

# AMERCARE LTD Equality and Diversity Policy

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## Introduction

This policy statement sets out Amercare's vision and commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, including equality of access to those services that we provide. In serving our customers and in valuing the contribution of our workforce, we aim to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of those we come into contact with. This vision and commitment is implemented through Amercare's Equality Objectives.

We recognise that the UK is becoming an increasingly diverse community and we accept that discrimination is a major barrier to a fair and just society. We acknowledge that there are some people who are prevented from taking part fully in the life of our community for a variety of reasons. This may include unfair treatment and exclusion, on the basis of one or more of the following factors: age, race, sex, gender re-assignment, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or some other personal characteristic or circumstance. We recognise that discrimination affects people in complex ways and that other forms of discrimination exist that have not been specifically mentioned in this document.

## Our Commitment

Amercare commits itself to the general principles of fairness and equality. We seek to apply these principles by challenging and eliminating discrimination where it exists.

Central to these aims is our commitment towards our staff, our customers and all our business contacts.

## The Legal Framework

We accept our legal responsibilities in relation to equality, as set out by the Equality Act 2010.

The Act protects people from discrimination on the basis of 'protected characteristics':

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

In meeting the requirements of the Equality Act, Amercare will in all its decision making, policy setting and service delivery have due regard and ensure equalities is integrated into our day-to-day work and that we positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations.

## Discrimination

Discrimination occurs when a person or group of people are treated less favourably than others. For example, unfair treatment might present itself as racism, sexism or disability. Discrimination of this kind can be direct, indirect, intentional or unintentional, and can be enacted by individuals, groups or institutions.

We acknowledge that at an institutional level, prejudices can become embedded within organisations through policies, practices, procedures and criteria for decision making. This can result in the exclusion of some people in favour of others, leading to unequal treatment, inequitable distribution of opportunities, power and resources, which in turn could deprive some people of better life experiences.

At an individual level, a person may hold negative attitudes about other people or groups. These attitudes could result in inappropriate discriminatory behaviour or outcomes, which we consider to be unacceptable.

We endorse the Social Model of disability, which acknowledges that disability is the denial of opportunity to take part in mainstream activities because of physical or social barriers. The aim of the Social Model is the removal of barriers to the inclusion of disabled people in employment, access to goods, facilities, services and premises.

## Achieving Equality and Valuing Diversity

To achieve our equality and diversity aims we will:

- Implement Amercare's Equality Objectives
- Continuously review performance on our equality and diversity work
- Provide appropriate training and development in equality and diversity issues for staff
- Support our modern and diverse workforce, that is reflective of the community it serves

## Equality and Diversity in Service Provision

We will aim to:

- Provide appropriate, accessible and effective services to all our customers
- Challenge, review and monitor our services, working practices and resource allocations to ensure that they do not discriminate, and identify where improvements can be made
- Ensure that all employees understand what equality in service provision means
- Ensure that all service users have equal access to our Corporate Complaints Procedure

## Equality and Diversity in Procurement and Contracting

We will ensure that our procurement and contracting practices fulfil our current equality duties, and that they will implement the new corporate Equality Objectives by:

- Ensuring that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of our position on equality and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

- Making sure that our selection and tendering processes address and include equality considerations.
- Providing guidance for relevant staff in equality issues for procurement.

## Equality and Diversity at Work

We have a role to play in tackling inequality and discrimination. In order to ensure that equality underpins all aspects of our employment policy and practice, we will aim to:

- Eliminate unfair treatment and discrimination through human resource policies and activities
- Provide appropriate training and development opportunities to all staff
- Ensure that employees receive fair and equal treatment in relation to their employment, regardless of whether they are full time, part time or temporary
- Recognise that employees have the right to work in a supportive, safe and harassment-free environment. Any allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment will be dealt with through the normal disciplinary process
- Create an appropriate balance between work and home commitments, so that we maximise employment opportunities for all
- Ensure that we have in place an equal pay policy
- Wherever possible, make reasonable adjustments to enable the employment and redeployment of staff with disabilities
- Ensure employees are aware of their personal responsibility to follow and support this Equality and Diversity Policy

## Our Responsibilities

Within Amercare all staff have a part to play in challenging discrimination and in implementing this policy:

The Directors and Senior Managers are responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the equality and diversity agenda.

All staff have an individual responsibility for promoting and delivering equality in the workplace. This expectation will be communicated to all new staff via our induction processes.

## Monitoring and Measuring Progress

We will continuously review, monitor and evaluate all policies, procedures and practices, both in service delivery and employment, from an equality perspective, to ensure that they conform with this Policy, as well as legislative and other external requirements. Where we ask employees and service users to provide us with personal information, this will only be used to improve access to and the quality of the services we provide. In order to succeed in this, we require the co-operation and understanding of our staff and service users.

## How to Make a Complaint

We regard comments and complaints as an opportunity to examine the quality of our services, and to proactively address the issues that have been raised.

If a customer has a complaint against Amercare in respect of the services we provide, they can exercise their right to complain. This can include a complaint of a discriminatory nature.

If a member of staff feels that he or she has been discriminated against, or victimised/harassed by a colleague or service user, they should, in the first instance, contact their line manager or other senior manager.

Any allegations of this nature will be taken very seriously and investigated. Where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken against staff who have breached, ignored or abused Amercare's Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **Conclusion**

We believe that any organisation should reflect all the communities and people it serves in both employment and service delivery. By implementing this Policy, Amercare recognises its responsibilities within the community.