EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) POLICY

PRN-59: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Policy
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the organisation actively considers the potential impact of its decisions, policies, procedures, services, and activities on different groups of people.

The organisation is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion, and human rights in all aspects of its work. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) help identify and address potential barriers, disadvantages, or unintended consequences that may affect individuals or groups.

This policy aims to:

- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Prevent discrimination.
- Support inclusive service delivery.
- Improve decision-making.
- Ensure compliance with equality legislation.
- Enable fair and accessible services.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Directors
- Managers
- Employees

- Volunteers involved in service planning or development
- Trustees
- Contractors acting on behalf of the organisation

The policy applies when:

- Developing new policies.
- Reviewing existing policies.
- Introducing new services.
- Changing service delivery arrangements.
- Making significant organisational decisions.
- Implementing projects or programmes.

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3. Policy Statement

The organisation is committed to ensuring that its decisions do not unfairly disadvantage any individual or group.

Equality Impact Assessments will be used to:

- Identify potential impacts.
- Promote inclusion.
- Remove barriers.
- Improve accessibility.
- Strengthen equality outcomes.
- Support person-centred services.

The organisation will use EIAs as a practical tool for improving services and ensuring fairness.

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4. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Embed equality considerations into decision-making.
- Improve accessibility and inclusion.
- Reduce inequalities.

- Promote participation and engagement.
- Support compliance with legal obligations.
- Improve service user outcomes.
- Encourage transparent decision-making.

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5. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR

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6. What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a structured process used to assess how a policy, service, procedure, decision, or activity may affect different groups of people.

The purpose is to identify:

- Potential positive impacts.
- Potential negative impacts.
- Barriers to access.
- Opportunities for improvement.
- Areas requiring reasonable adjustments.

An EIA helps ensure services are fair, accessible, and inclusive.

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7. Protected Characteristics

When completing an EIA, consideration should be given to the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010:

- Age

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

Consideration should also be given to:

- Carers
- Individuals experiencing social isolation
- People with communication needs
- People with long-term health conditions
- Individuals experiencing digital exclusion

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8. When an EIA Should Be Undertaken

An Equality Impact Assessment should normally be considered when:

- Developing new policies.
- Reviewing existing policies.
- Introducing new services.
- Changing service locations.
- Changing access arrangements.
- Modifying eligibility criteria.
- Changing communication methods.
- Introducing technology-based services.
- Implementing significant organisational changes.

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9. Principles of Equality Impact Assessment

The organisation will ensure that EIAs are:

Proportionate

The level of assessment should reflect the significance of the change.

Evidence-Based

Decisions should be informed by relevant information and feedback.

Inclusive

Affected individuals should be involved where appropriate.

Transparent

Findings should be documented and available for review.

Action-Focused

Assessments should result in meaningful improvements where required.

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10. Areas for Consideration

An EIA should consider whether proposals could affect:

Access to Services

- Physical accessibility
- Communication accessibility
- Availability of services

Participation

- Opportunities to engage
- Ability to contribute
- Inclusion in activities

Safety and Wellbeing

- Risk of exclusion
- Potential disadvantages
- Impact on wellbeing

Equality of Opportunity

- Fairness

- Accessibility
- Inclusion

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11. Sources of Information

Information used during an EIA may include:

- Service user feedback
- Complaints and concerns
- Consultation responses
- Community feedback
- Equality data
- Staff and volunteer feedback
- Service reviews
- Audit findings
- Relevant research and guidance

Assessments should be based on available evidence wherever possible.

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12. Consultation and Engagement

The organisation recognises the importance of involving people who may be affected by proposed changes.

Consultation may include:

- Service users
- Carers
- Family members
- Volunteers
- Employees
- Community organisations
- Advocacy groups
- Partner agencies

Engagement should be meaningful and proportionate.

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13. Identifying Potential Impacts

Assessment should consider:

Positive Impacts

Examples:

- Improved accessibility.
- Greater inclusion.
- Increased participation.
- Improved wellbeing outcomes.

Negative Impacts

Examples:

- Reduced access.
- Communication barriers.
- Exclusion from services.
- Unintended disadvantage.

Potential impacts should be carefully considered before decisions are implemented.

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14. Mitigating Negative Impacts

Where negative impacts are identified, the organisation should consider:

- Alternative approaches.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Additional support.
- Flexible arrangements.
- Improved communication.
- Additional consultation.

Mitigation actions should be proportionate and practical.

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15. Reasonable Adjustments

The organisation is committed to making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

Examples may include:

- Large print information.
- Easy Read documents.
- Alternative communication methods.
- Accessible venues.
- Additional support arrangements.
- Flexible participation options.

Reasonable adjustments should be considered throughout service planning and delivery.

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16. Recording Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments should be documented.

Documentation may include:

- Description of proposal.
- Groups affected.
- Evidence considered.
- Potential impacts identified.
- Consultation undertaken.
- Actions proposed.
- Review arrangements.

Records should be retained securely and made available for monitoring purposes.

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17. Monitoring Outcomes

Following implementation, the organisation should review whether:

- Expected outcomes were achieved.
- Unintended impacts occurred.

- Further adjustments are required.
- Additional support is needed.

Monitoring helps ensure equality objectives continue to be met.

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18. Equality Impact Assessment Process

Step 1: Identify the Proposal

What policy, service, project, or decision is being considered?

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Step 2: Gather Information

Review available data, feedback, and consultation information.

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Step 3: Assess Impact

Consider potential effects on different groups.

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Step 4: Identify Actions

Determine whether changes or adjustments are required.

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Step 5: Implement

Proceed with agreed actions.

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Step 6: Review

Monitor outcomes and evaluate effectiveness.

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19. Equality Impact Assessment Template

Title of Proposal

Date of Assessment

Assessor(s)

Summary of Proposed Change

Groups Potentially Affected

Evidence Considered

Positive Impacts Identified

Negative Impacts Identified

Actions Required

Review Date

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20. Case Study

Scenario: Introducing Online Wellbeing Sessions

The organisation plans to introduce online wellbeing activities.

EIA Findings

Potential Positive Impacts:

- Increased participation for housebound individuals.
- Greater flexibility.
- Reduced travel requirements.

Potential Negative Impacts:

- Digital exclusion.
- Limited access to technology.

- Communication barriers for some service users.

Actions Taken

- Telephone alternatives offered.
- Digital support provided where possible.
- Face-to-face opportunities retained.

Outcome

Participation increases while ensuring individuals without digital access remain included.

Learning Point

Equality Impact Assessments help identify barriers before changes are introduced.

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21. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Promoting equality and inclusion.
- Providing governance oversight.
- Reviewing significant assessments.

Managers

Responsible for:

- Completing EIAs where required.
- Implementing improvement actions.
- Monitoring outcomes.
- Supporting inclusive decision-making.

Employees and Volunteers

Responsible for:

- Identifying potential equality concerns.
- Contributing information and feedback.
- Supporting inclusive practices.

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22. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

- Equality Impact Assessments completed.
- Equality-related complaints.
- Accessibility concerns.
- Service user feedback.
- Participation levels.
- Policy review outcomes.

Monitoring information will be used to improve equality performance and service accessibility.

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23. Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following legislative changes.
- Following significant organisational changes.
- Following equality-related complaints or incidents.
- Following service reviews.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Service User Participation and Feedback Policy
- Person-Centred Support Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Accessibility Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

- Volunteer Management Policy