

# **Railway Housing Association**

## **Policy Statement**

### **Equality & Diversity**

#### **1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 The Association recognises the importance of its role as employer, service provider and purchaser of goods and services in eliminating all forms of discrimination and harassment, and in promoting tolerance, fairness and equality. It also recognises that the aims of the Association's Business Strategy will only be achieved by taking into account the diverse nature of our communities.
- 1.2 The Association will aim to ensure that no individual or group is treated less favourably on the grounds of race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. We aim to recognise the needs of individuals and treat each person in employment or through service provision with dignity and respect.
- 1.3 This policy is supported by an Equality & Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.

#### **2. Definitions**

- 2.1 Equality- by equality we mean treating everyone fairly.
- 2.2 Diversity – by diversity we mean valuing peoples' differences.
- 2.3 Protected characteristics are race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity. The Equality Act outlaws unlawful discrimination against a person because of one or more of these characteristics.
- 2.4 The Association recognises that the Equality Act 2010 defines unlawful discrimination in four main ways: -
  - Direct Discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic. The person may not have the protected characteristic but is linked or associated with someone who has; or they may be perceived to have the characteristic.
  - Indirect discrimination happens when there is a rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination can be justified if it can be shown that the rule, policy or practice is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.
  - Harassment occurs when someone engages in unwanted conduct which is related to a protected characteristic and which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of another person or creating for that person an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

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- Victimisation occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others because they have done something in relation to the Equality Act, such as making or supporting a complaint or raising a grievance about discrimination or because it is suspected that they have done or may do these things.
- 2.5 Disability - the Association's approach to disability equality is based on the 'Social Model of Disability'. This was developed by disabled people as an alternative to the traditional medical approach. It asserts that the exclusion and deprivation experienced by disabled people is not the inevitable result of their disability but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. Disabled people have the right to services and employment opportunities and it is the responsibility of organisations to recognise and remove any barriers. Typical barriers include – physical access to buildings, inaccessible information, attitudes and knowledge of managers and staff.
- 2.6 Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability and the unfavourable treatment cannot be justified. The treatment can be justified if it can be shown that it is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair balanced and reasonable way. This form of discrimination can only occur if the service provider knows or can reasonably be expected to know that the person is disabled.
- 2.7 Gender Reassignment is the process of transitioning from the gender assigned at birth to the gender the person identifies with. This may involve medical or surgical procedures.

**3. Implementation**

- 3.1 The Association will comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 As well as complying with the law, the Association will follow the guidance and good practice recommended by the Tenant Services Authority, National Housing Federation, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 3.3 We expect employees of the Association to promote the spirit of our Equality & Diversity Policy and to recognise that they have a duty not to discriminate against anyone in carrying out their duties.
- 3.4 The Association is committed to identifying and removing unnecessary bureaucratic barriers that may prevent equal access to employment and in the delivery of services. We will monitor Board membership, employment, service delivery and other activities in relation to equality to identify whether our policies and procedures are improving access for communities and individuals who face discrimination and disadvantage.

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3.5 It is the aim of the Association to promote and demonstrate fairness and equality of opportunity in the provision of services and in the employment of staff; and achieve measurable progress against agreed targets to promote equality throughout the organisation and all of its operations.

**4. Responsibility**

4.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

**5. Review**

5.1 This policy, together with the accompanying strategy and action plan, will be reviewed annually in consultation with residents and staff.

**This policy applies to the beneficiaries of Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses.**

**This policy can be made available on request in other languages, large type, Braille or in audio format.**

April 2011