

EQUALITY,
DIVERSITY &
INCLUSION

POLICY



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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Policy Document Information	
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1. Policy Statement

Help & Care is committed to working in a way that actively values difference and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences bring valuable insights and enhance the way we work.

This document set out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion for the services we provide and the commitment to and for the people who work with and for us, including volunteers. Different people may also need different things from our services and workplace that we need to understand, consider and address. 'Social Justice' and 'Personal', two of our organisational values, provide the cornerstones to our approach.

2. Introduction

Help & Care aims to be an inclusive organisation, pro active in tackling and eliminating discrimination.



We believe people should be

- **treated well**
- **able to have control of their lives**
- **helped to be safe.**

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin)
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

These are people's protected characteristics.

Help & Care will also treat people fairly with regards to occupation, education, employment status, caring responsibilities, number of hours worked, membership or non-membership of a trade union or spent convictions. No one should be treated less favourably or experience discrimination because of who they are.

We must try to:

- Prevent unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunities
- Encourage good relationships between different groups of people.

3. How will we do this?

Everyone who works for and with Help & Care will be expected to consider how they do this in their everyday work. This includes outside of the workplace where it relates to your work and volunteering role (e.g. at meetings, social events and social interactions with colleagues) or may impact on the organisation's reputation. For example, expressing views on social media contrary to the commitments expressed in this document that could be linked to Help & Care.

We commit to fulfilling both the letter and the spirit of our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any subsequent legislation relating to equality.



“A decent quality of life where people can live with dignity and respect is a basic human right for millions today and millions more in the future, only effective care and support has the power to translate that right from an aspiration into reality. (Equality and Human Rights Commission - EHRC)”

3.1 As a provider of services, we will:

- Treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Provide our written information in an accessible way, that uses plain language and follows the Accessible Information Standard, including providing formats, such as large print, Easy Read, audio and other languages.
- Facilitate access to interpreting services.
- Use positive images that reflect all sectors of our local communities.
- Ask organisations we work and contract with about their commitments to equality and diversity to ensure they align with our own.
- Monitor the diversity profiles of those we help and support, so that we can identify groups and needs that are under-represented.
- Develop meaningful working relationships with user-led and representative organisations of people who have protected characteristics, in order to ensure that our services and practice are accessible and inclusive.
- Ask people from different backgrounds who use our services about their experiences and use this to inform how we develop.

3.2. As an employer we will:

- Maintain an inclusive culture where everyone can be valued for who they are, and their individual differences and contributions are recognised and valued.
- Foster a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of discrimination, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Facilitate an environment where individuals feel confident to raise issues, feedback and complain including to whistle-blow and provide support throughout.
- Take the opportunity to utilise the talent that is available in society using an inclusive approach to attracting and selecting candidates.
- Regularly review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that decisions on training, development and progression opportunities are available to all of the workforce and based on objective criteria.
- Commit to being a learning organisation about equality & inclusion, always ready to improve our practice and in doing so provide refresher training to all workforce members every two years as standard.
- Take positive and proactive steps to make our workplace and process accessible and inclusive for disabled employees and applicants.
- Collect, monitor and analyse the diversity of applicants and our workforce to ensure that we reflect the diverse communities we serve, and proactively seeking applications from under-represented groups.
- Make sure that our policies and procedures comply with employment and equality legislation.

3.3. Wherever possible, ensure meetings are accessible as an employer and provider

We will make sure when organising events, training venues and meetings that they are easy to access. We will ask people in advance if they have any special requirements, such as access, communication support or diet (if food and drink is made available).

When people attend meetings, we plan for emergency evacuations, including how best to evacuate disabled attendees.

When food and drink is made available, special diets must be identified and catered for, different foods separated and clearly labelled.

Events, meetings, facilities and services must take account of people's ability to get to them. This includes public transport links, disabled bay parking, slopes or steps around the building. When setting a date or time commitments such as caring responsibilities and religious holidays or Sabbaths, including the implications of fasting should be considered. Including the provision of a quiet room (if possible) with no technology, where people can pray, contemplate, restore and rejuvenate.

