

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



**Our Viability**

Warrington Housing Association

## INTRODUCTION

Warrington Housing Association is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in our organisation and the communities in which we serve. Equality is about removing barriers and making sure people from all sections of the community have fair and equal opportunities to access services. Diversity is about respecting and valuing people's differences and treating people in an appropriate way. Inclusion is about making sure that people feel comfortable to be themselves and feel that they belong.

## SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy is relevant to all WHA board members, colleagues, residents, contractors, volunteers and other persons or other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services.

## OBLIGATIONS

We recognise our legal responsibilities in respect of the protected groups specified in the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Our regulator also requires us to treat our customers with fairness and respect and to tailor our services to meet their needs. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. We believe in going beyond compliance and recognise the moral imperatives and business benefits of equality, diversity and inclusion and that by creating a working environment in which individuals can utilise their skills and talents to the full without fear of prejudice or harassment, we aim to create a culture where everyone can reach their fullest potential. As a social landlord we also recognise we can help make Warrington a great place to live, in which the potential of individuals and communities can be realised.

## STATEMENT OF INTENT

WHA recognises that providing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and promoting a culture of inclusion are important to our success. We will:

- treat you fairly, with dignity and respect;
- not treat you less favourably because you belong to one of the protected groups;

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- not tolerate intimidation, discrimination or harassment against you based on any protected characteristic, and will take action against colleagues or customers who behave in this way;
- collect information about you to help us to develop and tailor our services to meet different needs;
- make information available on request in a format that meets your needs, for example, larger print, audio or Braille;
- communicate with you in the language you prefer, including British Sign Language. We have access to telephone interpretation services and by prior appointment, we can arrange for an interpreter to be present;
- communicate with you in ways which are sensitive to the needs of different protected groups. Examples include the option to choose an interview with a staff member of the same sex;
- involve and consult with customers and others who reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and make changes to our services when their feedback tells us this is necessary;
- carry out equality impact assessments of our policies, key decisions and changes to make sure they are inclusive and do not have the potential to discriminate against any group;
- ensure our services and procedures reflect issues of concern for members of protected groups. For example, continue to provide services which help tackle loneliness and social isolation for older people and ensure hate incidents are given high priority within our community safety procedures;
- provide our colleagues, board members and involved customers with training and guidance so they understand their responsibilities and the standards we expect;
- ensure Equality and Diversity is taken into account when procuring and commissioning services from contactors, suppliers, partners and consultants to maximise our economic and social value within Warrington
- require those working with us or for us to support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and will challenge those who do not;

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring the Equality and Diversity Policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards.

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The Director of Operations is the Executive Lead and Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Business Support Manager is responsible for overseeing the day to day implementation of this policy for colleagues and the Asset and Customer Leads for service delivery to customers. All colleagues are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy.

Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and may be dealt with in line with the Association's disciplinary policy.

## **TRAINING**

Appropriate training will be provided for Board, colleagues and contractors. This will include induction, team and contractor briefings, e-learning and access to external training.

## **PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

We will monitor and report on performance in Board membership, recruitment and promotion of colleagues and customer complaints and satisfaction and use this information to identify areas for improvement.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

When handling Equality and Diversity data colleagues will come into contact with sensitive personal information. The handling and use of the data will be carried out under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

## **IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This Policy will be implemented through WHA's Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory or best practice.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In implementing this policy we aim to promote and embed equality, celebrate diversity and create a more inclusive culture in which people can thrive.

An equality impact assessment has been carried out. This policy provides the framework and if colleagues, customers, Board members or visitors require

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additional support, we will endeavour to provide a service that seeks to meet the needs of a particular individual or household.

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