

Equality and Diversity Policy

Contents

1	Aims	1
2	Scope	1
3	Policy Statement	1
3.1	Introduction	1
3.2	Definitions	2
3.3	Our Approach	2
4	Monitoring and Delivery	4
4.1	Legislation and Regulation	4
4.2	Related Policies and Procedures	4
5	Glossary	5
6	Document Control	5

1 Aims

1. Jigsaw Homes Group recognises its responsibilities to provide equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations in its activities as a landlord, managing agent, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser.
2. The Group is totally opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of 'race', national origin, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment status, being married or a civil partner, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, disability or age.

2 Scope

3. The policy applies to all employees of the Jigsaw Homes Group.

3 Policy Statement

4. This policy aims to summarise how the Group is working to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and increase equality of opportunity. It supports delivery of our vision 'We want everyone to live successfully in a home they can afford'.
5. This policy applies to any person or organisation that any member of Jigsaw Homes Group has contact with in undertaking its activities as landlord, managing agent, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser.

3.1. Introduction

6. This policy has been produced in accordance with the requirements of our regulator, the Regulator of Social Housing.
7. In April 2010, the Equality Act was passed by Parliament. Its main purpose was to bring together the many acts and regulations in UK law that has been introduced to combat discrimination. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.
8. The Act requires equal treatment in access to employment and private and public services, on the basis of 'protected characteristics': disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (including ethnic and national origin, colour and nationality), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership. In the case of disability, employers and service providers are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to their workplaces to overcome barriers experienced by disabled people.
9. The Group also recognises as best practice guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

3.2. Definitions

10. Equality - A revised term for equal opportunities, being the same/treated the same.
11. Diversity - Recognising the differences in everyone that make them unique and responding to an individual's needs.
12. Disability - in line with the Equality Act 2010, this includes anyone who has, or has had a disability, as well as anyone who is perceived to have a disability. It also includes anyone who is associated with someone with a disability, which could result in that individual experiencing discrimination (e.g. a carer).

3.3. Our Approach

13. We will as a landlord:
14. Establish Policies and Procedures that are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the delivery of all housing services is fair and without discrimination;
Operate, and monitor, lettings practices that reduce the chance of discrimination;
15. We will ensure that published documents do not contain any graphics that portray stereotypes;
16. Make interpreting services available to those customers who need them;
17. Endeavour to provide a welcoming and informative environment for customers and where possible ensure that all offices and public areas are accessible to physically disabled people;
18. Provide a website that is accessible to the widest possible audience, by consulting with users on its design and adhering to available standards and guidelines;
19. Encourage all groups within the local community to become involved in the delivery of service; The Jigsaw Rewards scheme provides tenants with the opportunity to give feedback through our online portal on topics they are interested in. If tenants do not have access to the internet, access to consultations and surveys is available by post or telephone.
20. Respect and, where possible, accommodate the religious practices of customers;
21. Maintain accurate customer profile records in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations;
22. Prioritise repairs requests from residents with known support needs in line with our repairing obligations;
23. Investigate any differences in customer satisfaction between different groups, taking action where the cause of dissatisfaction is within our control as the landlord;
24. Operate harassment and domestic violence procedures that provide support for the victim;
25. Require that any recognised tenant group complies with and operate this policy and the equality and diversity values of the Group;
26. Liaise with an Occupational Therapist to assess requests for disabled adaptations;

27. Maintain accurate records of adaptations to our homes;
28. As an employer we will:
29. Aim to recruit and retain a workforce to reflect the diversity of its customer-base;
30. Operate, and monitor, recruitment practices that reduce the chance of discrimination;
31. Maintain our 'Disability Confident Employer' accreditation and display the logo in all recruitment;
32. In accordance with the 'Disability Confident Employer' accreditation, guarantee people with a disability an interview for any employment vacancy they have applied for, provided that they meet the essential criteria;
33. Continue employing, wherever practicable, employees who become disabled during their employment, and assist in their retraining;
34. Provide regular training for staff on equality and diversity issues, starting at induction;
35. Provide Board members with an assessment of the equality and diversity impact of recruitment decisions;
36. Respect the religious practices of staff in the workplace;
37. Offer flexible working hours and arrangements;
38. Monitor recruitment & pay to ensure terms and conditions are equally applied irrespective of any "protected characteristics"
39. Provide enhanced maternity and paternity leave (subject to eligibility) and offer staff the option to purchase childcare vouchers tax free.
40. Have a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, in particular where this may be linked to a "protected characteristic";
41. Equally apply terms and conditions irrespective of any "protected characteristics".
42. Support anyone going through a gender reassignment process in accordance with the Groups Gender Reassignment Policy.
43. As a purchaser we will:
44. Require maintenance contractors to comply with the Group's expectations with regard to equality and diversity;
45. Ensure that out-of-hours contractors operate a telephone interpreting service;
46. We will use our purchasing power to ensure that our contractors' service delivery is consistent with our equality and diversity commitments;
47. Any allegations of discrimination or harassment made against contractors and consultants will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and if necessary reported as a crime. Contractors and consultants will be expected to take prompt and appropriate action against any of their staff found to be acting in an unacceptable way.
48. As a Contractor and Partner we will:
49. Maintain our commitment to provide equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations.

50. Not accept instructions from any client or partner that indicates an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

4 Monitoring and Delivery

51. The Group publishes performance information regularly on its website, this will include Gender Pay Gap Information as well as in annual reports and financial statements.
52. This policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every three years, unless changes in statute, contract, or regulatory code and guidance require otherwise.
53. The Group Chief Executive will have responsibility for the implementation of this strategy in accordance with the Group's Scheme of Delegation. All employees will also be responsible for maintaining and continually improving fairness and equality for customers, staff and partners for all according to their needs regardless of who they are.
54. A Modern Slavery Statement has been published in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

4.1. Legislation and Regulation

55. Protection from Harassment Act 1997
56. Equality Act 2006
57. Equal pay act 1979
58. Human Rights Act 1998
59. Gender Recognitions Act 2004
60. Civil Partnerships Act 2004
61. Race and Religious Hatred Act 2006
62. Equality Act 2010 and Codes of Practice (Services, Public Functions and Associations, Employment and Equal Pay) Order 2011
63. Modern Slavery Act 2015

4.2. Related Policies and Procedures

64. Modern Slavery Policy
65. Gender Reassignment Policy
66. Human Trafficking
67. Customer Contact Strategy
68. Code of Conduct
69. Employee Handbook

70. Group Financial Regulations

71. ASB Policy

5 Glossary

72. None

6 Document Control

Responsible Officer/s:

Carol Lowe

Date of Approval:

Approved by:

To be Reviewed Every:

Three years



Creating homes. Building lives.

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