

## **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out Hornsey Housing Trust's (hereafter referred to as "HHT") Equality and Diversity (E&D) Policy and Practices in relation to its roles as a service provider and an employer.
- 1.2 HHT is committed to the promotion of equality and the valuing of diversity. To this end, we will continuously monitor and review the implementation of this Policy, whilst also ensuring that it is updated annually.
- 1.3 HHT seeks to ensure that, under the Equality Act 2010, everyone is treated equally and fairly.
- 1.4 This Policy applies to all employees and Trustees of HHT, along with other volunteers and sub-contractors/consultants. The wider shareholders of HHT are also expected to adhere to the core principles outlined here. These principles also apply to all those for whom HHT provides services.
- 1.5 The implementation of this Policy should be considered in the wider socio-economic context in which HHT operates. Additionally, we must also take into account the E&D policies of our key funders and commissioning partners.
- 1.6 HHT conforms to the Equality Act 2010, which became law in October 2010. This Act harmonised and replaced previous legislation, (such as the 1976 Race Relations Act, the Disability Discrimination Act 1965, the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, plus linked and subsequent legislation). The Act also extended some aspects of employer obligations.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions help in the interpretation of this Policy, and the understanding of its implementation:

### 2.1 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

**Equality** - *Everyone has access to the opportunities they deserve as a basic human right and so as to achieve their full potential*;

**Diversity** - *The differences between people are recognised and valued, with each person being seen as a unique individual*.

**Inclusion** - *that all people, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or health care needs, have the right to be respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities and in particular as residents and staff of HHT.*

### 2.2 DISCRIMINATION

Categories of Discrimination

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

- direct discrimination - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others

- indirect discrimination - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
- harassment - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone's dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
- victimisation - treating someone unfairly because they've complained about discrimination or harassment

It can be lawful to have specific rules or arrangements in place, as long as they can be justified.

### Types of discrimination ('protected characteristics')

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- gender reassignment
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

**Note on Disability** – Under the 2010 Equality Act a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities, including using the telephone, reading a book or using public transport. There is a duty on the employer to make reasonable adjustments to working practices to help someone who is disabled- e.g. use of assistive technology.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection

## 2.3 HARASSMENT

Harassment is defined as '*unwanted conduct related to a **Protected Characteristic** which violates an individual's dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment*'.

The harassment provisions apply to all **Protected Characteristics** except marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy / maternity.

Employees, can complain about behaviour which they find offensive, even if it is not specifically directed at them.

Employers are potentially liable if their staff are subject to harassment by a third party, i.e. a person they do not employ, where the employer's action in dealing with the harassment are deemed to have been motivated by discrimination

The most commonly reported forms of harassment are sexual, racial or workforce related. Examples of these are given below:

## **Sexual harassment**

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Verbal propositions, innuendo, suggestive remarks
- Display of sexual offensive pictures, sexually suggestive gestures, written material
- Physical touching, pinching, brushing against another employee's body
- Offensive or unwanted comments about appearance, clothes or personal characteristics

## **Racial harassment**

Examples of racial harassment include:

- Abusive remarks, racist jokes
- Graffiti or gestures
- Physical threats or assaults

## **Workforce harassment**

Examples of workforce harassment include:

- Shouting or swearing at people in public and in private
- Persistent or unwarranted criticism
- Ignoring or deliberately excluding people
- Dispensing disciplinary action which is unjustified
- Deliberately sabotaging or impeding work
- Removing areas of responsibility without explanation
- Consistently imposing excessively demanding tasks with the expectation of failure

## 2.4 VICTIMISATION

Victimisation in this context is defined as *“treating an individual or group badly because they have made / supported a complaint or grievance under the Act”*.

## **3. IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 In implementing this Policy, HHT will ensure that, as an employer, we access the widest possible labour market and secure the most suitable employees for our needs, whilst promoting inclusion and treating all applicants/employees fairly, in every aspect of recruitment, employment, performance appraisal and career development.
- 3.2 All employees, volunteers and Trustees will be treated with respect and enabled to work in a climate free from intimidating, hostile or humiliating treatment. Likewise, all our tenants, service users and partners will be treated fairly and with respect.
- 3.3 All employees, Board Members and volunteers are expected to understand and uphold this Policy, demonstrate good E, D & I practice in their work with HHT. The wider shareholding membership is also expected to ensure that they comply with the key aims and principles of this Policy.
- 3.4 The Board of Management has a strategic overview responsibility for the Policy, with the day to day implementation being delegated to the Chief Executive (CEO).

The CEO will ensure that this Policy is drawn to the attention of and explained to all Members, employees, volunteers, shareholders, sub-contractors, consultants, funders and other partners, along with tenants and service users, as appropriate.

Relevant updating and training will be given as needed.

All employees, Board members and volunteers are expected to promote this Policy in their internal and external dealings on behalf of HHT, and will be asked to sign a **statement** that they have read and understand the Policy and will comply with it. **(See Appendix 1)**

- 3.5 HHT recognises that it has a duty of care for all its employees and volunteers, including protection from discrimination and/or harassment in the workplace. The organisation will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of or by any employee and will take measures to handle any such incidents. Failure to comply with the letter and spirit of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Employees or volunteers who consider that they have been subject to discrimination or harassment should first raise this with the person responsible, asking them to change their behaviour, explaining that it is causing discomfort or offence or interfering with their work. If the behaviour continues, they should raise the matter with the CEO, invoking the Grievance Procedure where appropriate. Where it is the CEO who is considered to be causing the disruptive behaviour, the employee or volunteer should complain directly to the Chair of the Board of Management.

All complaints will be investigated with formal procedures being invoked as necessary.

#### 4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 4.1 The implementation of this Policy will be continuously reviewed as well as being updated annually, also taking into account progress with an agreed **Action Plan** relating to key activities. **(See Appendix 2 for latest version)**
- 4.2 E&D Impact Assessments will be undertaken in relation to other key HHT Policies being introduced or updated, so as to ensure that they both comply with and support this Policy.

#### 5. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 5.1 Further information is available at the following government websites:

Types of discrimination and protected characteristics:

<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/how-you-can-be-discriminated-against>

Definition of disability:

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

Discrimination at work:

<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/discrimination-at-work>

Reasonable adjustments for disabled workers:

<https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

**APPENDIX 1**

**HHT**

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT**

**FIRST NAME(S)** .....

**SURNAME** .....

**POSITION/ROLE** .....

*I confirm that I have read and understand this Policy and agree to comply with it. I will also do my best to promote it, as appropriate.*

**SIGNED** .....

**DATE** .....

**APPENDIX 2**

**HHT**

**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY ACTION PLAN**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Lead Person(s)</b>

<b>Approved by:</b>	Hornsey Housing Trust Board of Management
<b>Effective date:</b>	October 2022
<b>Review date:</b>	October 2023
<b>Policy developed by:</b>	CEO and Liz Hanley, Executive Assistant