

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy



Jigsaw

Creating homes. Building lives.



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# 1 Aims

1. Jigsaw Homes Group is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and eliminating all forms of discrimination.
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.
3. We recognise our responsibilities to increase our understanding of all forms of discrimination, so we can educate and raise awareness as a landlord, managing agent, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser to help eliminate discrimination.
4. We will endeavor to make equality, diversity and inclusion pivotal to our business by being self-critical, looking at our practices and policies to ensure they constantly evolve. This will help to increase our understanding so we can raise awareness, take decisive action whilst developing our action plan to ensure it is current and integrated with every element of our business.

## 2 Scope

5. This policy aims to support the delivery of our vision Creating Homes, Building Lives and applies to all employees, board members and 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 Policy Statement

### 3.1. Introduction

6. The Equality Act 2010 is an Act of Parliament of the United Kingdom with the primary purpose of consolidating, updating and supplementing the numerous prior Acts and Regulations, which formed the basis of anti-discrimination law in Great Britain.
7. 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.
8. Equality is ensuring everyone is treated fairly and no less favourably regardless of their protected characteristics. Equality is not about treating everyone the same, but about making sure that people are given equal access to opportunities.

9. Equity refers to the fair and respectful treatment of all people. This means that we do everything we can to identify and eliminate unfair biases, stereotypes or barriers that may limit full participation in our education system.
10. Diversity is what makes us different - age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, national background and life experiences, are examples of where difference can occur.
11. Recognising diversity alone is not enough; we need inclusion to ensure that diversity is embraced. Working collaboratively to harness and celebrate our diversity will benefit the organisation, those who work in it, customers who access our services and the wider society. It encourages action, allowing everyone to feel included, creating a strong culture where people are proud to collaborate to help create environments where people have a sense of belonging.
12. There are other benefits as detailed within the Diversity Matters report carried out by McKinsey et al, the relationship between diversity and performance shows a correlation, not a causal link. It has been demonstrated in other studies detailed within the research that more diverse companies are better able to win top talent, improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision making, leading to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns. That in turn suggests that diversity beyond gender and ethnicity/race (such as diversity in age and sexual orientation) as well as diversity of experience (such as a global mindset and cultural fluency) are also likely to bring some a level of competitive advantage as businesses are able to attract and retain such diverse talent.

### **3.2. Our Commitment**

13. Our aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of our customers and the areas we work within, and for employees and customers to have a sense of true belonging where they are seen and valued for who they are, which helps everyone to thrive. We will increase our transparency in relation to our policy, data and good practice building an evidence based approach to future targets/action required.
14. Our Board, Executive Team and Equality Street will ultimately drive change linked to this policy, through discussion, ensuring relevant data is collected/analysed and constantly reviewing the action plan. We believe this approach will help to create a culture where equality, diversity and inclusion are natural to all employees and stakeholders, as peoples experience and knowledge will be broaden about all difference within our society.
15. Board have adopted this Policy, identified a lead member with responsibility for oversight and monitor of Diversity and Equality through KPIs such as our Gender and BAME Pay Gap report and understand how the Senior Executives and Equality Street Group will work together to make a really difference.
16. Senior Executives from across the business will play a key role in promoting, advocating and shaping the sense of belonging for all by helping to create our objectives and further action which is required, linked to our Jigsaw values - Social Impact, Innovation, Empowerment, Efficiency and Collaboration. The Senior Executives will attend one Equality Street meeting each, per year, where they take

part in the conversation which helps them to understand how employees feel about the key themes so they can shape action within the workforce.

17. Employees from across the business attend the Equality Street Group every other month to discuss key themes to create a discussion about good practice, barriers within our business and initiatives that can help to raise awareness within the wider workforce. Their main aim is to advocate and champion all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. To help to build this sense of true belonging, with a safe environment for conversations to take place, they have created a set of values which they believe encourage conversations and education, the values are harmony, equality, acceptance, respect and trust.
18. Using a range of visuals and communication channels to make sure all stakeholders have information which broadens their knowledge and experience of issues which they may not already have experienced. We plan to highlight key areas which we want to raise awareness of by focusing on topical issues and challenges faced by different sections of the community. Along with having a zero tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimization, taking decisive action when needed.

