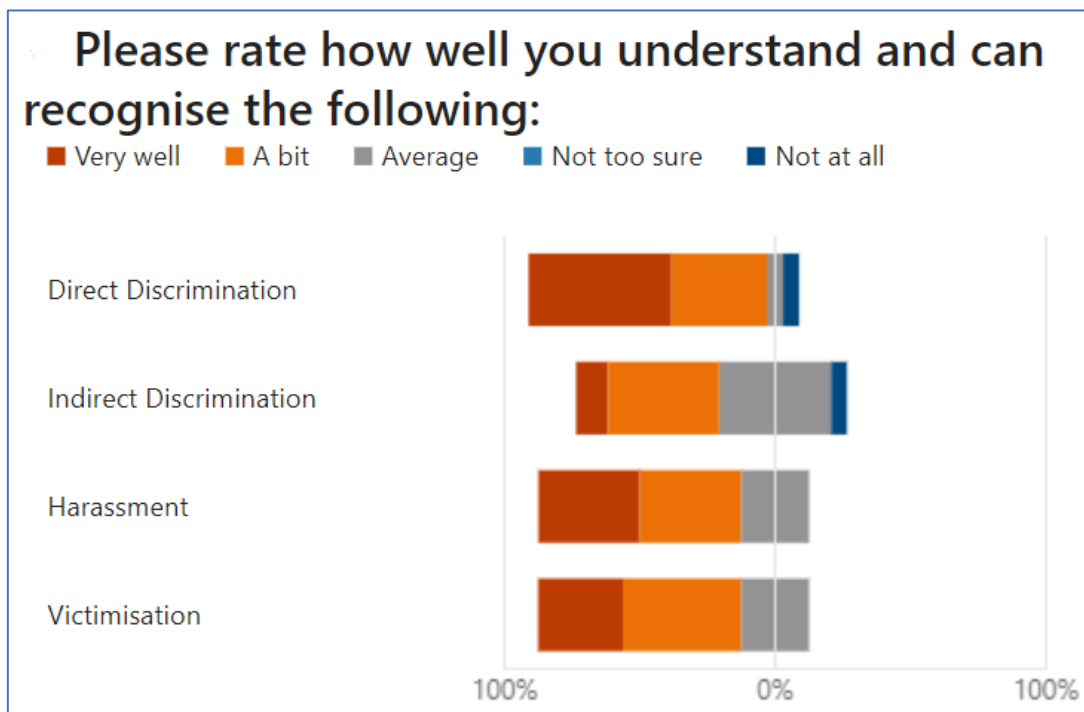
30% of respondents were unsure of the policy in place (6% did not think it existed). Overall knowledge of the existing policy was rated as **2.2** (out of 5).



- Recommendation is to implement a simple but shared training in Equality and Diversity for the whole team as part on the induction process, or in follow-up refresher courses. This can help create a shared understanding about reasonable adjustments or taking positive action to improve access for service users, as well as Equal Opportunities for employees.

3) Core knowledge about the protections of the Equality Act 2010:

