ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION POLICY

PRN-001: ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION 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 all individuals can access information, services, support, and communication in a way that meets their needs and promotes equal participation.

As a Non-Accommodation Companionship and Wellbeing Support Service supporting older people and adults with disabilities, the organisation recognises that effective communication and accessibility are essential to:

- Promoting independence.
- Supporting inclusion.
- Reducing barriers.
- Protecting rights.
- Improving wellbeing.
- Enabling informed choice and decision-making.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged because information or services are inaccessible.

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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Service users

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Family members
- Carers
- Advocates
- Contractors
- Visitors
- Partner organisations

The policy applies to:

- Written communication
- Verbal communication
- Digital communication
- Community activities
- Meetings and consultations
- Service delivery
- Information sharing
- Organisational publications

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3. Policy Statement

The organisation is committed to making information, communication, and services as accessible and inclusive as reasonably practicable.

We will:

- Respect individual communication preferences.
- Remove barriers to access.
- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Provide information in accessible formats where possible.
- Support participation and engagement.
- Consider accessibility in service design and delivery.

Accessibility is everyone's responsibility.

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4. Principles

The organisation will promote the following principles:

Inclusion

Everyone should have equal opportunities to participate and access services.

Respect

Individual communication needs and preferences will be respected.

Person-Centred Practice

Support will be tailored to individual circumstances.

Choice

Individuals should be able to access information in ways that suit them.

Equality

Accessibility arrangements should promote fairness and reduce disadvantage.

Continuous Improvement

The organisation will continually seek opportunities to improve accessibility.

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5. Definition of Accessibility

Accessibility means ensuring that information, communication, environments, and services can be accessed, understood, and used by as many people as possible.

Accessibility may involve:

- Removing physical barriers.
- Adapting communication methods.
- Providing information in alternative formats.
- Offering additional support.

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6. Communication Needs

The organisation recognises that communication needs vary.

Individuals may have needs relating to:

- Hearing impairment.
- Visual impairment.
- Learning disabilities.
- Cognitive impairment.
- Autism.
- Mental health conditions.
- Dementia.
- Language differences.
- Literacy difficulties.
- Speech and communication difficulties.

Support arrangements should reflect individual needs.

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7. Identifying Communication Needs

Where appropriate, communication preferences should be identified and recorded.

This may include information about:

- Preferred communication methods.
- Required adjustments.
- Language preferences.
- Accessibility requirements.
- Support needs.

Communication needs should be reviewed whenever circumstances change.

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8. Accessible Information Formats

Where reasonably practicable, information may be provided in alternative formats such as:

- Large print.
- Easy Read.

- Plain English.
- Audio format.
- Electronic format.
- Alternative languages.
- Visual aids.

The most appropriate format should be determined in consultation with the individual wherever possible.

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9. Plain Language Communication

The organisation encourages the use of plain, clear language.

Employees and volunteers should:

- Avoid jargon and technical terminology.
- Use simple and respectful language.
- Check understanding where appropriate.
- Explain unfamiliar terms.

Communication should be designed to maximise understanding.

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10. Supporting People with Hearing Impairments

Where appropriate, the organisation may:

- Provide written information.
- Reduce background noise.
- Face the individual when speaking.
- Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace.
- Use communication aids where available.

Employees and volunteers should be patient and responsive to individual preferences.

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11. Supporting People with Visual Impairments

Where appropriate, support may include:

- Large-print documents.
- Audio information.
- Verbally explaining written content.
- Accessible electronic documents.
- Clear verbal communication.

Accessibility arrangements should be tailored to individual needs.

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12. Supporting People with Learning Disabilities

The organisation will seek to communicate in ways that support understanding.

This may include:

- Easy Read materials.
- Plain language.
- Visual prompts.
- Repetition and clarification where needed.
- Additional time for discussion.

Individuals should be supported to make informed decisions wherever possible.

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13. Supporting People Living with Dementia

Employees and volunteers should:

- Communicate calmly and clearly.
- Allow additional time for responses.
- Reduce distractions.
- Use supportive communication techniques.
- Confirm understanding where appropriate.

