

1. Policy Overview

West Heanton is committed to ensuring that no person—staff, Service Users, visitors, contractors or prospective clients—is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. We actively promote equality of opportunity and work to eliminate discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional.

We uphold an inclusive environment where people are respected, valued and supported, and where fair recruitment, inclusive care and equitable treatment are central to our practice.

2. Policy Statement

West Heanton fosters a culture built on inclusiveness, tolerance, fairness and respect. We do not accept discrimination or less favourable treatment on the grounds of:

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

We are committed to addressing stereotyping, prejudice, harassment, victimisation and indirect discrimination, and to ensuring that our policies and practices support equality for all.

3. Policy Aims

West Heanton aims to create an organisation where:

- Decisions are fair and based on merit, competence and potential.
- Individual experiences, needs and backgrounds are understood and respected.
- Unfair discrimination is not tolerated.
- Extra support and training are available where necessary.
- Diversity is recognised as a strength.
- People feel safe, differences are accepted, and contributions are encouraged, valued and respected.

We strive to maintain a culture that is open, inclusive and supportive for everyone who works with or receives care from West Heanton.

4. Legal Duties

West Heanton complies with the Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from discrimination and ensures fair treatment in employment and service provision. This policy sets out how we meet our legal obligations.

The Act protects individuals based on the following protected characteristics:

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

We also recognise legal protection for trade union members and representatives.

4.1 Types of Unlawful Discrimination

West Heanton protects individuals from:

- Direct discrimination
- Discrimination by association
- Perception discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment
- Victimisation

4.2 Disability-related Protections

Disabled people are protected against discrimination arising from disability and have the legal right to **reasonable adjustments**, including:

- Assistive equipment
- Specialist software
- Adapted furniture
- Adjusted lighting
- Changes to working practices

West Heanton ensures that reasonable adjustments are identified, implemented and reviewed.

5. Definitions

West Heanton uses the following definitions, aligned with the Equality Act 2010:

- Disability
- Diversity
- Equality
- Equity
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Reasonable adjustment
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Stereotyping
- Transsexual person

These definitions guide our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Registered Manager

- Leads and oversees implementation of this policy.
- Provides strong leadership on equality and inclusion.
- Ensures all staff complete mandatory Equality & Diversity training.
- Responds promptly and fairly to allegations of discrimination or harassment.

6.2 Senior Management

- Acts as equality champions and role models.
- Embeds equality principles across West Heanton.
- Ensures staff understand their responsibilities under this policy.

6.3 All Staff

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Report discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- Identify and raise concerns about discriminatory practices.
- Contribute to an inclusive working and care environment.
- Attend mandatory training.
- Express opinions constructively and respectfully.

6.4 Contractors, Service Providers & Visitors

Must operate within the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and comply with this policy while working with or visiting West Heanton.

7. Policy Implementation

West Heanton will:

- Provide mandatory Equality & Diversity training tailored to our organisation.
- Review and update training regularly.
- Offer relevant external training where appropriate.
- Provide reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals.
- Communicate this policy via our website and internal systems.
- Take appropriate action when incidents occur.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy and associated action plans.

8. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.