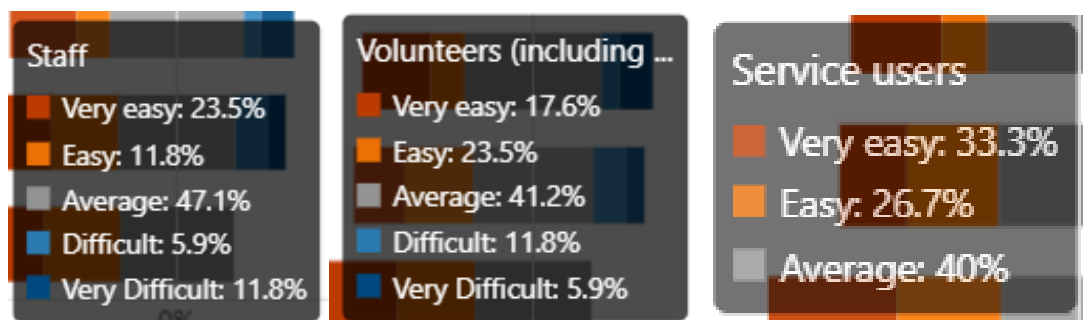
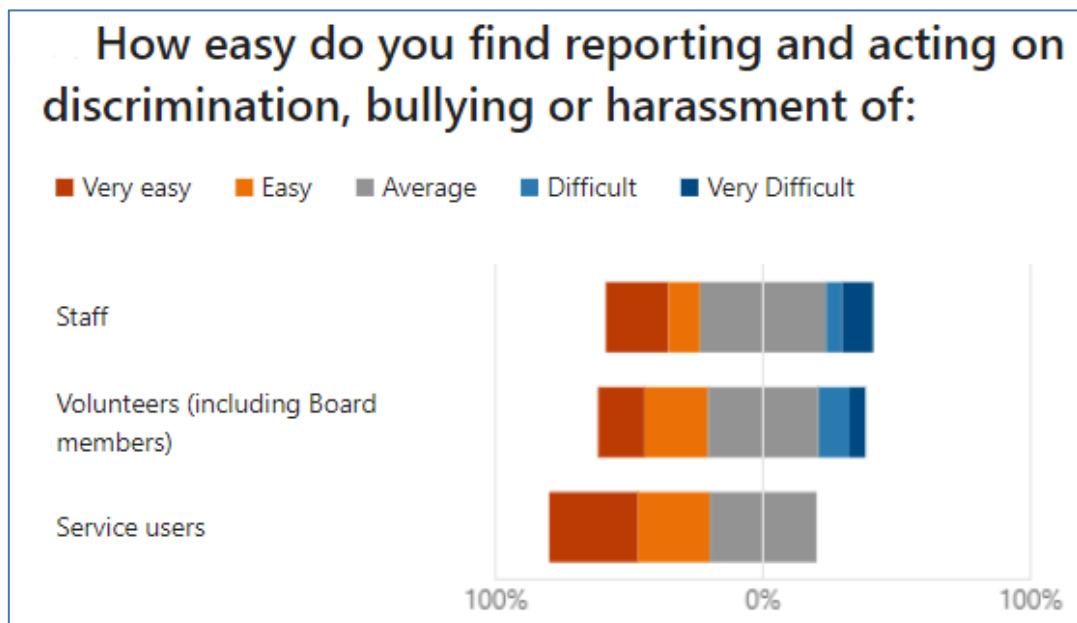
Most respondents say they can recognise Direct Discrimination (52.9%) very well, but only 11.8% said they could recognise Indirect Discrimination to the same level. Recognition and understanding of Harassment and Victimisation were more evenly distributed.



- As above, the recommendation is to implement a refresh in Equality Act 2010 training, with more focus on inclusive policy and practice.

4) **Reporting and acting on prohibited behaviours for staff, volunteers and service users** (*particularly agency concerning discrimination, bullying or harassment*)

Most respondents rated the process as Average (47.1% for staff, 41.2% for Volunteers, and 40% for Service Users). 11.8% found the process Very Difficult for staff.

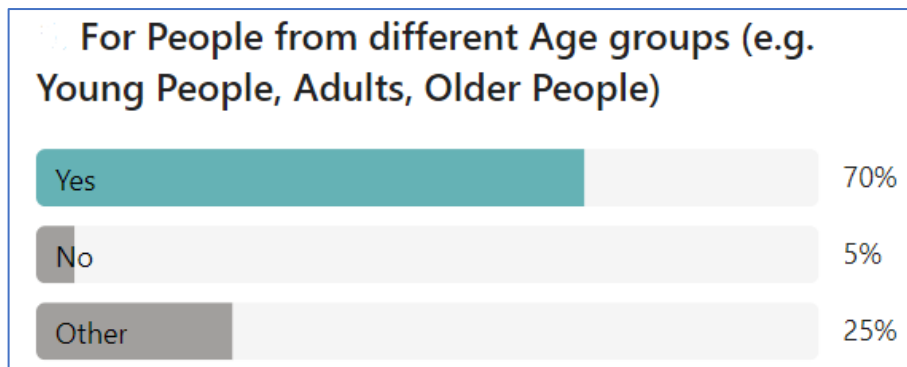


- The recommendation is to make the reporting process simpler and more accessible, e.g. through providing a simple guide or process tree on how to report and what steps take place following a report.

