

Equality and Diversity Policy

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Approved by: Board

Date:
11/11/17

Scope: Housing Solutions Board, Employees, Customers, Contractors and all others acting on our behalf

Date of next Review:

11/11/20

Legislation: Special Educational Needs and Equal Pay Act 1970
Children Act 1989
Protection from Harassment Act 1997
The Human Rights Act 1998
Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
Data Protection Act 1998
Civil Partnerships Act 2005
Equality Act 2010
Modern Slavery Act 2015

Regulatory/ Governance Code of Governance

Related Policies: Harassment and Bullying Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Employee Code of Conduct
Grievance Procedure
Probity Policy
Safeguarding Adults Policy
Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy
Whistle-blowing Policy
Inclusion Strategy

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1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Housing Solutions is committed to promoting equality and diversity and anti-discriminatory practice in all of its activities and will seek to ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexuality, marital status, health, age or any other unjustifiable criteria.

2 Scope & Objectives

- 2.1 The Equality and Diversity Policy applies to all Housing Solutions Board

members, employees and contractors and all of our services and activities, including:

- General service delivery;
- Access to information and advice;
- Customer involvement;
- Customer satisfaction and complaints;
- Dealing with incidents of harassment and anti-social behavior;
- Procurement and supply chain management;
- Governance;
- Staffing and employment; and
- Asset management, development and regeneration.

2.2 The means by which we will deliver these commitments in each of these areas are set out below:

2.3 **Service delivery** (inc meeting housing need and lettings) We will:

- ensure that all customers receive equally good services by making our staff aware of their obligations under this policy;
- develop, implement and monitor robust equality and diversity action plans;
- provide services that meet the needs of the communities we serve in a sensitive manner;
- ensure that our policies and procedures help to deliver efficient and effective services by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments, where appropriate, developing improvement plans and monitoring and reviewing progress of improvements; and
- use our resources to support and contribute to economic and social wellbeing and sustainability of the communities in which we work.

2.4 **Access to information and services.** We will:

- promote equality of access to our services for all eligible customers;
- provide information about our services in a range of ways that are sensitive to people's diverse needs; and
- ensure that our offices are open to and can be accessed by all.

2.5 **Customer involvement.** We will:

- consider equality and diversity issues when involving people in planning, developing and in the delivery of our services;
- ensure that meetings are fully accessible, and held at suitable times to

customers; maximise involvement of a diverse range of

- ensure that written material is provided in plain English and offered in a range of formats to meet different needs;
- provide translation and/or interpretation services where appropriate;
- use a range of consultative and involvement methods, including the use of digital platforms and social media to encourage the widest possible engagement; and
- expect customers involved in consultation and participation activities to operate within this policy.

2.6 Customer satisfaction and complaints. We will:

- measure the levels of satisfaction that customers have with our services; and
- monitor satisfaction and complaints by customer groups and use the information gathered via these activities to improve service delivery and target resources appropriately.

2.7 Anti-social behaviour and harassment (including incidents of domestic violence and abuse). We will:

- treat all reports of anti-social behavior, harassment and discrimination seriously, and investigate claims and take appropriate action;
- work with partners to deter incidents of harassment and use the full extent of the law to prosecute alleged perpetrators;
- not tolerate discrimination and harassment made towards or by any employee;
- act swiftly and effectively to meet the legal requirements, best practice and any regulatory standards that apply; and
- work to promote good relations between different groups of people in the workplace, estates and in the communities we serve.

2.8 Procurement and supply chain management. We will:

- use fair and open processes for the selection of contractors, consultants, agencies and other suppliers; and
- expect other organisations with whom we work or from whom we procure supplies or services to demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity.

2.9 Governance. We will aim to ensure that:

- membership of the Board and committees reflects the communities we serve;

- recruitment of Board members is undertaken through open and approved recruitment procedures;
- equality and diversity is effectively managed within the Association and all Board Members receive equality and diversity awareness training to assist in this function; and
- the Board approves action plans relating to equality and diversity, and monitors progress against such plans.

2.10 **Staffing and employment.** We will:

- value the differences in staff and consider diversity as a resource to help us to achieve our aims;
- work to recruit and retain a workforce which reflects the local community and set benchmarks to enable progress monitoring;
- undertake recruitment in such a way as to encourage applications from all sectors of the community;
- provide equal pay to people undertaking similar work;
- use recruitment and selection procedures that ensure equality of opportunity for all prospective applicants, including applicants for board or other governance positions;
- support employees' diverse needs in the workplace, including making reasonable adaptations where required;
- provide training and development opportunities on an equitable basis so that all employees are treated fairly on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities; and
- provide induction and training to ensure that all staff and Board Members are aware of their responsibilities in promoting equality and diversity in the workplace, in management and recruitment practices.

2.11 **Asset management, development and regeneration.** We will:

- build, acquire and improve homes to meet the diverse needs of the communities;
- establish and maintain up-to-date records of adaptations to homes to help allocate housing appropriately and accommodate the needs of people with disabilities;
- work with local communities to deliver neighbourhood improvements to improve the quality of life for customers and promote community cohesion; and
- engage and consult with our communities on the design of new housing schemes and neighbourhood improvements.

3 Equality & Diversity

- 3.1 HS recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equalities Act 2010. HS works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. The organisation will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

4 Confidentiality

- 4.1 Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive information, however received, is treated as confidential.
- 4.2 When dealing with resident information, officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:
- HSL is required to by law
 - The disclosure of the information is necessary for the protection of children.

5 Monitoring & Review

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions policy.
- 5.2 Our performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our established reporting mechanisms to our Senior Management Team, Executive Team, Board and associated committees.

6. Appendices

None