

The CARE CERTIFICATE

Equality and Diversity

- What you need to know

Standard

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Equality and Diversity, Inclusion and Discrimination



Promoting equality and respecting diversity are central to life today. To provide care and support that meets the needs of everyone you have to understand what these terms mean and take account of them in your work.

Equality is about treating people alike according to their needs. You should make sure that everyone is given equality of opportunity. For example, you may need to give information in different formats (for example Braille) or make sure there is access to a building for an individual in a wheelchair.

Diversity can be described as 'difference'. All individuals are different; the many different parts of a person's character and identity make them unique. Examples of the things that make up diversity are:

- Age
- Appearance
- Ability
- Disability
- Job role
- Health
- Background
- Gender
- Family
- Friends
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Belief
- Values
- Culture
- Race
- National origins
- Marital status.

Inclusion is 'being included within either a group or society as a whole'.

Inclusion links with diversity and equality. It is important to understand someone's differences so that you can include them and treat them equally and fairly. People can feel excluded if they are not able to join in with activities. Excluding people because of their differences is known as 'discrimination'. All workers in health and social care must make sure that they work in an inclusive way to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part when they want to. This is especially true about people taking part in their own care and support so that it is truly centred on them as a person.

Discrimination is action that is often based on a person's negative attitude towards others. The following can all lead to discrimination:

- labelling
- stereotyping
- prejudice.

It involves treating people differently because of assumptions made about a person or group of people based on their differences. Negative attitudes and behaviours exist in society that can lead to individuals or groups being oppressed or disadvantaged.



Labelling

This is to give a group of people a name because of characteristics, for example 'Goth'. People who self-identify as Goths may well be happy with that 'label', but others may not.

Stereotyping

To have an opinion about a group and applying this to anyone belonging to this group, for example "No woman can park a car".

Prejudice

Could mean to not like someone just because of the group they belong to.

Some discrimination is on purpose and can be easily noticed. This is known as *direct* or *deliberate* discrimination. Examples include unfairly treating a person differently because of their race, religion or sexual orientation, and excluding people who use wheelchairs by not providing access.

Other forms of discrimination can be unintentional or accidental and are not as easy to see. This is known as *indirect* discrimination. For example, providing food at times that do not take into account religious fasting periods may apply equally to everyone but might disadvantage certain individuals or groups.



Equality of opportunity

Individuals are provided with opportunities that take into account their differences and provide fair and equal access, that is to be given the same chance as all individuals.

Ways of working that reduce the likelihood of discrimination

You can reduce the chances of discrimination happening by the way that you work. As a health or social care worker it is your duty to work in ways that promote:

- equality
- diversity
- inclusion.

These principles should be included into everything that you do. To achieve this, you should:

- respect diversity by providing **person-centred care**
- treat the individuals you support as unique rather than treating all individuals in the same way
- ensure you work in a non-judgemental way. Do not allow judgemental beliefs to effect the care and support you provide
- follow the agreed ways of working in your workplace to create an environment that is free from discrimination.

- work in an inclusive way that sees the positive input that all individuals can make to society and to their own care
- be confident to challenge or confront discriminatory practice if you see this in your workplace.



Person-centred care

There are many aspects to a person that you must understand in order to meet their individual needs. The person is always the expert on their own care.



Holistic

The term 'holistic' means to look at all aspects that make up a person. It means seeing how all those aspects are integrated and can have an impact on each other. Therefore, we don't just view people from one perspective, but we look at all factors, including their thinking processes and the physical, emotional, social and cultural aspects of who they are. This helps to provide person-centred care.

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Courage

Be courageous to challenge or confront situations that you know are not right and that do not promote the wellbeing of all individuals.



Valuing diversity

To work in ways that are inclusive you need to understand and value the things that make people different. The care and support you provide must be specific to each individual's needs, wishes and preferences. It should be person-centred care which builds in the likes and dislikes, beliefs and personal history of an individual to meet their needs in the best way possible.

The Equality Act 2010 and protected characteristics

Every human being in the UK has rights and freedoms which apply regardless of their situation or characteristics. Equality and inclusion are basic human rights.