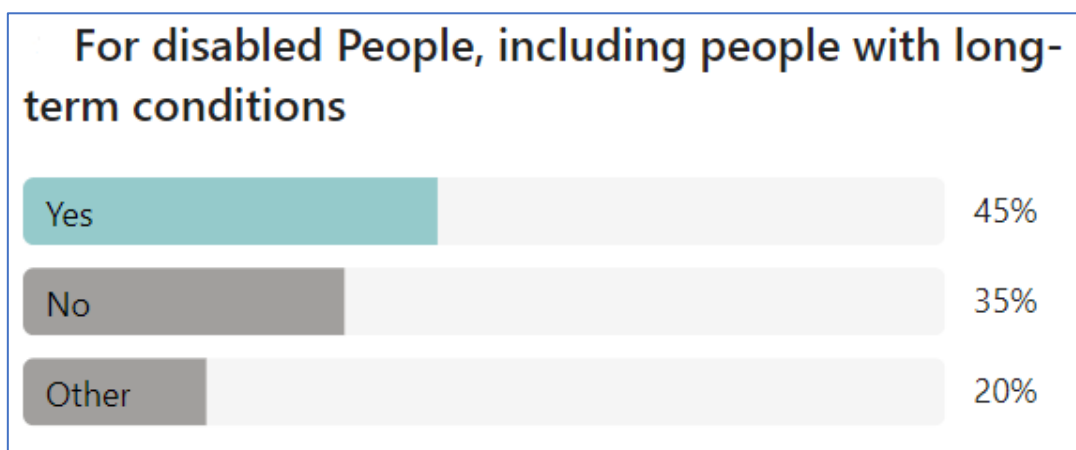
Section 2: Breakdown of EDI practices and resource use for Protected Characteristics groups

5) Knowledge of use of resources or plans for supporting service users from specific protected characteristics.

- **Age:** Overall, **95%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **25%** named a specific resource (RCS and young people mainly)



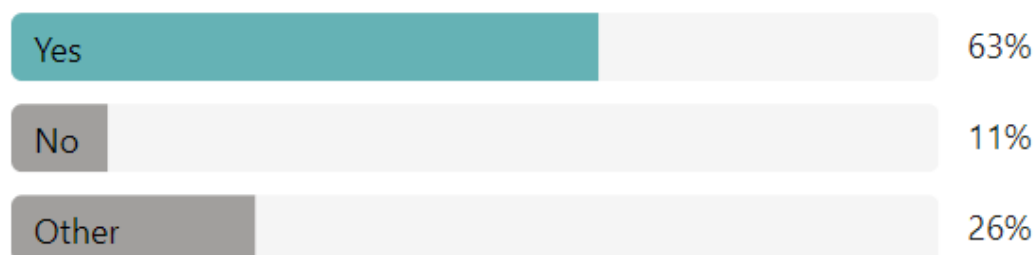
- **Disability:** Overall, **65%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan for disabled people, and **25%** referred to a specific resource
 - Suggestions include Easy Read leaflets, accessibility of buildings or alternate locations



- **Gender Reassignment:** Overall, **89%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan for disabled people, and **26%** referred to a specific resource



For people who are trans (e.g. Trans Men, Trans Women)



- Provision such as gender-neutral toilets and service leaflet accessibility referred as positive examples of work

- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Overall, **95%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **17%** referred to a specific resource

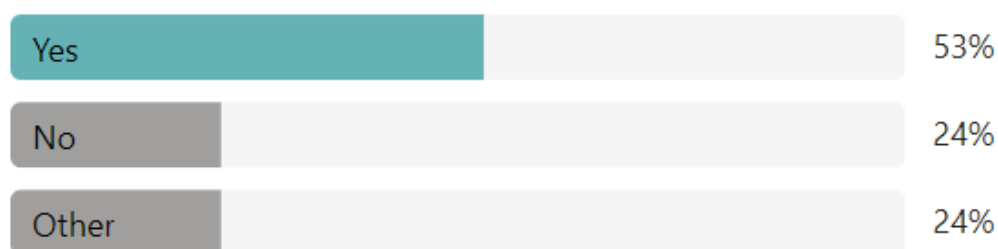


- Provision relationship based resources and RCS referred to specific resources in use

- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Overall, **77%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **24%** referred to a specific resource

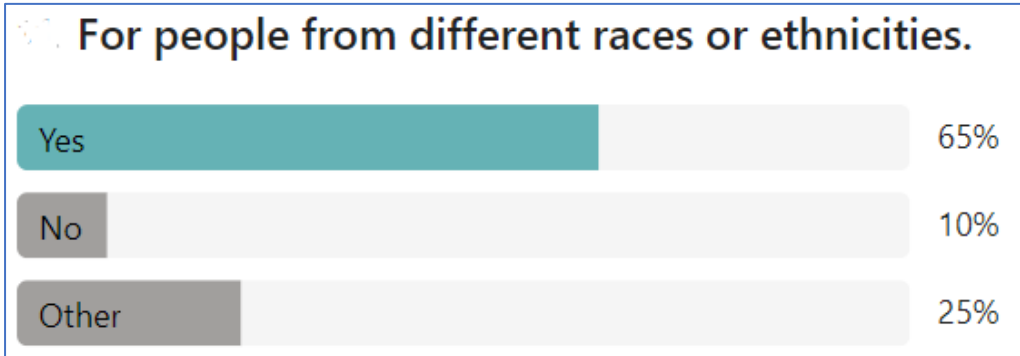


For people who are pregnant, or on maternity/paternity leave.



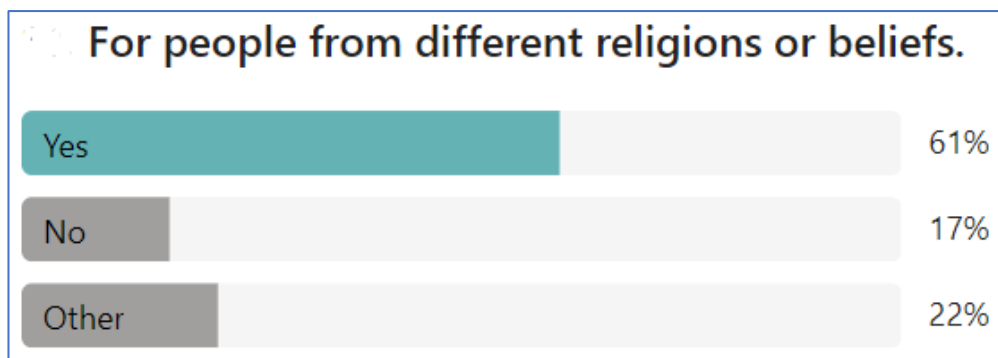
- Pregnancy risk assessment and breastfeeding private room referred to as practices and resources

- **Race:** Overall, **90%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **24%** referred to a specific resource



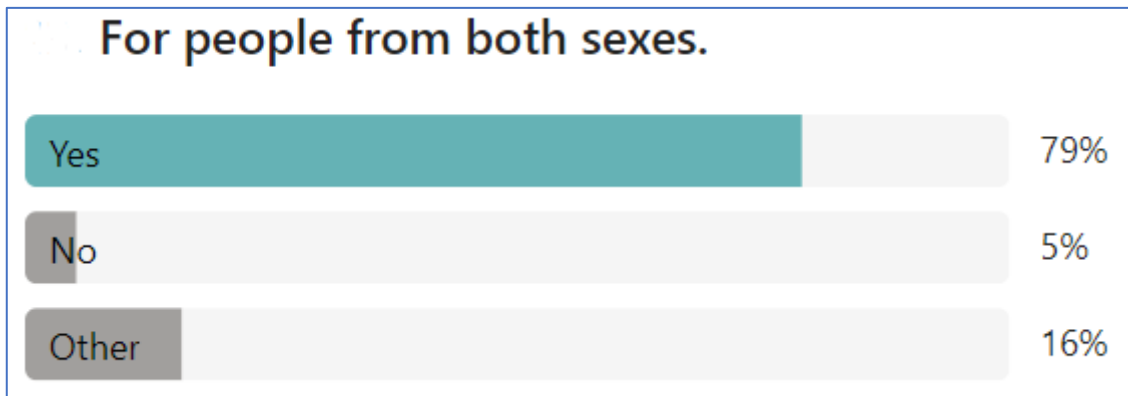
- Language accessibility referred to as main example (e.g. website using google translate, leaflets can be viewed in all languages, translator can be arranged via rape crisis)

