



Supportmatch
Homeshare Service

www.supportmatch.co.uk

Supportmatch Homeshare – Homeshare Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Grievance Procedure

POLICY TITLE: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ISSUED: October 2020

REVISED: October 2022

REVIEWED: October 2024

NEXT REVIEW DUE: October 2025

1. Policy Statement

Supportmatch is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of its work and operations. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and aim to create an environment that respects the dignity and rights of every individual. This policy applies to all employees, contractors, Homesharers, Householders, volunteers, partners, and service users. We are committed to complying with the **Equality Act 2010**, which protects individuals from discrimination based on the following **protected characteristics**:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



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2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all aspects of employment, volunteering, recruitment, and delivery of Homeshare services, including:

- Recruitment and selection
- Working conditions and terms of employment
- Training and career development
- Promotion, appraisal, and performance management
- Access to benefits and facilities
- Disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Working relationships and conduct at work
- Treatment of Householders, Homesharers, staff, and the public

All individuals are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes equality and inclusion.

3. Responsibilities

Supportmatch is responsibilities include:

- Ensuring equality of opportunity across all policies and practices
- Monitoring compliance and acting on evidence of discrimination
- Providing training and guidance to promote inclusive behaviours
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees and service users

All staff, Homesharers, and representatives must:

- Treat others with respect and fairness
- Challenge and report discriminatory behaviour or language
- Ensure that decisions and interactions are made based on merit and suitability, not prejudice

4. Implementation Measures

Recruitment and Promotion

All recruitment will be conducted using fair and objective criteria. Information about roles will be accessible to all potential applicants. Where a genuine occupational requirement exists, this will be stated clearly.

Job Descriptions and Flexible Working

Job descriptions will reflect only the essential and desirable requirements of the role. Requests for flexible or alternative working arrangements will be reasonably considered.

Selection

Shortlisting and interviews will focus solely on the skills, qualifications, and experience necessary for the role. Personal questions will only be asked if directly relevant to job performance and applied consistently to all candidates.

Training and Development

Training opportunities will be provided fairly. We are committed to upskilling all team members and ensuring equitable access to career development and progression.

Disability Inclusion

We will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. We will ensure accessibility in the recruitment process, the workplace, and participation in service delivery.

Monitoring and Review

The organisation will regularly review equality practices and monitor key data (e.g. recruitment and promotion outcomes) to identify and address barriers to inclusion.

5. Harassment and Discrimination

Harassment, victimisation, or discrimination will not be tolerated. Breaches of this policy by staff may be treated as gross misconduct and lead to disciplinary action. Anyone connected to Supportmatch who experiences or witnesses' discrimination should report it immediately. Please refer to our **Harassment and Bullying Policy** for further guidance.

6. Complaints Procedure

Employees or volunteers who believe they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against may raise concerns through the **Supportmatch Grievance Procedure**. Homesharers and Householders may contact the Director confidentially to report any concerns.

7. Review and Approval

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner in response to changes in legislation or organisational needs.



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Supportmatch Homeshare Policy Grievance Procedure

POLICY TITLE: Grievance Procedure

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1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure provides a clear framework for raising, addressing, and resolving concerns or complaints related to employment, volunteering, or participation in the Supportmatch Homeshare service. It applies to:

- Employees and volunteers
- Homesharers and Householders
- Coordinators, contractors, and others engaged with Supportmatch

This policy ensures all individuals are treated fairly and with respect when raising concerns about unfair treatment, harassment, bullying, policy breaches, miscommunication, or interpersonal conflict.

2. Guiding Principles

- **Confidentiality** will be respected throughout the process.
- **Timeliness:** All grievances will be handled promptly.
- **Impartiality:** Each concern will be considered objectively.
- **No victimisation:** No person will be treated unfairly for raising a grievance in good faith.
- **Right to representation:** Anyone raising a formal grievance may be accompanied by a colleague, advocate, or friend in meetings.

3. Step 1 – Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, individuals are encouraged to resolve issues informally first. This may involve:

- Speaking directly to the person involved
- Requesting support from a coordinator or manager to mediate the issue
- Raising concerns verbally in a safe, respectful setting

If the concern is resolved informally, no further action is required.



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4. Step 2 – Formal Grievance Submission

If the issue remains unresolved or is too serious for informal resolution (e.g. bullying, discrimination, safeguarding concerns), a **formal grievance** should be submitted in writing.

The grievance should include:

- A description of the issue
- Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of incidents
- Individuals involved
- Any previous attempts to resolve the matter
- The desired outcome

Formal grievances should be sent to the **Designated Complaints or Grievance Lead**

5. Step 3 – Investigation and Outcome

Upon receipt of a written grievance, the Designated Lead will:

- Acknowledge receipt within 5 working days
- Assign an appropriate person to investigate (if required)
- Arrange a meeting with the person raising the grievance
- Provide a written response within 14–30 calendar days, unless additional time is needed

The outcome may include actions such as mediation, policy clarification, retraining, disciplinary procedures (where applicable), or referral to other agencies if safeguarding concerns are raised.

6. Step 4 – Appeal

If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a written appeal within **7 calendar days** of receiving the decision. The appeal should outline the reasons for the dissatisfaction.

The appeal will be reviewed by a different senior member of the team or an independent party. A final decision will be provided within **14 days**, and this outcome will be final.

7. Safeguarding Concerns

Where the grievance involves an allegation of abuse, exploitation, or serious risk of harm, Supportmatch will follow its **Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults Policy**. Concerns may be referred to the local authority safeguarding team or the police.



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8. Record-Keeping and Monitoring

All formal grievances, investigations, and outcomes will be securely recorded and stored in accordance with **GDPR** and **confidentiality policies**. Anonymised grievance trends may be reviewed periodically to improve practice.

9. Support and Advice

Supportmatch encourages individuals to seek support if they are affected by any grievance process. Support may be provided by a line manager, safeguarding lead, or external advocacy service.

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