

equality and diversity policy



Policy Statement

The Adactus Housing Group recognises its responsibilities to provide equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations in its activities as a landlord, managing agent, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser. The Group is totally opposed to all forms of

discrimination on the grounds of 'race', national origin, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment status, being married or a civil partner, pregnancy or maternity leave, sexual orientation, disability or age.

Aims

This policy aims to summarise how the Group is working to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and increase equality of opportunity. It supports the delivery of the following corporate objectives of the Adactus Housing Group taken from its current business plan:

'Promote choice and services that are sensitive to the diverse needs of our customers.'

'Recruit, retain and develop the best staff.'

'Maintain strong governance with board members who provide the Group with a diversity of knowledge and experience.'

Scope

This policy applies to any person or organisation that any member of the Adactus Housing Group has contact with in undertaking its activities as landlord,

managing agent, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser.

Links to other policies and strategies

The Group has established an Equality Impact Assessment process that must be applied to all

policies to specifically consider equality and diversity issues when policies are produced or reviewed.

Context

This policy has been produced in accordance with the guidance provided by the Housing Corporation publication Equality and Diversity Good Practice Note 8 (November 2007).

There are currently eight main pieces of legislation in force in the UK which make discrimination in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services unlawful (this list is not exhaustive):

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2005)

- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

The Group also observes the Commission for Racial Equality code of practice on housing and associated guidance produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Definitions

Equality – A revised term for equal opportunities, being the same/treated the same.

Diversity – Recognising the differences in everyone that make them unique and responding to an individual's needs.

Our Approach

As an Employer

As an employer the Group's equality and diversity priorities are to encourage its members to recruit and retain talent from a wide pool and to ensure that staff are treated fairly and in accordance with the law.

The Group and its members will:

- Aim to recruit and retain a workforce to reflect the diversity of its customer-base, set equality targets for recruitment and publish performance against these targets.
- Operate, and monitor, recruitment practices that reduce the chance of discrimination.
- Maintain 'Positive about Disabilities' accreditation and display the 'Positive about Disabilities' logo on all job advertisements.
- In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, guarantee people with a disability an interview for any employment vacancy provided that they meet the essential criteria.
- Continue employing, wherever practicable, employees who become disabled during their employment, and assist in their retraining.
- Subscribe to the Housing Diversity Network (HDN) and advertise all job vacancies on the HDN website.
- Provide annual training for staff on equality and diversity issues.
- Provide annual training for Board members.
- Respect the religious practices of staff in the workplace.

- Offer flexible working hours and arrangements.
- Ensure that pay is determined equitably.
- Provide enhanced maternity and paternity leave and offer staff the option to purchase childcare vouchers tax free.
- Have a zero-tolerance approach to racist behaviour and other harassment.
- Equally apply terms and conditions irrespective of an employee's sexuality.
- Make an equality impact assessment of all employment policies.
- Be sensitive to gender reassignment.

As a Landlord and Managing Agent

The Group encourages its members to recognise diversity and provide equality of opportunity by tailoring the delivery of landlord services.

The Group and its members will:

- Operate, and monitor, lettings practices that reduce the chance of discrimination, set equality targets for lettings and publish performance against these targets.
- Provide an over-the-telephone and face-to-face interpreting service.
- Highlight the availability of, and provide, any of its publications in alternate formats / languages, including websites.
- Ensure, where possible, that all offices will be fully accessible for disabled people.
- Use tenancy agreements that recognise the rights of same-sex partner relationships.
- Provide a wide range of customer consultation methods.
- Respect and, where possible, accommodate the religious practices of customers.
- Maintain accurate customer profile records in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Pilot the prioritisation of requests for repairs for customers with support needs.
- Investigate any differences in customer satisfaction between different groups.

- Build new properties that meet the 'Life time Homes' standard.
- Operate harassment and domestic violence procedures that provide support for the victim.
- Consult the services of an Occupational Therapist to speedily assess requests for disabled adaptations.
- Maintain accurate records of adapted properties.
- Make an equality impact assessment of all policies and services.

As a Purchaser

The Group will use its purchasing power to ensure that its contractors' service delivery is consistent with the Group's equality and diversity commitments.

The Group and its members will:

- Require maintenance contractors to agree to work within a Code of Conduct which emphasises the Group's expectations with regard to equality and diversity.
- Ensure that out-of-hours contractors operate a telephone translation service.
- Require contractors to commit to achieving equality and diversity targets for staffing and customer satisfaction.

As a Contractor and Partner

As a contractor or partner providing services to a third party, the Group's members will maintain their commitment to provide equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations.

The Group and its members will:

- Not accept instructions from any client or partner that indicates an intention to discriminate unlawfully.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

No adverse impact identified.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery of this policy's action plan will be monitored through the Equality & Diversity Continuous Improvement Group. The Group will

publish an Equalities Scheme to provide an evaluation of its work in this area.