- **Religion:** Overall, **83%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **22%** referred to a specific resource



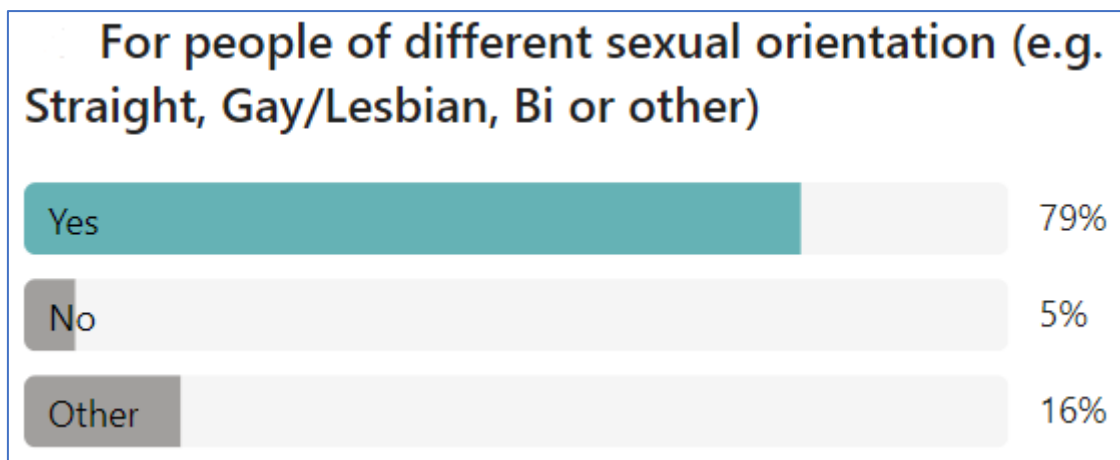
- Language accessibility referred to as main example (e.g. website using google translate, leaflets can be viewed in all languages, translator can be arranged via rape crisis)
- Across both Race and Religion suggestions were that more could be done in terms of creating shared resources

- **Sex:** Overall, **95%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **16%** referred to a specific resource



- Inclusion of service for all sexes, gender neutral toilets and giving service users the choice of contacting a male or female support worker referred to as positive practices and resources in place.

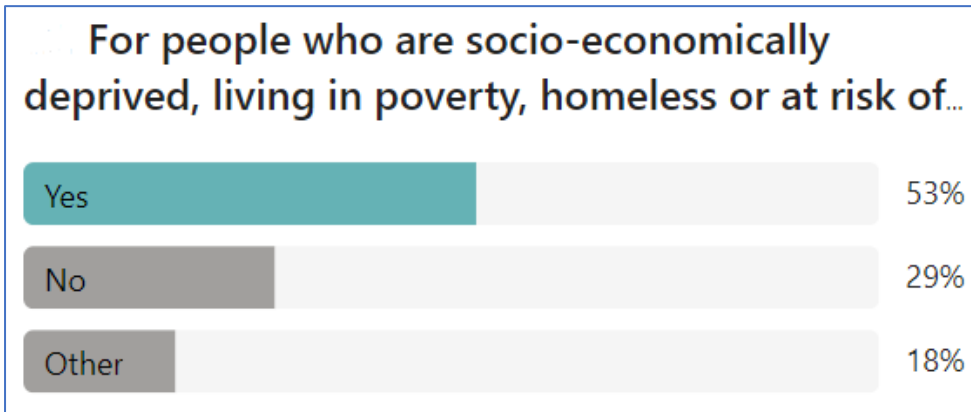
- **Sexual Orientation:** Overall, **95%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **16%** referred to a specific resource



