



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY



Document Version	Issue Date
Version 1	18 th October 2018



CONTENTS

1.	UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES.....	4
2.	DEFINITIONS.....	4
3.	LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT	4
4.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	5
5.	GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY.....	6
6.	GRIEVANCES AND COMPLAINTS.....	6
7.	MONITORING AND MEASURING PROGRESS.....	7

1. Underlying Principles

Vivo Care Choices respects and values differences, and as a major employer and provider of services, recognises the importance of setting out a clear commitment to promoting fairness and tackling discrimination. Since the Company was created in 2013, the two main commitments have been:

- 1.1 **Employment** No employee or job applicant will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, trade union activity, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, social or economic status, political beliefs, or will be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.
- 1.2 **Service delivery** Vivo Care Choices, recognising its responsibilities as a provider of major services within the community, will ensure that its services are available equally to all, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, social or economic status or political beliefs, making sure that no one is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified.
- 1.3 These pledges are Vivo Care Choices' formal commitment to delivering fairness and removing the barriers that limit what people can do and can be. It is a promise that the company will work hard to respond to local challenges, to tackle prejudice and improve the life chances and opportunities of those who face discrimination and disadvantage.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Diversity is about understanding, recognising, respecting and valuing differences.
- 2.2 Equality is about managing differences so that everyone has equality of opportunity through a fair and consistent approach to the application of rules and policies. We recognise that sometimes this will mean treating people differently.

3. Legislative Context

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 was introduced to consolidate and strengthen previous anti-discrimination legislation. It covers the following nine protected characteristics:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 3.2 However, the company recognises that discrimination can occur outside of the strict definitions in the Equality Act, which is why the commitment in section 1 above is wider.

3.3 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (‘the ‘Public Sector Equality Duty’) places a general duty on the company and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

3.4 In meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty, Vivo Care Choices will, in its decision making, policy setting and service delivery, have due regard and will ensure equality is integrated into our work and that we positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fostering good relations.

4. Roles And Responsibilities

4.1 Vivo Care Choices as a service provider

- a. Provides appropriate, accessible and effective services to the whole community
- b. Provides clear and accessible information about services in a variety of formats and languages as appropriate
- c. Develops, reviews and monitors services to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate, and identify where improvements can be made
- d. Ensures that appropriate consultation and engagement methods are used to enable the community to have a say on the way we plan and deliver services

4.2 Vivo Care Choices as a commissioner of services

- a. Ensures that contractors, suppliers, volunteers and partners are aware of the company’s position on equality and diversity and understand their obligation to provide services that are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- b. Ensures that our contract monitoring processes are inclusive of equality considerations
- c. Ensures that when we purchase or commission services from organisations we are confident that these organisations respect equality and diversity and have in place an Equality and Diversity Policy that is at least as robust as ours
- d. Ensures that equality and diversity is built into our processes and procedures around procurement and commissioning
- e. Ensures that we work closely with commissioned services in joint training, awareness initiatives and events.

4.3 Vivo Care Choices as an employer

- a. Promotes equality of opportunity for all staff
- b. Makes reasonable adjustments to allow staff to fulfil their potential and take action, alongside staff groups and other workplace representatives where needed, to tackle inequality and promote diversity
- c. Protects and promotes the health, wellbeing and safety of all staff, including taking appropriate action to safeguard staff from discrimination from third parties
- d. Ensures our recruitment and selection processes are fair and do not discriminate against anyone
- e. Monitors our workforce composition regularly to identify any issues
- f. Enables, encourages and supports staff to report discrimination or harassment promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued
- g. Maintains a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and bullying on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics listed in section 3 above
- h. Facilitates staff to champion equality, diversity and inclusion
- i. Makes opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation

5. Governance And Accountability

- 5.1 All Board Members and employees have responsibility to abide by this policy.
- 5.2 Board Members are responsible for leading the equality and diversity agenda, providing oversight and scrutiny, and community leadership.
- 5.3 The Leadership Team is responsible for the overall management and strategic direction of the equality and diversity agenda.
- 5.4 Human Resources lead on equality and diversity issues in respect of employment.
- 5.5 All staff have individual responsibility for promoting and delivering equality in the workplace and in serving the community.

6. Grievances And Complaints

- 6.1 Vivo Care Choices takes seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities. Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and any appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.



6.2 All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment.

7. Monitoring And Measuring Progress

7.1 Vivo Care Choices is committed to measuring its performance in equality and diversity through independent assessment and accreditation. This includes the Disability Confident scheme.

7.3 The internal equality and diversity mechanisms outlined in paragraph 5, both officer and Board Member led, will monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

7.4 The Equality and Diversity Policy is fully supported by the Board, senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and employee representatives.