Communication approaches should support dignity and independence.

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14. Language and Interpretation Needs

Where possible and appropriate, consideration may be given to:

- Translation of information.
- Interpretation support.
- Bilingual communication assistance.

The organisation will seek reasonable solutions to support effective communication.

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15. Digital Accessibility

Where digital systems are used, the organisation will seek to ensure that online information is:

- Clear and easy to navigate.
- Compatible with assistive technologies where practicable.
- Available in accessible formats where possible.
- Designed with inclusivity in mind.

Digital accessibility should be considered during service development and review.

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16. Accessible Meetings and Activities

The organisation will seek to ensure that meetings, consultations, and activities are accessible.

Consideration may include:

- Venue accessibility.
- Hearing needs.
- Seating arrangements.
- Transport barriers.
- Communication support.
- Accessible information.

Participation should be encouraged for all individuals.

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17. Physical Accessibility

While the organisation does not provide accommodation-based services, activities and meetings should, wherever possible, be arranged in locations that are:

- Safe.
- Accessible.
- Inclusive.
- Suitable for participants' needs.

Physical barriers should be considered during planning.

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18. Equality and Human Rights

Accessibility is an important part of promoting:

- Equality.
- Diversity.
- Inclusion.
- Human rights.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that accessibility considerations are integrated into decision-making and service delivery.

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19. Service User Participation

Accessible communication supports meaningful participation.

Service users should be enabled to:

- Express their views.
- Ask questions.
- Provide feedback.
- Participate in decisions.
- Access complaints procedures.
- Understand available support options.

Accessibility arrangements should support active involvement.

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20. Training and Awareness

Employees and volunteers may receive training relating to:

- Inclusive communication.
- Disability awareness.
- Dementia awareness.
- Equality and diversity.
- Person-centred communication.
- Accessible information practices.

Training will support confidence and competence in meeting communication needs.

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21. Recording Accessibility Needs

Where appropriate, records may include:

- Communication requirements.
- Accessibility adjustments.
- Preferred contact methods.
- Support arrangements.

Records should be:

- Accurate
- Relevant
- Secure
- Regularly reviewed

Information should be processed in accordance with data protection requirements.

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22. Complaints and Concerns

Any concerns relating to accessibility or communication barriers should be taken seriously.

Individuals may raise concerns through:

- Informal discussions.
- Feedback processes.
- Complaints procedures.

- Advocacy support.

The organisation will seek to address concerns promptly and fairly.

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23. Case Study

Scenario: Supporting a Service User with Visual Impairment

A service user wishes to participate in a community wellbeing programme but struggles to read standard printed information.

Action Taken

- Information is provided in large-print format.
- Key information is discussed verbally.
- Telephone reminders are offered.
- Feedback is obtained regarding accessibility.

Outcome

The service user is able to participate confidently and remains fully informed about activities.

Learning Point

Small adjustments can significantly improve access, inclusion, and participation.

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24. Responsibilities

Directors

Responsible for:

- Promoting accessibility and inclusion.
- Ensuring appropriate resources are available.
- Monitoring organisational accessibility arrangements.

Managers

Responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Supporting accessibility improvements.
- Reviewing communication arrangements.

- Addressing identified barriers.

Employees and Volunteers

Responsible for:

- Communicating respectfully and inclusively.
- Identifying accessibility needs.
- Implementing reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- Reporting barriers to access.

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25. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The organisation will monitor:

- Accessibility feedback.
- Complaints relating to communication barriers.
- Service user participation levels.
- Equality and inclusion outcomes.
- Accessibility improvements implemented.
- Staff and volunteer training completion.

Learning from feedback will be used to improve accessibility and service quality.

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26. Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following significant changes to services.
- Following accessibility-related complaints.
- Following legislative changes.
- Following equality reviews.

Related Policies

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

- Equality Impact Assessment Policy
- Dignity and Respect Policy
- Service User Participation and Feedback Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Person-Centred Support Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