- Resources referred to are created following own staff research, in response to specific service users. Suggestion is to create an organisation-wide and recognised resource base for working with various equality groups

6) **Resources for service users experiencing socio-economic deprivation, people living in poverty or at risk of homelessness:**

Overall, **71%** of respondents said they knew of a resource or used a plan, and **18%** referred to a specific resource*

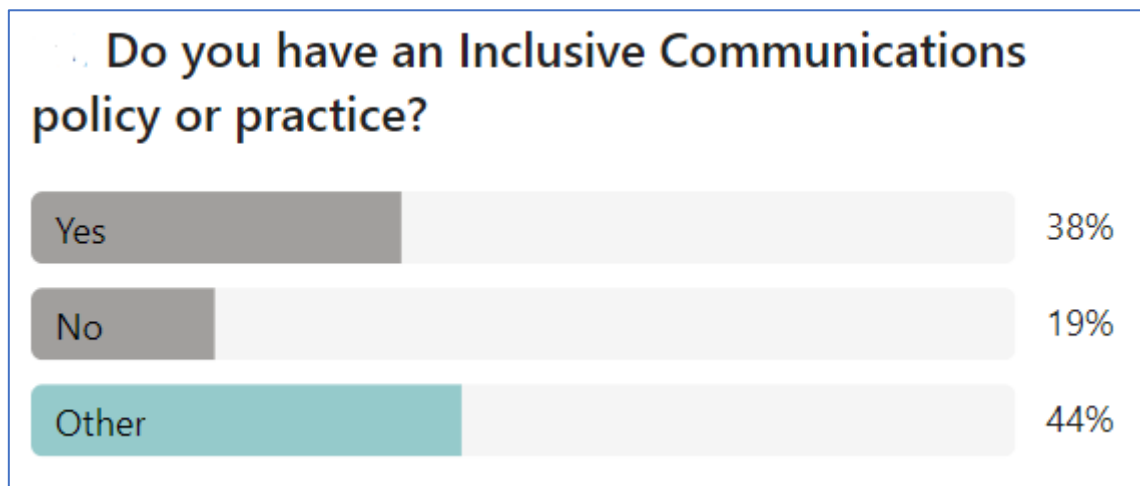


- Resources referred were external, i.e. signposting to other organisation. Suggestion is for an internal policy or practice for helping service users with limited access to resources access the service.

Section 3: Inclusion/Communication specific policies and reasonable adjustment practices

7) Inclusive Communications

38% of respondents said there was a policy and practice for inclusive communication. **44%** of respondents (under 'Other'), were not clear what practice was in place.



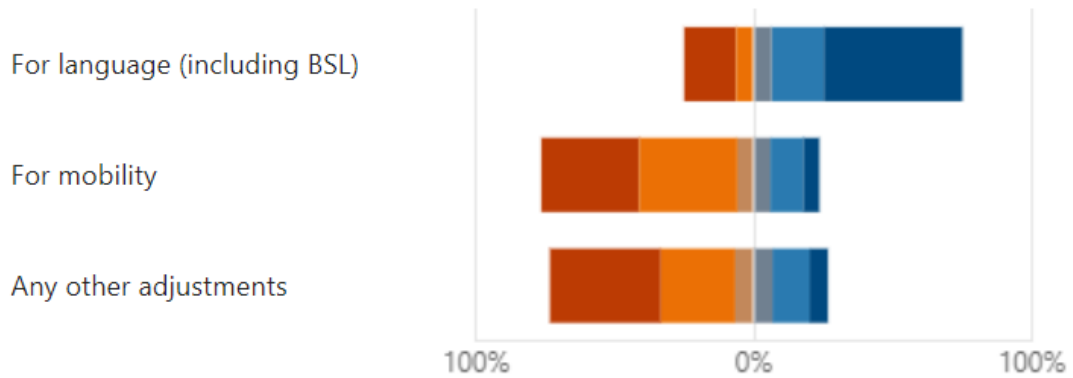
- The key recommendation is to develop a joined up an inclusive communications policy in tandem with the overall Equality and Diversity policy for the organisation to provide clarity for the staff team and improve access to a wide range of potential services users (particularly people with disability/communication barriers, language barriers)

