Unconscious Bias

We all have biases, both conscious and unconscious which are formed from the environments in which we grew up and the environments we find ourselves in on a daily basis. They are also shaped and changed by people we know, the places we have visited and our memories throughout our lives.

A bias is a thought or feeling that we have about individuals or groups of individuals and can be both positive and negative. Our biases influence our day to day decision making and how we behave towards a person or group of people. We all hold natural biases and we have natural ‘people preferences’. However, our unconscious bias can override rational decision making and logical thinking. Unconscious bias influences how we make judgments and develop prejudice, including how the influences enable us to categorise people and groups of people.

It is important that we are aware of our biases and that we confront our unconscious bias. If we don’t, we run the risk of discriminating against individuals or groups of individuals and making decisions based on what we have always thought, rather than logically thinking through our decision making.

We should always challenge ourselves on why and how we reach decisions. Working with vulnerable children and families or recruiting new members of staff, it is essential that Action for Children staff are aware of their unconscious bias. Not being aware of your unconscious bias can often lead to errors in judgment and even stereotyping and discrimination.

In order to achieve a diverse organisation that is reflective of our communities across the UK, we must challenge our unconscious bias and understand how biases can impact on other people.

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