4. Making it happen

Help & Care's Board will approve Help & Care's policy in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion for all aspects of its work and responsibilities. They will ensure, alongside the Chief Executive, that there are enough resources to support its implementation, and receive progress reports, recommending further actions where necessary. They will ensure their own behaviour reflects the organisation's commitment.

Chief Executive has overall responsibility for policy and procedures across the organisation and overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, including ensuring that legislative requirements are met and that action plans are developed. The Chief Executive reports to the Board on implementation of policy as part of performance reporting and leads by example in relation to good practice on equality, diversity and inclusion matters.

All Directors and Heads of Departments will be responsible for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is integral to their decision making, service delivery and employment policy and practice.

Line Managers are responsible for making sure their teams are aware of these commitments. They will provide support to achieve these and deliver good practice in their services and employment practices. They are also responsible for recruiting and employing people fairly.

All employees and volunteers must deliver our commitment by:

- Treating colleagues and clients fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Meeting specific needs of clients, the public and those we work with.
- Ensuring that services, facilities and information are accessible to all.
- Reporting and responding to complaints and reports of discrimination in a proactive way.



*"In the future we want people and organisations, and beyond to look to Help & Care as a model of **good practice** in addressing **equality, diversity and inclusion**".*

We define this as meaning:

- Actively considering equality and inclusion in very practical ways in all that we do so others can readily see the difference it makes.
- Leading from the top of the organisation and hold ourselves to account.
- Working with communities, partners and neighbourhoods to support equality and inclusion at local levels. Co-producing alongside people with lived experience of all forms of inequality and exclusion and taking what they tell us into account when we make decisions.
- Embedding equality analysis into policy and strategy development so decisions are made on the basis of the deepest possible understanding of their implications for equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Showing that we value diversity in how we speak and behave every day, not just when we are talking about equality.
- Being open and transparent about our progress and on equality, diversity and inclusion, sharing information with our partners and our communities, celebrating successes and learning from experience, including our mistakes.
- Have a workforce that is diverse in the widest possible sense and in which diversity of background and thought is valued.
- Celebrating a workplace where colleagues from different backgrounds work together harmoniously and productively and everyone feels valued.
- Using policies and practices that demonstrably enable colleagues to fulfil their potential within Help & Care.

5. Ask people about their experiences

We are committed to actively asking people about their experiences of our services and employment practice, including seldom heard groups, so everyone's voice can be heard. We want this involvement to be meaningful so will make sure there is enough time for people to give feedback and that it is done in an accessible way. We will also be honest about what we can and cannot achieve or do.

6. Dealing with complaints fairly

We have a Feedback Policy and process to encourage people to tell us what we are doing wrong so that we can try to put it right. We take complaints seriously. It is an opportunity to listen to those who use our services to see how services can be improved. People can tell us through this process if they believe they have been subject to unfair discrimination, prejudice or harassment and we will record and investigate this as such and take the appropriate action.

7. Support people to report hate crimes and incidents

We work with lots of different people in the community and some experience discrimination where they live and work. If this is brought to our attention, we will encourage and support people to report this to the police or via a third-party.

8. Report discrimination at work

Help & Care takes all claims of unfair or unlawful discrimination very seriously. Any employee or volunteer who feels they have been discriminated or witness others experiencing it must raise their concern or complaint via the Code of Conduct Policy and if appropriate the Grievance Procedure.

9. What happens if this policy is not followed?

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure.

Help & Care will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably by Help & Care as a result.

10. Implementation, monitoring and review.

This policy will be implemented through Help & Care's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, which will feed into Help & Care's strategic delivery board. Progress against actions and objectives will be reported, monitored and reviewed by the Leadership Team.

We will:

- ✓ Collect and analyse our workforce data to identify any under-representations and use the information to address any imbalance.
- ✓ Continue to work closely with workforce members in the development or review of relevant policies.
- ✓ Collect data about our clients with their consent. Data will be collected on the protected characteristics as appropriate. We may collect other information where this will help deliver our services or employment practices.
- ✓ Analyse data to identify trends, complaints and patterns in service delivery and employment. The analysis helps us see if we are applying our policies fairly or if they have any unintentional consequences. We are looking for under or over representation of different groups of people and use this information to take action where required.
- ✓ The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it reflects best practice and current legislation.

