Developing a Business Case for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Overview

The implementation of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) policy and practices within aged care organisations is becoming more and more important. Embedding inclusive service models and delivery into the heart of the organisation and responding to the needs of all older diverse people is deemed essential in delivering quality and equitable care. The 2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety made a series of recommendations to fundamentally change the aged care sector and made it clear that:

"The existing aged care system is not well equipped to provide care that is non-discriminatory and appropriate for people's identity and experience. We heard about aged care providers that do not provide culturally safe care, that is, care that acknowledges, respects and values people's diverse needs. Across the aged care system, staff are often poorly trained in culturally safe practices, with little understanding of the additional needs of people from diverse backgrounds."

Yet the application of such approaches comes with challenges. Some of the barriers facing aged care leaders in implementing DE&I approaches include:

- Lack of staff, time, resources or allocated funding
- Lack of commitment to diversity and inclusion
- Lack of change readiness
- DE&I not being a priority for leaders in the context of heavy regulatory and compliance obligations
- Thinking diversity approaches "others" people or promotes "inequality"

Despite these challenges, it is important to remind ourselves that our aged care community is diverse in many aspects and that not everyone has the same abilities and/or opportunities to access services and feel safe. Therefore, in order to apply person centred care approaches and to address systemic discriminations, having a considered diversity, equity and inclusion strategy embedded across the whole organisation and in the organisations core values and principles is essential in delivering quality of care in line with human rights and equal opportunity.

This tip sheet is designed to support you in developing a business case for having targeted diversity, equity and inclusion strategies and approaches within your organisations. There are seven key arguments to consider when developing a business case. These are:

- The legal argument
- The moral argument
- The social argument
- The consumer argument
- The business argument
- The national approach argument

- The global approach argument

Legal Argument
- Aged Care Act 1997
- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Business Argument
- Promotes innovation, productivity, profitability
- Increased Employee satisfaction & morale
- Reduces staff turn-over & absenteeism
- Increases consumer loyalty & satisfaction
- Increases reputation/brand
- Minimises risk & ensure compliance

Consumer Argument
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Increases feelings of safety, respect and belonging
- More opportunities for the consumer to be their authentic self
- Increases feeling of purpose and contribution
- In line with person-centred care principles and the Aged Care Quality Standards
- In line with human rights principles

Social Argument
- Improves quality of life and wellbeing for all
- Contributes to the greater good of society
- Contributes to a peaceful and inclusive society

Moral Argument
- It is fair
- It is just
- It is respectful

National Approaches Argument

- Department of Health and Aged Care's Aged Care Diversity Framework
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission through Aged Care Quality Standards

- Aged Care Diversity Consultative Committees
- Department of Health and Aged Care responses to Royal Commission into Aged care Quality and Safety (2021)

Global Approaches Argument

- Supported by global human rights such the WHO Social Determinants of Health, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and United Nations Principles for Older Persons

Further Reading

https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/aged-care-diversity-framework

https://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/documents/practice-guides/1467-ten-steps-to-developing-a-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-plan-in-aged-care/file

https://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/documents/inclusive-service-standards/1525-tip-sheet-inclusion-statement/file