

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

City Care Southwest Ltd offers care and support services to adults over the age of 65 in their own homes. Our service is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in relation to the regulated activity “Personal Care” and in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and its associated regulations 2014.

Version Control

Date	New Version #	Made by	Changes/updates	Review Date
16/11/2023	V1.2023	Rhiannon		16/11/2024
28/03/2024	V1.2024	Rhiannon	Inclusion of regulated activity statement and admin footer	28/03/2025
03/07/2024	V2.2024	Rhiannon	Update to include requirements from CQC 20/05/2024. Definition of accessible information, reasonable adjustments and sharing of information.	03/07/2025

Statement and purpose of policy

City Care Southwest Ltd is committed to providing the highest quality care. It is our hope that all those who interact with our service feel welcomed, included, and celebrated for their individuality. Whether it be race, religion or beliefs, age, gender reassignment, disability, marriage or civil partnership, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, each person deserves to have their identity and individual needs recognised.

Promoting equality and diversity must be central to our operation, not only to meet our legal obligation but also to meet the needs of those who’s care has been entrusted to us and those who decide to work with us.

Scope and Definition

This policy contains guidance from legislation and relevant bodies that all staff must adhere to. This includes:

- The Health and Social Care Act 2008
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- The Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its code of practice
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998

Principles

City Care Southwest would like to provide our staff, clients and their families, and professionals with a framework within which to work against discrimination, whether direct or indirect and ensure that the culture and ethos of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embedded. To do this, we aim to:

- Provide excellent, high-quality care that is responsive to our client’s needs, wishes and preferences.
- Provide equally high-quality training and support to ensure staff can adequately respond to our client’s needs.
- Ensure that staff can work in an environment which promotes dignity and respect for all.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to intimidation, bullying and harassment.
- Take positive action to encourage under-represented groups to apply for posts or specific training.

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- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff, clients and their families, and professionals are recognised and valued.

Responsibilities

The Nominated Individual/Directors will:

- Review this policy annually, or sooner as required.
- Conduct quarterly service audits which include a review of the efficacy of this policy in practice.
- Stay up to date with legislation, guidance, and best practice in relation to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights.
- Undertake regular training as part of their continuing professional development.

The Registered Manager will:

- Implement this policy, ensuring that all staff read and understand it.
- Conduct bi-monthly service audits which include a review of the efficacy of this policy in practice.
- Undertake regular training as part of their continuing professional development.
- Stay up to date with legislation, guidance, and best practice in relation to Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights.
- Provide adequate training and supervision for all staff to support Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Foster a climate of 'openness, honesty, and awareness' to encourage feedback.
- Ensure all staff, clients and their families, and professionals are treated fairly, with kindness, respect and understanding.
- Ensure that all clients have plans that are representative of their individuality and support staff to meet their individual needs.
- Monitor our employment processes by age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and race and take action to address any inequalities that are apparent.

All staff will:

- Read and understand this policy and comply with its guidance and instruction.
- Attend regular, relevant training in Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights.
- Treat all staff, clients and their families, and professionals with kindness, respect and understanding.
- Follow guidance and advice detailed in the client's care plan.

Respectful Curiosity Approach

City Care Southwest has developed a model for respectful curiosity to improve understanding of diverse backgrounds. This approach is communicated to all staff and clients at the start of their journey with us.

The Respectful Curiosity Approach provides a framework for communication between two people in order to better understand their individuality, culture, diversity and life. It works on the basis that:

I can ask a question respectfully, and you can respectfully decline to answer.

The key to the successful implementation of this approach is that both parties feel able to have polite, friendly, open, and respectful conversations which improve relationships and care delivery. Individuals should

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- Know what a respectfully curious question is,
- Understand why the question may be important,
- Feel comfortable either answering or declining to answer.
- Not feel or be treated any differently following a question asked under this approach.

When seeking further understanding of a client's wishes, choices, preferences and life, staff will first discuss the approach with the client to assure them that they need not answer if they feel uncomfortable doing so and that there will be no hard feelings either way. Staff will explain that it would help them to understand a particular element of the client's life and if a client declines to answer, staff will immediately change the subject and reassure the client by continuing to provide their care and support as before.

Staff will be supported to understand how to identify when a client asks a respectfully curious question.

Where a client asks a member of staff a respectfully curious question, they will answer with information which is appropriate and within the professional boundaries under which they work. If they feel unable to answer, they will explain the reasons for this and reassure the client that there are no hard feelings.

Intentionally inappropriate or disrespectful questions could be perceived as discriminatory and may be treated as such.

Reasonable Adjustments

Physical Accessibility – We will ensure that all our office spaces and facilities are accessible to individuals with physical disabilities by providing ramps, lifts, accessible toilet facilities and designated parking spaces.

Communication Accessibility – We will offer alternative forms and formats of communication, such as large print, audio and easy read where these are required.

Assistive Technology – We will support our clients and staff to access services and products which support accessibility such as screen readers or speech to text technology.

Personal Assistance – Where there is a need, we will support the use of sign language interpreters and note takers and we will help individuals to navigate and use our services.

Accessible Information

We will ensure that all information provided to our clients and staff is available in formats that meet their needs. Needs will be assessed in relation to communication during their initial interaction with our services and these will be recorded in their care plan.

