

ExtraCare Policy Statement

REFERENCE

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

MANAGEMENT 40b

MAIN GOAL: In line with the Trust's Strategy, the aim of this Equality and Diversity Policy is to promote equal opportunity, encourage and value diversity and prevent unlawful discrimination within ExtraCare.

Discrimination

Discrimination is unlawful when it takes place on one of the following grounds (the 'protected characteristics'):

- age
- disability
- gender re-assignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

Discrimination can take a number of forms:

- Direct discrimination is when someone is treated worse than someone else just because of a protected characteristic. *For example, it would be direct discrimination if a manager excludes an employee from a training course just because she is gay.*
- It is also direct discrimination when someone is treated worse than someone else because they associate with someone with a protected characteristic or because they are perceived to have a protected characteristic. *For example, it would be direct discrimination if an employee ostracised a colleague because the colleague has a gay flatmate or because he thinks the colleague is gay.*
- Indirect discrimination is when an apparently neutral practice or requirement disproportionately disadvantages one group and cannot be justified by the needs of the business. *For example, imposing a requirement that job applicants must speak fluent English disproportionately disadvantages non-English groups and would be unlawful unless it could be justified on genuine business grounds.*
- It is also discrimination when a person who experiences disability is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability and this cannot be justified by the needs of the business or when the business fails to make reasonable adjustments for a person who experiences disability.

Aims

At ExtraCare we will endeavour to achieve equality of opportunity in relation to all protected characteristics and embrace the diversity they bring within our workforce and our resident and volunteer populations. We will work to dispel discrimination against, and the harassment of, employees, residents or volunteers who have any protected characteristic.

In terms of;

Race, we will;

- Promote equality for individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic communities within the organisation and work to develop diversity and access to all services.

We will achieve this by:

- Identifying the ethnic mix of the local catchment area when developing a new village and tailoring services accordingly.
- Improving the access of Black and Minority Ethnic communities to new housing opportunities through being sensitive to their needs in respect of location, design, facilities, services and mix of development projects.
- Ensuring that the care, housing and associated needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities are fully

researched.

- Preventing discrimination (direct or indirect) in the allocation of care, housing and services through improved access and operating within a framework which recognises diversity.
- Managing the provision of care support and housing services by being sensitive to the specific needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities, encouraging inclusion and by taking action to eliminate harassment and anti-social behaviour.
- Ensuring that the levels of Black and Minority Ethnic people in the workforce are reflective of their local community.

Sex and Gender Reassignment, we will;

- Create an environment where people are free from discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender or gender reassignment status.

We will achieve this by:

- Striving to provide services which are relevant to all men and women's needs
- Responding appropriately to the needs of people who have told us that they have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment treatment.

Sexual orientation, we will;

- Recognise the discrimination that lesbian, gay and bisexual people sometimes face in their lives due to their sexuality and life choice and be committed to working to remove this discrimination, to enable them to feel safe to be open about their choices, if they choose to be so.

We will achieve this by:

- Working to produce effective and appropriate services which meet the needs of all service users irrespective of sexuality.
- Recognising that sexuality is not relevant to any post, and should not be seen as a criterion for determining an individual's suitability for a post

Disability, we will;

- Work towards eliminating disadvantage experienced by people who experience disability and discrimination on the grounds of disability. We recognise that people who experience disability are disadvantaged by an environment and by social attitudes which reflect the needs of people who do not experience disability and which, as such, fail to promote equality of access and opportunity for people who experience disability. We further recognise that the operation of our services can reduce this disadvantage. We therefore commit ourselves to making our services, facilities and resources equally accessible and useful to people who experience disability and those who do not.

We will achieve this by:

- Striving to provide services which are relevant to the needs of people who experience disability by actively involving those people in the design and evaluation of services.
- Seeking to ensure that all our services, documentation and other media are accessible and available to all people who experience disability
- Continuing to employ, whenever practicable, employees who become disabled during their employment and to assist in their re-training

Age, we will;

- Recognise that age discrimination can affect all groups, that age is no indicator of effectiveness in most work activities, that employment decisions should not be based on age alone and that services should be sensitive to the needs of all age groups.

