

<b>ESTUARY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD</b>	Committee: Corporate Health & Remuneration – 3 <sup>rd</sup> August 2015 Joint Negotiating Committee – 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
	Senior Management Team: 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2015 Staff Consultation Group: 18 <sup>th</sup> March 2015
<b>DIRECTORATE / DEPARTMENT:</b> Human Resources  <b>AUTHOR:</b> Linda Hollingworth – Assistant Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development	Page: 1 of 6
	1 <sup>st</sup> Issue Date: 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2009 Re-issue: 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015
	Location: HR
	Last Review Date: February 2015 Next Review date: February 2017 EIA Date: 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2015

## Equality & Diversity Policy – HR 19

### VERSION CONTROL

Date	Author	Version	Notes
16 <sup>th</sup> July 2014	L Hollingworth	3.1	Change of job titles – senior management roles Removal of point re explicit staff assessment in appraisal – staff are assessed under the stated values and adherence to policies Removal of annual report by Board member on E&D progress. Reporting undertaken through Board dashboard and HR reporting methods to G&A Committee.
23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2015	S Jha	3.2	The Job Guarantee scheme has been included. Encouraging representation from unrepresented groups. Refers to the dress code. E&D Training to be delivered to all staff.

### Purpose or Aim:

At Estuary Housing Association (EHA) we value inclusiveness and we are committed to embedding equality and diversity at the heart of our work. We aim to be an inclusive organisation, where individual differences are respected, where

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staff, people who use services, as well as their families and carers, are treated with dignity and on the basis of their merits, abilities and needs, and where everyone has a fair opportunity to fulfil their potential without suffering discrimination or disadvantage.

## **Policy**

### **1. Definition**

Estuary Housing Association (EHA) will promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice and strive to ensure that no one is disadvantaged because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion or faith, home language or family background, gender, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, age, offending history, marital status, caring responsibilities, or any other unjustifiable criteria.

### **2. Responsibilities**

- The Board of Management of EHA, having formally adopted the Equality & Diversity Policy, accepts overall responsibility for its implementation and for monitoring its effectiveness.
- Individual Board members will champion the implementation of the Equality & Diversity Policy.
- Together with the Chief Executive, the senior management team has a particular duty to ensure that the requirements of this policy are planned and met. Assistant Directors and Heads of Department will have responsibility for the day to day implementation of the policy and will be accountable for this via recruitment, performance management, staff development and appraisal systems.

All staff, Board members, tenant representatives and groups and anyone representing the Association has a specific responsibility to ensure the positive application of this policy.

### **3. Employment**

- It is a condition of employment that all our staff adhere to this Equality & Diversity policy.
- EHA encourages diversity and seeks to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all staff and job applicants.
- Selection criteria and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.
- EHA seeks in its employment practices to employ staff so that it represents

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the communities it serves at all levels of the Association.

- EHA actively seeks to employ and retain staff with disabilities. Under the Equality Act 2010, EHA has a duty to make reasonable changes for disabled applicants and employees. These are known as 'reasonable adjustments' and should be made where possible to avoid disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. The need to make reasonable adjustments can apply to the working arrangements or any physical aspects of the workplace.
- EHA offers a job interview guarantee scheme to people with disabilities who meet the essential criteria of the job.
- EHA will, where it is justifiable, incorporate membership of a minority group as a genuine occupational qualification for any specific job.
- EHA will take positive action to encourage applicants from under represented groups.
- EHA monitors job applicants to ensure that a wide range of applicants apply for employment and that no applicants are discriminated against.

#### **4. Training**

- From time to time Equality and Diversity training will be provided to all staff within EHA in order to embed and apply the implications of current legislation and standards. All staff will be expected to attend.
- EHA provides a range of equality and diversity training and development activities for staff and the Board of Management to enable them to undertake their responsibilities and discharge their obligations to the Association in accordance with the Equality & Diversity Policy stated here.
- EHA monitors its staff development practices to ensure that no-one is discriminated against through Equality Impact Assessment and training evaluation.
- EHA maintains training records for all staff and Board Members.
- EHA endeavours to provide training and development opportunities to all staff and will identify and address any barriers that may arise.

#### **5. Work Life Balance**

- Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work and live. EHA recognises that effective practices to promote work life balance will benefit the Association and its employees and tenants.
- EHA endeavours to offer the ability to apply for flexible working

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arrangements through our Flexible Working Policy, whilst balancing this with the requirement to provide appropriate high quality services to customers.

- EHA also acknowledges the importance of flexible working arrangements in helping to increase the diversity of the workforce by ensuring that those who may be disadvantaged in the workplace are able to enter into working arrangements which suit their needs. For some groups of workers, such as those with family and caring responsibilities or certain disabilities, more flexible working hours provide opportunities for working which are not otherwise available for them.