Clients and staff can use multiple forms of communication to speak with us, including by email, phone and in person. We have a care planning and rostering software called Birdie. This software is available digitally, with access for clients and family members where consent is provided. Staff are trained to support clients to access their records digitally and where clients do not have access to technology, staff will provide physical copies of their records in an accessible format.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at Work

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City Care Southwest Ltd understands that when Equality, Diversity and Inclusion underpins all aspects of our employment practices, individuals feel welcome and are more likely to achieve their goals. Our staff have a right to work in a supportive and safe environment free from harassment and with access to reasonable adjustments which will enable them to realise their full potential.

We will provide opportunities that support a healthy work life balance, with fair pay and recruit employees in a manner which is fair and open.

Staff at all levels of the organisation will participate in training which improves understanding and awareness of how to implement this policy and to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to contribute to our business.

Recruitment

The key factor in the recruitment and selection process will be selecting individuals who are able to do the job which they have applied for.

- Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role can request a guaranteed interview if they wish.
- Disabled applicants who identify themselves at the application stage will be offered appropriate interview arrangements (such as accessible interview rooms or the assistance of a sign interpreter)
- should be offered to enable candidates to compete on an equal basis.
- All job advertisements will carry wording designed to encourage applicants from all sections of the community.
- Recruitment literature will describe jobs without bias.
- All applicants will be assessed in the same way, using the same evaluation and selection criteria which is based on merit, competence, and ability.

To ensure we are achieving our policy objectives, we will monitor the effectiveness of our policy by keeping accurate records of our recruitment selections process.

Employment

Staff will be protected from discrimination and abuse in the workplace under this policy and everyone has a role to play in achieving this.

Staff will be empowered, encouraged, and trained to identify, challenge and report harassment, discrimination, and abuse of any kind.

Managers will respond promptly to such reports and offer support, guidance, and reassurance to those involved. Intentional, direct, and overt acts of race and sex discrimination, and racial and sexual harassment will be regarded as gross misconduct and therefore a dismissible offence.

Job sharing will be considered for all roles in the organisation where evidence suggests that work efficiency and effectiveness can be maintained. Managers can offer trial periods of up to two weeks where there is not sufficient evidence to support a decision.

Provisions relating to Parental Leave (Maternity and Paternity) are detailed in our Parental Leave Policy. Taking time off under the parental leave policy will not pose an obstacle to an individual's development or progression.

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In cases where employees are being dismissed, this decision will not be made on grounds of their protected characteristics and decisions will be made solely in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

We will seek feedback from our staff in an annual survey to identify trends, patterns and areas that require improvement and to celebrate good practice. The results of our survey will be shared with all clients and staff.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in our Service

Service Delivery

City Care Southwest takes active steps to provide equal opportunities for our clients.

Equal opportunities means that our customers will not be treated less favourably because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, sexuality, age, or religious belief.

Our commitment to equal opportunities means we will encourage the development of understanding and the appreciation of diversity and lifestyles, and we expect our staff to have a positive attitude to equality issues, treating others equally and fairly.

Part of the development of understanding and appreciation will be achieved by working in partnership with our clients and the important people in their lives and staff are encouraged to be respectfully curious with clients to further understand how to provide truly person-centred care and support.

Our care and support services are available to any individual who we can safely provide care and support services to. Additional training may be required to do this and will be sought by the Registered Manager where appropriate.

Recording and Sharing Information

We will document relevant information about an individuals' needs, preferences and any reasonable adjustments made, ensuring it is stored securely and updated regularly.

Where we receive feedback, good or bad, we will welcome this as a driver of positive change. Staff and clients can provide feedback in a number of ways, and this feedback will be reviewed for opportunities to improve our service and the way we support clients with their personal, cultural, social and religious needs.

Information will only be shared with other relevant professionals or organisations when necessary and with the individual's consent, in accordance with data protection regulations. For clients, this will support working in partnership to provide truly person-centred care.

Where there is a risk of harm, or harm has been observed or disclosed, the Registered Manager may share relevant information on a need-to-know basis with the local safeguarding team, Care Quality Commission and/or the police.

Personal, Cultural, Social and Religious Needs

Staff will be trained to understand and respect the diverse personal, cultural, social and religious needs of the individuals we support. This includes recognising how these needs may impact their care requirements.

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We will provide on-going training and opportunities to learn and stay up to date with the best practices in accommodating diverse needs and promoting equality.

We will deliver our services in a way that acknowledges and accommodates our client's needs, providing support to staff in preparing culturally appropriate meals, respecting religious practices and offering gender sensitive care.

Personal, cultural and social needs will be recorded in the client's care plan, and this will be available to staff on a need-to-know basis. Information relating to a client's needs in this area will be shared with other services, providers and/or professionals to ensure coordinated and respectful care, with the client's consent. Where a client has a specific Personal, Cultural, Social and/or religious need, Staff will receive additional training as and when required to ensure that they:

- Recognise how these needs relate to the client's care needs
- Understand and take these needs into account when delivering care to the client
- Understand how to record the information, and when and how to share any relevant information

Staff will also record any support provided in line with our client's personal, cultural, social and religious care plan.

Code of Conduct

Equal for All

Staff, Clients and those important to them will be equally responsible for maintaining suitable conduct under this policy.

Client and staff wishes and preferences will always be respected and upheld where they are justified and not discriminative or offensive to any protected group or individual.

Clients and staff will treat each other with respect, and understand our approach to respectful curiosity, where the asking and answering of questions can identify helpful information which can improve relationships, our service and the delivery of care and support. Both staff and clients can respectfully decline to provide information which they prefer not to share, and neither party will dwell on this under the approach.

Harassment, Discrimination and Victimisation will not be tolerated at any time and may be reported to the police and local authority where appropriate.

Any concerns, comments, considerations, or compliments in relation to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will be reported to the Registered Manager without delay.
