

Policies & Procedures

Equality and Diversity and Human Rights Policy v1.0

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and Procedures

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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy and Procedure

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Policy Statement

VCare Consultancy Services Limited is committed to promoting equality, diversity and human rights (EDHR) and recognises its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and The Human Rights Act 1998.

VCare Consultancy Services Limited is committed to creating a culture in which equality and diversity are promoted actively and unlawful discrimination is not tolerated. VCare Consultancy Services Limited recognises that the experiences and needs of every individual are unique and strives to respect and value the diversity of its service users and employees.

Service users

Service users of VCare Consultancy Services Limited have a right to be treated fairly. They will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Service users can expect to be treated with dignity and respect.

Employees

VCare Consultancy Services Limited's employees can expect to work in an environment where diversity is valued, and equality of opportunity is promoted. Employees have a right to be treated fairly in recruitment and career progression.

As an equal opportunities' employer, VCare Consultancy Services Limited will promote equality with due regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The management of Equality and Diversity is important to VCare Consultancy Services Limited as it will help to:

- ensure that the services we provide are accessible to all people
- actively promote equality.
- deliver person-centered care.
- ensure employees, and service users are free from unlawful discrimination
- develop services which best meets the needs of our diverse communities
- eliminate from our services, policies and decision making, any adverse impact on the promotion of equality and inclusion for our service users and employees
- promote the reputation of the business.

Scope

This policy and the procedures apply to employees, contractors, agency and temporary workers, suppliers, service users and carers, and anyone else with whom we come in to contact with during the course of our work.

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Definitions

Equality - Equality is not about treating everyone the same. It recognises that:

- everyone has individual needs and the right to have those needs respected
- inequality exists and that unlawful discrimination needs to be tackled
- company services and employment should be accessible to all
- it is about treating people fairly where everyone can participate and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Diversity - Diversity is about respecting and valuing individual difference. It recognises that:

- a diverse approach aims to recognise, value and manage differences to enable all service users and employees to contribute and realise their full potential
- diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences in order to make the company a better working environment and to ensure that we provide an excellent service for all service users.

Inclusion - is about embracing people regardless of their characteristics and ensuring equality of opportunity and removal of discrimination.

Procedures

No individual will be less favourably treated, either directly or indirectly, as a result of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity.

These are known as protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

Discrimination on the basis of a work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is justifiable, will also not be tolerated.

All Employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability alone.

Reasonable Adjustments

VCare Consultancy Services Limited will make the following reasonable adjustments to ensure that that service users with a disability can access and use services on an equal basis to others:

- offer longer visit or appointment times to those who require it
- offer face to face appointments instead of remote initial care assessments
- ensure visiting times and appointments are available at different times of the day, so if a service user has a need that makes a certain time of day easier for them, this can be accommodated
- supply information in simple ways with pictures to support where necessary

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- provide or signpost service user's to interpretation services.
- additional individualised adjustments may be made when identified from an individualised service user consultation

VCare Consultancy Services Limited will make every reasonable effort to meet people's preferences.

Accessible Information Standard

As VCare Consultancy Services Limited has best endeavors to provide which is funded by the NHS/publicly funded, the Accessible Information Standard applies. VCare Consultancy Services Limited recognises the needs of people who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have a learning disability and will provide material in alternative formats as required.

VCare Consultancy Services Limited will follow the five steps to meet the Accessible Information Standard and ensure that people who have a disability or sensory loss are to get information in a way they can access and understand.

VCare Consultancy Services Limited will follow the **Five Basic Steps:**

- Ask - Identify / find out if an individual has any communication /information needs relating to a disability or sensory loss and if so, what they are.
- Record - Record those needs in a clear, unmistakable and standardised way in electronic and / or paper-based record / administrative systems / documents.
- Alert/flag/highlight - Ensure that recorded needs are 'highly visible' whenever the individual's record is accessed, and prompt for action
- Share - Include information about individuals' Information / communication needs as part of existing data sharing processes (and in line with existing information governance frameworks).
- Act - Take steps to ensure that individuals receive information which they can access and understand and receive communication support if they need it.

Use of technology

VCare Consultancy Services Limited's uses an innovative Digital Care Management Sofware Solutions for its clients and service users. Carebeans has been tested and proven and provides advance functionalities like care planning, supported living software, domiciliary care software, and staff management software.

Service users will be advised on adjusting their individual technology to meet their individual needs as per their technology provider for example changing the screen / sound format on their tablet/phone, setting voice recognition or setting the devise to read aloud - https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/device-accessibility/

Prohibited Conduct

VCare Consultancy Services Limited will actively eliminate and avoid unlawful discrimination, including direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, associative discrimination, perceptive discrimination, harassment, victimisation, disability-related less favourable treatment, failure to comply with a duty to make reasonable adjustments and social exclusion.

Direct discrimination - means treating someone less favourably compared to others because they have certain protected characteristics or:

- because they are thought to have a protected characteristics (perception) and

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- are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic (association).

Indirect Discrimination - can occur when you have a rule or policy that applies to everyone but disadvantages a person with a particular protected characteristic.

Harassment - unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of people in the workplace. It may be related to any personal characteristic of the individual and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It is difficult to categorise all forms of harassment, but examples of some more easily recognisable forms of harassment are covered in more detail in the Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure.

Victimisation - happens when a person is treated less favourably because they complain about discrimination or they witness it and give evidence about it.

Due Regard - The Equality Act 2010 requires us to pay 'Due Regard', when considering the effects on different groups protected from discrimination (protected characteristics).

No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated. If you believe that you may have suffered discrimination because of any of the above protected characteristics, you should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of attempted informal resolution by discussion in the first instance with your line manager or another colleague in a relevant position of seniority. You may decide in the alternative to raise the matter through the Bullying and Harassment or Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the appropriate procedure. VCare Consultancy Services Limited will ensure that individuals who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. However, false allegations of a breach of this policy which are found to have been made in bad faith will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A person found to have breached this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Employees may also be personally liable for any acts of discrimination prohibited by this policy that they commit, meaning that they can be sued by the victim.

Monitoring

This policy will be monitored as part of the monthly Leadership Team meeting and on an individual 1:1 basis with Employees.

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy and procedure should be inherent in every other policy and procedure within VCare Consultancy Services Limited.

- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure

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Legislation and Guidance

Equality Act 2010

The Human Rights Act 1988

ACAS resources: https://www.acas.org.uk/search?keys=equality+and+diversity

Accessible Information Standard https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/accessibleinfo/