### **3.3. Our Key Objectives**

19. Ensure our social impact is clearly visible as a landlord and managing agent. Review our Lettings policy to ensure to it is inclusive to all. Ensure our Neighborhood Plans responding to the needs and aspirations of the local communities
20. Encourage completion of diversity data declarations by both customers and employees, allowing us to use the data to identify barriers faced by certain groups, and develop data-driven actions to address them.
21. Create a working environment free from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, monitoring the proportion of employees with protected characteristics within Employees Relations processes (grievances, disciplinarys etc)
22. Review our Recruitment and Selection policy to ensure to it is inclusive to all. Increase understanding and knowledge of senior managers about unconscious bias particularly where they undertake recruitment and selection within their role
23. Ensure all employees receive Equality & Diversity training during their probation period and then refresher sessions every two years. The refresher sessions will include topical issues to create an active discussion which educates by raising awareness.

## **4 Recent Good Practice**

24. It's important that we celebrate the good practice which we have already developed across our business, some examples of this are detailed below.
25. Our Equality Street Group have arranged a variety of initiatives including a walking float in the Manchester Pride event, a workshop delivered by a transgender woman who shared her experiences to build understanding of terminology and considerations that people should make, along with visits to a local mosque and catholic church.

26. Last year we decided to expand the analysis of our Gender Pay Gap analysis, going above and beyond our legal requirement to including BAME data to show trends in our pay rates so we understand if areas need further work or analysis.
27. A well established group of Mental Health First Aiders who have a range of experience and knowledge who assist managers and employees by offering help to dealing with mental health and well being issues ensuring we can act quickly to support employees when needed within the work place. This helped to raise awareness that employees are absent from work for mental health reasons not just physical illness which is often easy to see.
28. Ashton and Latifi Hands in Oldham, are aimed at BAME ladies. The sessions are very popular and have resulted in a costume making project with the Royal Exchange theatre and one women setting up her own business sewing from home.
29. The Everyday Creative English course held in Oldham and Bury is aimed at BAME residents with limited levels of English language. The sessions teach how to use English language in everyday situations such as travelling, shopping and making an appointment at the GP. It also has the benefit of enabling social interaction, communication and building confidence.
30. Annually we work in partnership with Oldham Coliseum theatre to celebrate International Women's day, aimed at women from all ethnicities and backgrounds, through a host of activities to improve health and wellbeing, build confidence and self belief.
31. Our Oldham Work Club, held at the OBA Millennium Centre, although open to all, attracts predominantly BAME residents who are far away from the job market due to language barrier, work experience and other personal issues, due to the personal approach and language experience offered by the Neighbourhood Engagement Officer running the club.
32. Our work with Motiv8 target BME as part of the cohort, providing ESOL classes via Wai Yin one of our specialist partners plus these targets include working with disabled people.
33. Bridges undertook two joint campaigns with the Local Authority in the last year to target victims of Domestic Abuse who were Male and one for BME victims to help raise awareness and support of both of these issues.

## **5 Monitoring and Delivery**

34. The action plan developed will create further conversations with Equality Street Group and Senior Executives to ensure we are self critical to allow our practices and policies to constantly evolve so the further actions needed can be constantly developed.

## **6 Legislation and Regulation**

35. The Equality Act 2010.

## 7 Related Policies and Procedures

### 36. Related policies

- Modern Slavery Policy
- Human Trafficking
- Customer Contact Strategy
- Code of Conduct
- Employee Handbook
- Group Financial Regulations

## 8 Document Control

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Responsible Officer/s:	Assistant Director of People
Date of Approval:	Sept 2020
Approved by:	Board
To be Reviewed Every:	Two years

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## Creating homes. Building lives.

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