

**STYLES HOUSE
TENANT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION**

Equality and Diversity Policy

1 STATEMENT OF POLICY

Styles House Tenant Management Organisation is committed to promoting equality and embracing diversity and is opposed to all forms of unlawful discrimination. We believe that no person or group should suffer disadvantage because of their age, colour, disability, mental health, ethnicity, gender or sex, marital status, national origin or nationality, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other factors.

We take action to ensure equality of opportunity in the provision of:

- Appointment of Board Members
- Access to homes
- Access to and delivery of services
- Employment of staff
- Appointment of contractors, consultants and suppliers
- Resident involvement and participation.

We have set standards against which our performance can be measured in an open and accountable manner.

2 LEGAL/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Legislation

This policy and framework complies with the requirements of but is not limited to:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Employment Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 & 1999
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Race Relations Act 1976 & 2000
- The Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- The Equal Treatment Directive 2002
- Employment Equality (Religion & Belief) Regulations 2003

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- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 & 2005
- Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005
- The Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- The Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 & 2007
- The Equality Act 2010
- Unlawful discrimination on any other grounds under any other relevant legislation in force from time to time relating to discrimination in employment and the provision of goods, facilities and services.

The Regulatory Code

“Registered Providers must demonstrate when carrying out all their functions, their commitment to equal opportunities. They must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups”.

The Code also requires all registered providers to provide good quality services “by being responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents”.

3 DEFINITIONS

Equality is about recognising that:

- Certain groups within society experience common forms of discrimination.
- We have a duty to remove barriers faced by disadvantaged groups in our role as an employer, landlord, service provider, and partner and services provided through contractors and procurement.
- We need to monitor our service delivery and employment practices to ensure equality of opportunity and to help eliminate any discriminatory behaviours, policies and practices.

Diversity emphasises the value to business in:

- Respecting and understanding individual differences and individuality
- Maximising the unique contributions of individuals.

Discrimination can take many forms including:

- **Direct discrimination** - treating one person less favourably than others in same or similar circumstances, e.g. on the basis of their race or sexuality

- **Indirect discrimination** – imposing a condition or requirement, or having a policy or practice, which cannot be justified, and which in practice prevents people from certain groups from complying with the requirement or receiving a service. E.g. treating an offer of accommodation as being refused because an adult is unable to attend an interview at the time they are due to collect children from school
- **Institutional Discrimination** - the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service or employment condition to people from certain groups.
- **Harassment** - individuals or groups of individuals are harassed or abused because they are from certain groups.
- **Victimisation** - where a person is treated less favourably because they have, or it is suspected that they have, complained about being treated unfairly, or they have been involved as a witness in a discrimination case.

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

a) Valuing and managing diversity on the Board

We recognise the need for diversity and a good representation of views on our Board and committees. We will encourage a broad range of members to get involved. Where necessary we will take positive action to reach out to groups who are under represented on the Board and provide support through buddying, mentoring and training to ensure they have the appropriate skills to undertake the role.

b) Valuing and managing diversity in the workplace

We recognise the need for diversity in our approach to employment. Employing individuals from a wide range of backgrounds should enable us to have a greater focus on meeting customer needs over a broader area of issues and provide the range of skills necessary to meet changing needs and agendas.

We will ensure that we canvas as widely as possible for employees in order to establish a workforce that is genuinely representative of the local community we serve and our customer base. Where necessary we will take positive action to ensure representation of diverse groups.

We will take into account the needs of individual staff members, and make reasonable adjustments so that they are able to carry out their roles.

c) Staff and Board responsibilities

In order to fully implement the policy all staff and Board Members need to be aware of their responsibility to integrate equality and diversity in their day-to-day activities. Staff must be aware of and responsible for equality and diversity in their behaviour with colleagues, customers and stakeholders and in identifying equality objectives through the

appraisal process, projects, plans and initiatives, and progressing those objectives in their day-to-day work.

d) Equality standards

We have established Equality Standards with the aim of achieving the highest standards of equality in the following areas:

- Policy and Planning
- Employment - recruitment, selection, development and retention
- Communication and Corporate Image
- Community Development and Resident Involvement
- Service Delivery and Customer Care

We will carry out regular audits to ensure that the standards are being met.

e) Training and development

We acknowledge that responsibility for the successful implementation of equality and diversity in employment and service delivery lies with all Board members and employees. We will promote enhanced awareness of unfair discrimination or potentially discriminatory practice, attitudes and behaviour so that they can be identified and eliminated.

Staff and Board Members will undertake appropriate equality and diversity training to raise their awareness and understanding of issues in the workplace and service delivery.

f) Information and promotion

We will regularly advertise our commitment to the Equal Opportunities Policy, targeting groups who are known to suffer discrimination. We will ensure that:

- We make available any publication in translation to customers whose first language is not English or where there may be other language barriers
- Translation services will be made available to customers who have communication barriers.
- Our offices will be accessible for people with disabilities
- We will take into account the needs of individual residents who take part in customer involvement and participation

g) Hiring contractors

When hiring contractors and other agents, we will actively seek to employ organisations which are committed to equal opportunities. Contractors' commitment to Equal Opportunities will be measured and evaluated prior to any contract being awarded.

5 FURTHER ACTION

We recognise that these measures are only the first steps towards the establishment of genuine equal opportunities. We will:

- Continually monitor the effect of the Equal Opportunities Policy, by reference to collected and analysed data. The TMO Manager will monitor the number of discrimination issues raised and will report to the Styles House Board. Information will be provided by ethnicity, gender, disability, and age. The Board will raise any issues of concern with the TMO Manager where an inappropriate trend or pattern becomes apparent
- Continually review our policies and practices to ensure that we are implementing equal opportunities. Where an imbalance is found, action will be taken to redress the reasons for the imbalance. We will continually work to become more aware of the various forms of discrimination and the problems they cause, how they affect us, and the implications for our work