

# Equalities and Diversity Policy

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## 1 Introduction & Summary

1.1 Genesis Housing Group recognises the important role we have, in eliminating all forms of discrimination and harassment under our sphere of control and in promoting tolerance, fairness and equality.

1.2 In addition to our moral and legal obligations, we recognise there is significant strength to be gained from an effective Equalities and Diversity Policy:

- It will help build a positive public image to customers, prospective customers, other customers, partners and stakeholders. Good performance on equality will help win new business.
- Taking account of diversity is crucial to developing new services to meet future need and to keep existing services relevant.
- A governance structure and workforce that reflects the customer base at all tiers will be better equipped to deal with the range of needs and aspirations of customers.
- It will help improve staff recruitment and retention, with people not only wanting to join the organisation and to enhance the job satisfaction and loyalty of existing employees. Genesis Housing Group is working towards becoming an Employer of Choice.
- Recruiting a diverse workforce will ensure a wider choice of applicants by making use of all available talent, bringing different outlooks and expertise, thereby improving the understanding of, and quality of services, to our customers.
- An inclusive approach will result in a more motivated workforce who feels valued and willing to contribute to the success of the organisation. It should lead to reduced absenteeism and turnover, with people able to attend work, free from prejudice, fear and harassment or other forms of discrimination.
- It will avoid, or reduce, costs associated with discriminatory action.

1.3 Our commitment to equalities and diversity is explicit in two of the corporate objectives contained within our Strategic Plan:

- Putting customers first
- Growing the business
- Community investment
- Delivering value for money
- Developing and supporting our people

Genesis Housing Group is  
committed to **eliminating  
discrimination** and  
encouraging **diversity**

## **1.4 Using This Document**

### **1.4.1** Our Equalities and Diversity Policy is in three parts:

- Policy Statement - setting out our overall position in relation to equalities and diversity.
- Policy Framework - setting out our specific policy aims and our strategic objectives to achieve those aims. Our policy aims and strategic objectives are given both in terms of our areas of operation (e.g. employment or access to housing) and across the various categories of discrimination (e.g. race or disability).
- Implementation – setting out overall responsibilities for implementation, monitoring and review of the Policy.

### **1.4.2** The policy document will be supported by a number of action plans detailing the specific actions to be undertaken to achieve our policy and strategic aims.

## **2. Our Policy Statement**

### **2.1** Genesis Housing Group, as both a major employer and a large social landlord, is committed to eliminating discrimination and encouraging diversity amongst our workforce and the communities in which we serve.

### **2.2** Our aims in respect of equalities and diversity are:

- To ensure that our workforce is truly representative of all sections of society and that each employee feels respected and able to give their best.
- To work together to ensure that our customers, and other customers, are provided with a responsive and culturally sensitive service, which addresses issues of discrimination and harassment.

### **2.3** We recognise that some forms of disadvantage and discrimination are widely experienced by particular groups on the grounds of:

- age;
- disability;
- race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality or national origin;
- gender including gender identity;
- HIV status;
- marital status;
- religion or belief; and
- sexual orientation.

We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination and will seek to achieve equality by eliminating discrimination experienced on these grounds and promoting social cohesion.

- 2.4 We acknowledge that social cohesion is bringing together, with the participation of all customers in an integrated way, of the economic, social, health and educational policies that will create a sustainable community. Genesis Housing Group continues to develop and implement projects that actively contribute to the social cohesion of communities within which we operate.
- 2.5 In addition, we support and promote diversity, by recognising that all people are different. We aim to recognise the needs of individuals and treat each person, in employment and through service provision, with dignity and respect.

### **3 Policy Framework: Areas of Operation**

**Our Equalities and Diversity Policy covers all areas of operation:**

#### **3.1 Governance**

We believe that the accountability of our organisation is enhanced by the representation and involvement, on our governing bodies and sub-committees, of individuals from the diverse communities in which we serve.

