

O27. EQUALITY POLICY

Purpose

This policy describes how we will meet the aims of our Equality Strategy.

Introduction

We are committed to the principles of equality and equal opportunities.

We are totally opposed to any form of discrimination – whether direct or indirect – on grounds such as age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion/belief, sexuality, gender identity, pregnancy, or marriage/civil partnership.

Our overall approach for ensuring that these principles are reflected in the way we run our business is set out in our Equality Strategy.

External obligations

settle and our suppliers are required under the Equality Act 2010 not to discriminate in the delivery of services on the grounds of any of the ten specified 'protected characteristics'. These are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; or
- sexual orientation;

We also have certain responsibilities in relation to the prevention of harassment on ground of any of these characteristics.

We are also required to follow the Regulatory Framework set by the Housing Regulator (currently the Homes and Communities Agency).

These set out expectations on equality issues in the 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment' Standard.

How we will achieve this

By ensuring our policies are fair

- We will check (impact assess) all our strategies and policies dealing with the way we allocate homes and deliver services to our residents as well as our employment practices to ensure that they do not unintentionally cause us to discriminate against any individual or particular sections of the community.

By providing extra help to those who need it

- We will do our best to understand and meet the reasonable needs of our diverse group of tenants, leaseholders and service users.
- We will ensure that tenants are made aware of any special services we are able to offer.
- We will work with partners or statutory agencies where necessary to make the best use of our resources.

Through our Staff and employment practices

- We will encourage and promote the recruitment and retention of people from all sections of society.
- We will aim to create a workforce which reflects, as much as reasonably possible, the diversity of the community we serve.
- We will strive to ensure that the particular needs of each individual employee are recognised and respected.
- We will make 'reasonable adjustments' to enable people with disabilities or other needs to be part of our workforce.
- We will operate a range of policies and procedures which offer staff the means to combine work and family life more easily.
- We will train all new staff on equality issues and their implications for their work as part of our induction process. Existing staff will receive update and refresher training as necessary.
- We will not tolerate any form of harassment by staff of residents or other members of staff.
- We will take disciplinary action against any staff member whose conduct or actions are inconsistent with 'the organisation's commitment to equality.

Through our contractors

- We will ensure that our contractors, consultants and partners working with us treat our tenants with the same respect and consideration as our own staff.

Through our tenants, leaseholders and service users

- We will take steps to ensure that residents are aware of this policy, our commitment to equality and our zero tolerance of diversity related harassment of other tenants or our staff.
- We will discuss and review equality matters with tenants, and publish information which enables them to judge our plans and our performance in this area.

Through our Board

- Ensure that our Board receives appropriate training on equality issues.
- Aim to make the composition of our Board reflect the diversity of our community in so far as the requirements of good governance allow.

Through Monitoring

- Subject to their consent, we will collect information on the gender, age, disability, ethnic origin, faith and sexuality of all those being housed.
We will use this information anonymously to enable us to monitor the use of services by different groups of tenants and to compare levels of satisfaction with the way we provide services.
- We will also collect this information from our staff and Board members.
We will use this information to assess the effectiveness of our equality strategy and this policy.

Through Reporting

- We will report on equality performance issues annually to both our Board and Stakeholders.

Review Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years.