

Equality and diversity

Join Hands Care Ltd is committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity, challenging unfair treatment and avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and the provision of services. We view diversity as a strength to be valued for the benefit of the people we support and our employees.

We are committed to making sure current and potential people we support, employees, casual workers, agency workers, job applicants and volunteers will not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief, or because someone is married or is in a civil partnership.

This policy helps us put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure we do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

This applies to all staff, including employees, casual workers, agency workers and volunteers.

- It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment, employment on grounds of age, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief, or because someone is married or is a civil partner. These are known as the protected characteristics.
- It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in the provision of goods, facilities or services to customers on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics
- It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled person, to enable them to overcome the barriers caused by disability.
- Discrimination after employment is also unlawful, e.g., refusing to give a reference because of a protected characteristic or because someone has made a complaint of discrimination.
- Harassment or bullying is unlawful discrimination (see the Anti bullying and harassment policy).
- It is unlawful to victimise someone because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another in comparable circumstances, because of a protected characteristic. An example of direct sex discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she was pregnant.

Indirect discrimination is where a rule or practice is applied which disadvantages a larger proportion of the relevant group to which the individual belongs than to others, which cannot be justified, and which is to the individual's disadvantage. For example, requiring everyone to work full time unless there is a good reason, unrelated to sex, as

to why the job must be done on a full-time basis. This is because requiring everyone to work full time will normally negatively affect a higher proportion of women than men.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct related to one of the protected characteristics which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, or is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his or her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Third-party harassment happens when an employee is harassed by third parties (that means someone not employed by Join Hands Care Ltd, such as a person we support or an external contractor) and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is when arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Victimisation is when someone is treated less favourably than others because he or she has alleged unlawful discrimination or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint.

Associative discrimination is when an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is when an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

We will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Job descriptions and person specifications will be limited to those requirements needed to do the job effectively. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the job requirements, taking account of any reasonable adjustments required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions, except where necessary and justified.

We will monitor the demographics of the existing workforce and of job applicants (including promotion). We will consider and address any problems identified through the monitoring process.

We will not unlawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion, but we may use appropriate lawful methods, including positive action, to

address the under-representation of any group which is identified as being underrepresented in any types of job.

We will not discriminate against the people who use our services or others seeking to use facilities or services provided by us. We will provide services that cater for the

individual needs of the people who use them. We will not tolerate discrimination, inappropriate or offensive language or behaviour towards the people we support.

We will provide information to people who use our services in a way that they understand, including explaining the information in person if necessary.

We will monitor the use of the services that we provide, to ensure that they do not discriminate or exclude people.

We will not tolerate any form of discrimination by third parties. Employees should report any bullying or harassment by outside agencies, suppliers, visitors or others to their manager who will take appropriate action.

We will provide training in diversity and equal opportunities to all employees. Additional training will be provided to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

Every member of staff must help Join Hands Care Ltd meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination at work and in the provision of services.

We will regard breaches of this policy as misconduct which could lead to formal disciplinary action, possibly leading to dismissal. Employees can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Sometimes all of us behave in ways we wish we had not and cause offence unintentionally. In all working relationships there must be a level of acceptance of each other's genuine mistakes. When this happens a genuine apology and discussion can often repair a relationship with a colleague. All parties are encouraged to try to understand the other person's point of view, or the reasons for their behaviour - and accept genuine apologies combined with a willingness to learn from any mistakes.