



HARROW CHURCHES HOUSING ASSOCIATION

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Reviewed: December 2016

Review Date: December 2019

1 Introduction

Harrow Churches Housing Association is committed to promoting equal opportunities both in the provision of services and in our employment practices. We aim to reflect and serve the diverse community that we work in fairly and equitably at all times. We value diversity in employment and service provision. Through our work in providing affordable housing and support services, and as an employer, we will help ensure fair treatment for all members of the community, regardless of race, ethnic origin or nationality; gender; disability, whether mental or physical; religion; marital or family status; sexuality or sexual orientation; HIV status; age or physical appearance. We recognise that because some groups or people experience prejudice and discrimination, that it requires commitment and effort to be able to support diversity and offer equitable services. We will strive to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by any conditions, requirements, provisions criteria, procedures or practices that cannot be justified, and undertake the no person will be victimised for taking action against discrimination or harassment.

2 Objectives

HCHA will ensure fair access to the varied housing and support services that we provide by:

- 2.1 Monitoring the allocation of our homes, including the quality of accommodation, to ensure that discrimination does not occur.
- 2.2 Continuing to offer a proportion of our homes to those most disadvantaged in accessing housing, for example, those with HIV, older people with care needs
- 2.3 Ensuring that our procedures and policies reflect our aim to promote diversity and anti-discrimination.
- 2.4 Reporting all complaints that highlight challenges to good practice or poor practice at a senior level.
- 2.5 Working closely with our partners to address any problems that affect our ability to support diverse neighbourhoods, promote a diverse workforce and/or offer an equitable service to our tenants and prospective tenants.

3 Aims

- 3.1 We will ensure that we offer opportunities to consult in a way that offers access to all tenants and assists those who need extra support to participate.
- 3.2 We will challenge discriminatory practices and opinions in the workplace.
- 3.3 We will make sure our complaints procedures are accessible to all and that every tenant has the chance to complain, ensuring support to do so where needed.
- 3.4 We will not tolerate harassment of our tenants or staff and will take the strongest possible action against perpetrators. We will be proactive in co-operating with other agencies in dealing with all forms of harassment.
- 3.5 We will provide all reasonable adjustments to those who need it to enable them to participate in employment, housing, support and other services that we provide, including doing what we can to offer appropriate services to those with varied and diverse cultural and religious needs.

4 Recruitment, employment and training

- 4.1 HCHA will promote and encourage all applicants to apply for posts and will proactively seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all current and potential employees.

- 4.2 We will conduct and monitor our recruitment in an open and accountable way and according to equal opportunities practices, and will regularly review the results of the monitoring to ensure fairness is evident at all stages.
- 4.3 We will seek to deal with any under representation of particular groups among employees, including under representation at Manager and Director level, and make full use of positive action provisions permissible within legislation.
- 4.4 We will strive to prevent harassment or bullying of staff by other staff or any other person connected to the workplace and if and when it occurs take swift action to stop it.
- 4.5 The distribution of training opportunities will ensure that all staff are being treated fairly.
- 4.6 We will ensure that selection for employment, career development opportunities, access to benefits, facilities and services are fair and equitable and based solely on business requirements
- 4.7 We will train and support staff to ensure everyone has a basic awareness of equalities and diversity issues, as well as training to meet the specific needs of their post.
- 4.8 The Board of Management will ensure that all contracts are awarded fairly and reflect our commitment to antidiscrimination and equality.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1 HCHA will endeavour to recruit a Board that is fully representative of its community by having an open and accountable recruitment process and by the use of positive action to recruit members from under-represented groups.
- 5.2 Board members will be briefed on equality matters, complaints and performance through the year.
- 5.3 The Board are responsible for setting and reviewing policy.
- 5.4 All staff have an individual responsibility and duty for ensuring that this Policy is put into practice. We expect a personal commitment from all employees in making equality work at HCHA and in setting a high professional standard for others to follow. Additional and specific responsibilities apply to those who manage staff and to those who are involved in recruitment, training and development. All members of staff have a contractual responsibility to:
 - Ensure that they understand the values and benefits of equality and diversity and are familiar with the Equalities Act 2010;
 - Familiarise themselves with this Policy, follow it, and ensure that any staff for whom they are responsible do so as well;
 - Draw to the attention of their line manager any instances of discrimination or harassment, or any perceived problem in relation to equality of access to services, employment opportunities or any other concern.