Appendix A

1. Glossary of Definitions

- 1.1 **Equality** – At Help & Care we consider that equality means breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities and access for all groups both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported by legislation.
- 1.2 **Diversity** – At Help & Care we consider diversity to mean celebrating difference and valuing everyone. Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for Help & Care too.
- 1.3 **Equal Opportunity** – is not about treating everyone the same. Instead it recognises that people have different needs and that some people experience discrimination and disadvantage over others.
- 1.4 **Inclusion** - Inclusion is ensuring that all individuals are included in a group or activity and are given the opportunity to participate if that is their wish. Diversity creates the potential for better decisions and innovation, but its inclusion of a diverse workforce that allows that potential to be realised. Examples of inclusion in the workplace are listed below, please note that the list is not exhaustive:
- **Using gender neutral language in documentation.**
 - **Prohibiting language that stereotypes others or may make others feel uncomfortable.**
 - **Encouraging all employees to express their ideas and give their thoughts on how Help & Care can become a more inclusive workplace.**
 - **Encouraging managers to look out for signs of non-inclusion (such as workforce members not participating fully) and to have conversations with individuals about what can be done to help them feel able to make their best contribution.**
 - **Conducting regular workforce surveys and exit interviews, so that Help & Care can continually learn.**
- 1.5. **Equality Duty** – Help & Care as a service provider who carries out public functions for Public Sector organisations i.e. Local Authority, we are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty. This policy sets out how we will meet our statutory obligations under this duty, which is defined with the Equality Act as:
- "A public authority, must in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –*
- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 1.6 **The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC):** is responsible for enforcing the provisions of the Act on behalf of anyone subject to the protected categories. They have power to monitor compliance with and enforce the Public Sector Equality Duty on behalf of Individuals or organisations.

The EHRC will assess complaints and if it is seen to be substantial, it can take up the complaint under its own procedures.

2. Under the Equalities Act there are four main types of discrimination:

- 2.1 **Direct Discrimination** occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.
- 2.2 **Indirect Discrimination** occurs when someone discriminates against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.
- 2.3 **Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, such as sexist jokes, racist banter or inappropriate comments related to disability. As well as being related to a protected characteristic, the conduct must have the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.
- 2.4 **Victimisation** is when an employee suffers what the law terms a 'detriment' - something that causes disadvantage, damage, harm or loss because of:
- making an allegation of discrimination, and/or
 - supporting a complaint of discrimination, and/or
 - giving evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination, and/or
 - raising a grievance concerning equality or discrimination, and/or
 - doing anything else for the purposes of (or in connection with) the Equality Act 2010, such as bringing an employment tribunal claim of discrimination.

Victimisation may also occur because an employee is suspected of doing one or more of these things, or because it is believed they may do so. A 'detriment', for example, might include the employee being labelled a 'troublemaker', being left out and ignored, being denied training or promotion, or being made redundant because they supported a discrimination claim.

3 Bullying and the Equality Act

Bullying and harassment is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.

Examples of bullying or harassing behaviour include:

- spreading malicious rumours
- unfair treatment
- picking on or regularly undermining someone
- denying someone's training or promotion opportunities

Bullying itself is not against the law but harassment is. This is when the unwanted behaviour is related to one of the protected characteristics.

Bullying involves belittling or intimidation of an individual and may arise from the misuse of managerial status or as a result of certain physical and mental characteristics. **Bullying may also constitute harassment under this policy and be unlawful under employment equality regulations.**

4 Unconscious bias

Unconscious bias can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion and performance management. It could be discriminatory when the unconscious bias relates to a protected characteristic.

Unconscious bias occurs when people favour others who look like them and/or share their values. For example a person may be drawn to someone with a similar educational background, from the same area, or who is the same colour or ethnicity as them.

Unconscious bias at work can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion, workforce development and recognition and can lead to a less diverse workforce. Employers can overlook talented workers and instead favour those who share their own characteristics or views.

Where unconscious bias is against a protected characteristic, it can be discriminatory. For example if during a recruitment process an employer ignores the skills and experience of a candidate who is a different race than them and appoints another candidate who is the same race, this could be discriminatory.