8) Reasonable Adjustments (particularly for language barriers, mobility and other requested adjustments)

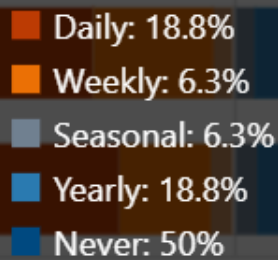
- 50% of respondents never make adjustments for language (NB: this might reflect not needing to as most service users are accessing the service in English), and 18.8% yearly.
- 70% make mobility adjustments either daily or weekly.
- 40% make daily 'other' adjustments

How often do you put in place reasonable adjustments to help service users access your...

■ Daily
 ■ Weekly
 ■ Monthly
 ■ Seasonal
 ■ Yearly
 ■ Never



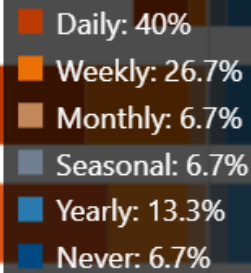
For language (includin...



For mobility



Any other adjustments



Section 4: Responses and direct suggestions for improvement

The responses below are 'as is', they have been thematically grouped to help create a basic equality action plan to improve EDI practices at FRASAC. Based only on participant responses, key suggestions are:

- 1) Develop EDI practice as a natural extension of person-centred approach**
- 2) Improve accessibility, or agree workarounds to address inaccessibility of premises**
- 3) Create opportunities to increase equality awareness / lived experience.**
- 4) Create an internal knowledge bank of inclusion resources / links etc**
- 5) Create a priority outreach programme of engagement with equality groups (e.g. disabled people, minority ethnic people, people experiencing poverty)**
- 6) Develop inclusive communications**

Developing EDI practice as a natural extension of person-centred approach

- *I consider the clients needs i.e. I have arranged to meet someone with a disability at a venue which doesn't have stairs. I think the organisation has become more diverse in our employment and volunteers which offers clients the ability to meet with someone that speaks their language. I have worked with a client who was deaf and we agreed that I would ensure I was always facing her during sessions.*
- *Depending on client needs. I am always on the look out for groups or activities or places that can help clients. I have suggested previously to reach out to other ethnic groups who may not know who we are and we can offer colleagues who can speak different languages.*
- *Ensure that I have offered all options to clients regarding venues, accessibility and moving onto teams if nothing else is possible. researching other agencies and partnership working, so that if we're not the best service for that user, for a variety of different reasons, I can signpost to where would be.*
- *I look at every person individually and assess their needs. I would consider what adjustments were needed and put them in place as best I could to meet their needs therefore allowing them to access their support.*
- *I would take into account anything a client said or did and try to make the service as open to them as possible.*
- *Provide equal opportunity to access support service - discuss any barriers to support with client and also combine with knowledge of marginalised groups*

Accessibility / Inaccessibility of premises

- *I don't have much option but to follow the St Andrews policy in place, which I think is pretty good when it comes to equalities. I make my room as welcoming as possible and welcome each student individually and ask if there is anything they need to help them.*
- *Our offices are not accessible to those with mobility problems, they are also not easy to find (signage on door is small, to protect dignity and privacy of service users) Staff with mobility problems cannot access our offices. No reasonable adjustments could be made if someone was to become disabled with mobility problems - working from home for client work is not an option, and they would not be able to access the office. "*
- *Accessibility is a big factor, both offices are currently not accessible for wheelchair users or clients with mobility issues.*
- *This increases the need for outreach venues within a large team, everybody needing the space potentially at the same time.*
- *Request a building where it is easily seen and accessible*
- *Be more flexible with appointments*