## **6. Harassment**

- EHA does not tolerate any form of harassment of or by service users, tenants, staff or contractors working for the Association and takes the strongest possible action against any perpetrators.
- Harassment by EHA staff is a breach of conditions of service and will be dealt with as such.
- EHA has adopted a positive policy on **ALL** forms of harassment and takes action against any perpetrators.
- EHA has in place a number of policies which aim to support employees, tenants and service users in reporting incidents of harassment. Please refer to the Anti Harassment and Bullying Policy.

## **7. Housing Management, Family Centre, Nursery and Development**

- No person or group of persons applying for access to services is treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons.
- EHA ensures that information for tenants, service users and prospective tenants and service users is made available, on request, in the main community languages of the areas in which the Association works, and that information is made accessible for people with a hearing impairment, visual disability or for people who cannot read.
- EHA monitors the allocation of its homes (including the quality of accommodation offered) and provision of services and ensures that discrimination does not occur. This monitoring takes account of the extent to which minority groups are represented amongst local people in housing need.
- EHA identifies the needs of minority and disadvantaged groups in its area of operation and considers ways in which new services can be provided to meet them.
- EHA reviews its housing and care provision policies regularly to ensure the

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Association's commitment to equality & diversity is being maintained. EHA acts on problems highlighted by the reviews.

- Where possible, EHA consults all tenants/families (including minority groups) on the design of new development schemes and services and values this contribution to our understanding of equality & diversity.
- EHA aims to provide a secure environment in which those who use our services can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.
- EHA endeavours to bring to the attention of other organisations areas where their practices are preventing EHA from meeting its equality & diversity objectives.

## **8. Contractors and Suppliers**

- When dealing with partners, such as NHS Trusts, Local Authorities, voluntary partners, contractors, suppliers, consultants, solicitors, auditors and providers of other professional services, EHA only engages companies and partners which operate in accordance with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy Statement.

## **9. Grievance and Discipline**

- If any employee of EHA believes that they have been unfairly discriminated against, harassed or bullied, they may register a complaint under the Grievance Procedure and that complaint will be fully and fairly heard.
- If any service user/tenant (or a member of their family) believes they have been discriminated against, harassed or bullied, they may register a complaint under the Complaints Procedure and that complaint will be fully and fairly heard.
- If any employee is found to have breached the Equality & Diversity Policy they may be subject to disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure and serious cases may lead to dismissal.

## **10. Training Facilities**

- Any individual or organisation hiring the EHA training venue will be expected to operate in accordance with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy. No discrimination, harassment or bullying will be tolerated on EHA premises.

## **11. Dress Code**

- EHA will make a reasonable adjustment to the dress standards in relation to disability, race & religious belief subject to compliance with Health and Safety rules.

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## 12. Legal Framework

The legal framework for this policy is:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Children Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Age of Consent for Gay Men 2001
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) and (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Civil Partnerships Act 2005
- Health and Safety Work Act 1974

## 13. How will we achieve Policy Implementation?

- **Equality & Diversity Working Group** - we will maintain an Equality & Diversity Working Group made up of a cross-section of staff, board directors, tenant representatives and where possible other stakeholders to drive forward the organisation's equality objectives, evaluate performance, analyse best practice and recommend improvement actions.
- **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)** – we will undertake EIAs or appropriate alternative methods of assessment as applicable to ensure our policies, procedures, services and activities are not discriminatory and hold details of all completed EIAs centrally.
- **Training** – Appropriate training will be given to all staff, volunteers and board directors in respect of equality and diversity issues. Provision of this training is offered to partners and other stakeholders such as resident representatives and contractors, ensuring all contractors and consultants uphold EHA's equality and diversity commitments.
- **Performance Benchmarking** – we set and monitor our performance against Equalities Performance Indicators. We will undertake resident / community profiling and service needs analysis to enable the delivery of services which are accessible and which are able to meet the diverse

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needs of the communities in which EHA operates. We will also compare satisfaction levels of different sections of the community particularly those from commonly disadvantaged groups taking remedial actions where appropriate.

- **Partnership Working** – EHA will seek to work with a range of agencies and advisors to ensure it complies with best practice, understands future local housing and develops services to meet these needs. Additionally it will work with its local authority partners and other statutory agencies such as the police, social services and NHS Trusts to help them meet their own respective equality targets and objectives wherever possible.
- **Consultation & Involvement** - EHA will work with resident and community groups, representatives and advocates to ensure appropriate involvement from all sections of the community in the organisation's decision making activities and to help identify changing service needs and preferences. EHA will also ensure that recognised resident forums, panels and groups uphold and promote EHA's equality and diversity values and objectives.
- **Communication** - EHA will publicise it's commitment to promoting equality and diversity and adopt a communications strategy that takes account of the needs of the local communities we serve. EHA will use a variety of means including: job application packs and job advertisements, corporate publications and reports and resident/service user and staff newsletters to promote this commitment.

#### **Related Documents:**

This policy relates to all EHA policies and procedures

- Single Equality Scheme
- Equality & Diversity Action Plan
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Equality Impact Assessments

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