

Respecting Service Users' Religion and Belief Policy

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the principles and procedures underpinning the care provider's approach (care home or domiciliary care) to service users' religion and beliefs. It is set in the context of the service's respect for and commitment to human rights and policies on equality, diversity and inclusion.

The care service, in line with its registration requirements, accepts that every service user has the right to freedom of religion and belief and this includes opportunities and facilities to practice their religion without interference or stigma. We will do everything possible to ensure that all service users enjoy this right to the full.

Implementing the Policy on Religion and Belief

1. We will ensure that the information about the organisation that we provide to prospective service users informs them of their rights in respect of their religion and beliefs and of what we can provide to further that right. We recognise that for some ethnic minorities, religion is inescapably linked with culture and sometimes with language, so we will make every effort to ensure that this information is accessible, comprehensible and expressed sympathetically for all who need to understand it.
2. In the course of making or considering the assessment of the needs of a prospective service user, we will seek and record information regarding their religious needs so that we can give assurances that we will be able to respond appropriately when providing care, or when they enter the care home.
3. If we honestly feel that we would not be able to respond appropriately in respect of a prospective service user's religious needs, we will advise the person, and if necessary their care manager, relatives and representative, accordingly.
4. In each service user's plan of care we will in collaboration with the service user set out what contribution, if any, the care service needs to make to meet the service user's religious needs.
5. We will brief all relevant care staff on each service user's religious needs and ensure that they understand what the care service has undertaken to fulfil these elements of the care plan.
6. [For care homes] We will establish relationships with relevant local religious groups, congregations and places of worship in order to facilitate the contacts necessary to the religious needs of service users, including involvement in services or other faith

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activities, visits to the home by service users' co-religionists and clergy, and participation in religious rituals, ceremonies and festivals.

7. We recognise that contacts with places of worship and fellow believers are for many people an important element of their continued integration with the community, and we will take steps to make such continued contacts possible and meaningful.
8. [For care homes] We will provide service users with the necessary space and privacy within the home to engage in personal religious practice such as prayer, worship, meditation or the reading of scriptures if and when they wish to.
9. [For care homes] We will make every possible effort to provide for any dietary requirements that are based on a service user's religious beliefs and help them to observe special festivals and anniversaries related to their faith.
10. [For care homes] We will ensure that no service user has to participate in any religious activity if they do not wish to.
11. We acknowledge that at the time of dying and death, religious belief and practice may assume a particular significance, and if our workers are involved at such times we will try to observe any requests for special treatment, ritual, or family and community contacts which are requested, for service users close to death and after, and for their friends and relatives.
12. We recognise that for some people the expression of personal and spiritual values takes forms outside a structure of religious belief and practice, and in such instances we will do everything possible to facilitate that expression in ways appropriate to individuals in order to make possible their maximum personal fulfilment.
13. We know that some people with severe disabilities, communication difficulties, mental disorders or terminal illnesses retain a sense of the importance of their personal faith; we will respect and try to respond to this need in any appropriate way.
14. We will take vigorous steps to ensure that no service user is the subject of discrimination because of their religious beliefs or practices. A lack of respect for religious needs on the part of any member of staff will be the subject of disciplinary action.
15. We will seek in the makeup of the staff group to reflect the diversity of faiths and cultures among service users and in the local community as a way of helping service users to feel accepted and respected. We will not discriminate on grounds of religion against applicants for posts in the care service, and we will attempt to accommodate staff whose personal religious beliefs require them to be away from work at certain times or on specified days.
16. We see our efforts to promote appropriate responses to service users' religious needs as a part of all our efforts to provide each service user with as fulfilling and

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participative a lifestyle as is possible according to their personal preferences, needs and choices.

Training

All staff members are given a copy of this policy and expected to read it during their induction. If any new service user presents religious needs with which staff are not familiar, we will take steps to ensure that the relevant staff receive appropriate briefing and training in order to provide good care in this regard.

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