Improve equality awareness within team

- *Access training in different backgrounds of marginalised groups and how to engage them in service to support*
- *Could try to be more active community-wise. To know when different religious celebrations are taking place for example.*
- *I would love to go to services specialized to support people with different barriers and ask them how we can work together and what we could do to get more referrals from their services. For example, we support men, and BME men may not have many places to go. If Shakti already has the knowledge and has earned the trust of the BME community in the area they could refer men, as it is my understanding they do not support men survivors yet. We could learn from them and take their feedback on how to make the service more accessible to BME men survivors. Of course not just learning in an empty way which is only beneficial to us but on a good partnership that recognizes they are the experts in the topic. We could have a project or campaign together. This can be done with LGBT charities like the Hive as well.*
- *We could encourage staff to take more trainings for CPD., and increase our network with other rape crisis centres and other charities.*

Create an internal knowledge bank

- *"Inform staff what tools are in place for support. Eg, access to translators for staff to work with clients that English is not their native language and speaking in English is a barrier. How to access the language line, leaflets in different languages, etc. Not all staff/volunteers know how to access these resources or that it can be done. We should all know where people can report hate crime and what a third reporting center is, and where they are in*

Fife.

- *Personally - train in different areas of inclusion e.g. disability. include question on first evaluation with service users "how can FRASAC make your experience with us more inclusive?"*

Outreach / links with equality groups

- *We use the church next to Fife College for training sometimes (we rent rooms, but we do not necessarily have a relationship with the church). It would be good to know if we could use a mosque or if Shakti knows/have relationships with mosques where we could also rent out a room and even leave some leaflets as well.*
- *More information is needed for staff regarding trans inclusion. More information about how to reach that area of the population and how to support them. People need to be aware of the biases and how the political environment is impacting trans people. Being able to understand privileges and intersectionality and how this impact trans clients.*
- *Gain further knowledge of other orgs to signpost, as we might not be right organisation for that group. "*
- *Making ourselves known in hard to reach communities- be seen and be trusted within communities.*
- *I would like us to be more inclusive for ethnic minorities. We could reach more people by: working in collaboration with other agencies, through social media. There are a lot of people from ethnic minority groups within Fife who doesn't seem to be choosing our service. I think we should be more active to show them that we are welcoming them.*
- *I think we should be more proactive in reaching out to minority groups, either religious or ethnic to make sure they know they are welcome at Frasac.*

Support people access the services by addressing barriers of low-income / limited access to childcare / experiencing chaotic situations

- *We could try to access financial resources to support people with child support needs, it is a big barrier for volunteers and clients. There are many cancelations due to people needing child support.*
- *Understanding the impact of poverty and cost of living on clients and how this can impact their availability to travel or negotiate times with other appointments.*
- *Offer group work/ drop in sessions for those who can't commit to weekly support perhaps due to chaotic lifestyle/substance use."*

Develop inclusive communication (including website components)

- *On our website, we have information for ""female survivor"", ""male survivor"", ""LGBT+ survivor"", ""young people"" and ""partners/family /friends"". We should also have information for people living with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. We could have one option saying ""inclusion"" and then be able to select different info.*

- *On our website, we can have a page where we share things we are putting in place for inclusion, say we have access to language line/translators, have been trained, support workers/volunteers who speak different languages, etc.*
- *"We have never had to find a translator for a service user since I started (but I am very new!) I think this needs to be advertised that this is an option - as it may prevent people from accessing our services. We are predominantly a white female work force, we do have some staff from different races who speak different languages (Chinese, Polish, Mexican) and also volunteers, plus 2 new male volunteers. Staff and volunteers are from all ages. All this could be highlighted more on our social media. Utilise social media more with people of all backgrounds; advertise our services in more areas of deprivation and different communities. When recruiting volunteers and staff, utilise other platforms to encourage applications from different backgrounds.*
- *Children and Young People- the leaflets may hold too much information for them to process and understand, a child friendly version.*
- *I can ensure that when I am creating social media posts/newsletters that i include images of all races and ethnicities. I could also raise awareness for religious dates that are not already highlighted.*
- *Improving forward facing materials - more accessible through visibility in community - create more equal opportunities for people to access our service*

[For more information please contact us at:](#)

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