We will achieve this by:

- Working to provide effective and appropriate services which meet the varying needs of our customers, no matter their age.

- Ensuring age-related criteria plays no part in our employment practices. Providing training on the basis of need, regardless of age.

Employment

Our objective is to create a working environment in which there is no unlawful discrimination and all decisions are based on merit.

Our approach to our employees

All employees have a duty not to discriminate against each other and not to help anyone else do so. We will not tolerate discrimination in our workforce.

Recruitment and selection

We aim to ensure that job requirements and job selection criteria are clear and based only what is required to get the job done effectively. We will avoid making stereotypical assumptions based on protected characteristics about who is able to do a particular job.

We aim to ensure that no job applicant is placed at a disadvantage by practices or requirements which disproportionately disadvantage protected groups and which are not justified by the demands of the job.

For all jobs, we will draw up a clear job description to ensure that we remain focussed on what the job involves and the skills, experience and qualifications which are relevant and necessary.

When recruiting and making selections, we will focus on whether someone has the relevant skills, qualities and experience to do the job.

Training and development

Such decisions will be made on the basis of merit. We believe all employees should have an equal opportunity to progress and develop.

Training needs and development opportunities will be identified through annual Development Reviews for all employees.

Positive action

For some specific recruitment and promotion exercises we may take positive action to address under-representation in our workforce by encouraging applications from people from certain underrepresented groups. For example, we may state on advertisements that we particularly welcome applications from certain groups, and we may target our advertising towards particular groups. However, we will ultimately make recruitment and promotion decisions on merit and not on the basis of protected characteristics.

Working conditions and terms of employment

We aim to ensure that our terms of employment, benefits, facilities and policies are fair, free from unlawful discrimination and promote a reasonable worklife balance.

We will ensure that decisions made under our disciplinary and attendance management policies are carried out fairly and without discrimination.

Employees

We will make every effort to make adjustments to accommodate employees who experience disability where possible and reasonable. If you think you may have a disability, you are encouraged to tell your manager about this so that we can explore what adjustments might be appropriate.

Equality and Diversity training

We will train those responsible for recruitment on understanding and avoiding discrimination and we will train all staff on equality and diversity to raise awareness.

Our relationships with residents, volunteers, visitors, partners, contractors

You must not discriminate against any of the above. Equally, we expect them not to discriminate against you.

Bullying and harassment

ExtraCare will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment of or by its staff, residents, or volunteers.

Harassment can take many forms and may be directed against men, women, black and minority ethnic people, people with disabilities, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals or transgender people. It may also be directed against people because of their age, religion, beliefs, status, or physical appearance. In fact harassment may occur against any individual or group which is perceived as "different" from a majority. In extreme cases, harassment may involve physical violence and abuse.

Whatever its cause, harassment is stressful for the recipient, unacceptable and must be dealt with. It is important to remember that in all cases, harassment is behaviour which is unwanted, is found objectionable and which causes offence. It results in the recipient feeling threatened, uncomfortable, humiliated and patronised.

What to do if you have been discriminated against

If you believe you may have been discriminated against, please tell us.

If you are an employee, you can speak informally with your manager or anyone in HR. If you want to make a more formal complaint, you are encouraged to raise the matter through our Grievance procedure. If you believe there has been any bullying or harassment then you should raise the matter through our Bullying and Harassment policy.

Residents or volunteers can speak informally with a member of staff. If they wish to make a more formal complaint, they can do so through our *Complaints Procedure*. *Staff should report any safeguarding issues in line with local procedures.*

Allegations of potential breaches of this policy will be treated seriously. Employees, residents or volunteers 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 our disciplinary procedure.

What will happen if you act in a discriminatory way?

If, after investigation, we decide that you have acted in breach of this policy you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Policy review

We will review our Equality and Diversity Policy on an annual basis.

AUTHOR AND PERSON RESPONSIBLE:	DATE OF ISSUE:	DATE OF REVIEW:
Human Resources Director	January 2011	January 2012

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