



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Classification: Board & Staff

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved:	May 2019
Last Review Date:	August 2010
Review Due Date:	April 2022
Review Period:	3 Years

REFERENCE PAGE

Document Title:	Equality and Diversity Policy
Aim:	Promotion of diversity, elimination of discrimination and equality of opportunity are integral to the Association's activities.
Objective:	Strategic Objective SO1, SO6
Scope of Policy:	Board & Staff
Nominated Officer:	CEO
Approval Source:	Executive Team
Legal and Regulatory References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Equality Act 2010
Procedural References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Code of Conduct • Disciplinary Procedure • Competency Framework.
Consultation Completed:	N/A
Risk Implications:	1. Existing policy, minimal change
Equalities Assessment:	All Eildon policies and key documents are developed with the clear objective of ensuring that they do not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people and that they do not have negative impacts for equality groups. However, we will always welcome comments on the impact of a policy on particular groups of people in respect of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation, being pregnant or on maternity leave and children's rights and wellbeing.
Accessibility:	Accessible electronically/online and in print. All documents can be translated and made available in audio, braille and large print versions upon request.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
GENERAL PRINCIPLES	3
TYPES OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION.....	4
DISABILITY	4
IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE	5
COMMUNICATION & TRAINING	6
MONITORING, REVIEW and ACTION PLANS	6
COMPLAINTS	6
REVIEW	7

INTRODUCTION

Eildon Housing Association is committed to ensuring that the promotion of diversity, elimination of discrimination and equality of opportunity are integral to the Association's activities. The Association seeks to ensure that its responsibilities to the community for the provision of housing and other services, and as an employer to its staff, are undertaken within an equalities framework.

This Policy relates to our customers, employees and anyone else who works with us or receives a service from us.

CONTEXT

The Equality Act 2010 harmonised and replaced previous legislation (such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) and ensures consistency in what is needed to make workplaces a fair environment.

The Equality Act covers the following protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Equal access to housing for all sectors of the community based on housing need.
- Equal access to care and support services for all sectors of the community based on identified needs.
- Equality of employment opportunity for all job applicants based on aptitude, skills and ability to carry out the relevant requirements of a job.
- Equal access to employment opportunities and procedures for existing staff to ensure that staff are treated on the basis of relevant merits, abilities and performance and are given equal opportunity to progress within the Association.
- Equal access to training and development opportunities for existing staff to ensure that performance is enhanced through the acquisition of new skills or expertise so that staff are able to contribute to the aims and objectives of the Association.
- Equal treatment of all staff in relation to the provision of pay and other conditions of employment.
- That where appropriate and permissible under legislation, the Association will undertake to provide positive action measures.

TYPES OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the **Protected Characteristics** set out above. [An example of direct discrimination would be refusing to employ a woman because she is pregnant.]

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same Protected Characteristics at a particular disadvantage.

Harassment related to any of the protected characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. [Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy].

Victimisation is also prohibited under this policy. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has raised or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 for discrimination or harassment, or because they are suspected of doing so.

DISABILITY

The Association is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for those members of staff who are disabled or become disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 during their employment with the Association.

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that the Association may support you as appropriate.

If a member of staff is unable to continue in their current role as a result of a disability, the Association will consider any alternative roles and vacancies they may have as a way of retaining the services of that member of Staff.

IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

Responsibility for implementing this Policy rests with the Executive Team supported by the Human Resources Team.

The Association will endeavour to achieve the above requirements and general principles through the provision of training and awareness necessary to enable staff and Board members to understand and implement their responsibilities under the policy.

Individual employees, at all levels, have a personal responsibility in law and with reference to this policy for the application of the principles of equality and diversity. In particular, individual employees are required to:

- Implement equality practices and procedures introduced by the Association.
- Co-operate with the Association's measures to ensure equality, fairness and non-discrimination.
- Not themselves discriminate, intimidate or harass colleagues, visitors, clients or customers.
- Maintenance Contractors, Consultants and Management Agents will be made fully aware of the Association's Equality and Diversity Policy and will be required to follow it when acting on behalf of the Association.
- Not induce or attempt to induce other employees or management to practise discrimination.
- Draw the attention of their line manager to suspected discriminatory acts or practices or contravention of the Association's Equality and Diversity Policy and Professional Code of Conduct.
- Not victimise individuals on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.

Employees should understand that any such incidents will render them liable for disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. In addition, the law permits where a complaint of discrimination is made by an employee to an Employment Tribunal and the complaint is upheld, individual employees of the Association may be ordered to pay compensation to the employee, in addition to the Association as the employer.

To further ensure that it's Equality and Diversity Policy is fully effective, the Association makes the following commitments. It will:

- Include at induction a discussion of the appropriate behaviour expected of employees; as outlined by internal policies such as the Professional Code of Conduct, the Disciplinary Procedure, and the Competency Framework.
- Include responsibility for equality and diversity in job descriptions where appropriate.
- Examine and review existing Association policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Ensure wherever possible, that workplaces are accessible to persons with mobility impairments or that suitable and reasonable alternatives are put in place.
- Undertake regular examination of the composition of the workforce, Board, applicants and tenants, to identify any possible areas of action and priorities for equality purposes.
- Encourage staff to challenge unacceptable behaviour, when appropriate to do so.

COMMUNICATION & TRAINING

This policy will be made available to all employees and Board members and will be discussed as part of staff and new Board member induction.

MONITORING, REVIEW and ACTION PLANS

The Association recognises that monitoring is integral to the success of its Equality and Diversity Policy and without this information it is impossible to determine if the implementation of action, as a result of the policy, is effective in ensuring that all groups are being treated equally.

Monitoring will take the form of collecting relevant statistics and providing anonymised information to inform this policy being reviewed and updated as necessary.

Action Plans will be produced where monitoring and review indicates that improvements are required.

COMPLAINTS

The Association takes seriously and will deal effectively with any complaints of discrimination on any of the grounds covered in this policy.

REVIEW

This Policy will be routinely reviewed by the HR Department and the Executive Team according to the Eildon Policy Framework.