The Equality Act 2010 makes it against the law for people to be treated unfairly because of the things that make them different. The Act sets out how individuals should experience equality of opportunity and lists a number of '**protected characteristics**' that help to safeguard them from discrimination.

Promoting equality and respecting diversity help to ensure that people are valued and have the same access to all opportunities whatever their differences.



Protected characteristics

Stated in the Equality Act 2010, they aim to protect these groups of individuals from experiencing discrimination. The protected nine characteristics are:

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

www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance



The Act also provides protection for individuals who experience *discrimination by association* with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Other legislation

Your role as a health or care worker is governed by a number of different laws in addition to the Equality Act 2010.

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the ways that everyone should be treated by the state and by public authorities.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/1>

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is designed to protect people who can't make decisions for themselves.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>

The Care Act 2014 brings care and support legislation together into a single act with a new **wellbeing principle** at its heart. It aims to make care and support clearer and fairer and to put people's wellbeing at the centre of decisions, and include and develop personalisation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets/care-act-factsheets>

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 sets out to modernise NHS care by supporting new services and giving patients a greater voice in their care.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-fact-sheets>

Sources of information, advice and support could include:

- looking into the ways of working of your organisation
- checking out the Care Quality Commission's Five Key Questions:
<http://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/five-key-questions-we-ask>



Wellbeing principle

The guiding principle of the Care Act 2014 that puts an individual's wellbeing at the centre of all care and support.

Useful links

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents

www.gov.uk/government/collections/mental-capacity-act-making-decisions

www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-fact-sheets

The code of conduct

Codes of conduct or practice set out the standards and values that care workers must meet in order to provide effective and supportive care. In England, the Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers is overseen by Skills for Health and Skills for Care. It is available at either of:

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/code-of-conduct

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/code-of-conduct

The Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers includes the following principles:

- Be accountable by making sure you can answer for your actions or omissions
- Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health and social care services and their carers at all times

- Work in collaboration with your colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate healthcare, care and support
- Communicate in an open, and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use health and social care services and their carers
- Respect a person's right to confidentiality
- Strive to improve the quality of healthcare, care and support through continuing professional development
- Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion.



Reflecting to discover discrimination

It is important to reflect on your work and to think about how you can improve the care and support that you provide to others. Discrimination is unacceptable and should be confronted whenever it is found, whether in your own work, or in that of others. Working in a reflective way is one way that can help you to identify if and where your own values and beliefs lead to unfair treatment of others. 'Reflective practice' means thinking about what you or others have done, what happened as a result and whether you or they could do anything differently in future to get a better outcome.

If reflection leads you to see that individuals are being treated unfairly, you should discuss this with your manager who will be able to take action to make sure that the poor practice is properly challenged and positive change is encouraged.

Information, advice and support

In the course of your work there may be times when you need to take action to find out more information about diversity, equality and inclusion. This might be as a result of:

- reflecting on your own work and finding that you need to develop your skills and knowledge
- needing to know how to apply the principles of diversity, equality and inclusion to an unfamiliar situation
- witnessing discrimination or unfair treatment in someone else's work and needing advice on how to deal with it.

Information, advice and support in relation to diversity, equality, inclusion and discrimination can be found in a number of places. Reflecting on situations and experiences will help you to decide if you do need further information, support or advice; this will help you to develop as a worker.

Sources of information, advice and support could include:

- looking into the ways of working of your organisation
- checking out the Care Quality Commission's *Essential Standards* of quality and safety
- speaking to your manager for advice and guidance and for extra support or for ideas on where to go or who to speak to for further information

- making use of informal meetings or discussions with other workers and formal appraisals or supervision with managers for additional guidance or to ask specific questions
- undertaking your own research on the internet, for example looking at the Equality and Human Rights Commission or your Social Service's or NHS website.



Reflect

To think over your experiences in a way that will help you to learn for the future. This may mean you think about how you approach a situation differently next time or a strategy you will use again because it worked well.