**To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.1.1 Be fair and transparent in the recruitment of Board Members to our governance structures.
- 3.1.2 Keep the membership of governing bodies and sub committees under review and will implement ways to improve under-representation of people from minority groups.
- 3.1.3 Ensure that all in governance are well informed about equalities and diversity issues.

#### **Recruitment and Staff Development**

- 3.2 We recognise that employing staff who reflect the range of experiences of the local community assists in the delivery of effective services.

**To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.2.1 Ensure that staff recruitment is conducted in accordance with equal opportunities principles.
- 3.2.2 Regularly review the recruitment level of under-represented groups, particularly at senior levels, and take effective action to rectify any imbalance.

- 3.2.3 Value and respect the identities and cultures of all our employees, and encourage all employees to reach their full potential.
- 3.2.4 Develop and maintain opportunities for the career development of under represented minority groups. Where appropriate we will use lawful positive action to redress any imbalance within the workplace.
- 3.2.5 Undertake to provide training in equality issues to all staff in relation to both the provision of services and the implementation of this Policy.

### **3.3 Customer Involvement**

We strongly believe that resident involvement is a way of empowering customers and delivering services more effectively. We recognise that there are difficulties in involving customers from diverse communities and groups, who may face institutional barriers or hostility from other customers.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.3.1 Seek to ensure that our mechanisms for customer consultation and promote the full and active contribution of customers and groups based within the diverse communities within which we work.
- 3.3.2 Encourage best practice in terms of involving BME customers and customers from other 'hard to reach' groups.
- 3.3.3 Use appropriate means of communication which recognises diverse communities within which we operate.
- 3.3.4 Encourage customers challenging discriminatory views in our offices and at public meetings.

### **3.4 Procurement**

The Group provides a large amount of work to contractors, consultants and other suppliers. We recognise our responsibility in ensuring there is no discrimination in the allocation of this work and our responsibility in promoting equality issues.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.4.1 Regularly review our procedures on selection of contractors and contract compliance to ensure they are not adversely affecting BME and other minority contractors. Promote and encourage the use of suppliers that employ individuals from under-represented groups such as people with disabilities.
- 3.4.2 Monitor to ensure that our contractors comply with our equalities and

diversity policy and do not discriminate in the execution of contracts. Ensure that those who provide services in people's homes are sensitive to different needs.

- 3.4.3** Work with local authorities and others to identify and develop good practice in equalities and diversity for BME and other minority contractors.

### **3.5 Housing Needs and Housing Strategies**

We recognise that as a major social landlord we need to understand and address the housing and related needs of everyone in the communities we serve.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.5.1** Work in partnership with local authorities and other local agencies, in order to ensure that we accurately assess the housing needs and aspirations amongst diverse communities and minority groups.
- 3.5.2** Regularly review our contribution to meeting those needs through the use of existing stock or developing new housing.
- 3.5.3** Review the role of low cost home ownership in meeting the needs of BME and other minority groups.
- 3.5.4** Carry out equality impact assessments on all significant functions and policies which might affect our customers.

### **3.6 Development and Community Regeneration**

We recognise the importance of responding to the needs of the diverse communities within which we operate, when considering new developments and priorities for community regeneration activities.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.6.1** Consult with diverse communities to explore location and design issues in order to develop appropriate housing.
- 3.6.2** Regularly review our community regeneration strategy delivered through Genesis Community Foundation to ensure that it takes account of the needs of diverse communities in assessing priorities and allocation of resources.
- 3.6.3** Work with other agencies to ensure additional services are in place to meet the needs and aspirations of BME groups and other under-represented minority groups (e.g. opportunities for training, employment and business development).

- 3.6.4 Use opportunities afforded by our community development activities in order to promote diversity.

### 3.7 Harassment and Bullying

The Group condemns harassment, bullying or intimidation of any kind and is committed to taking effective action to end such behaviour and provide proper redress.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.7.1 Implement a Dignity at Work Policy which stresses the entitlement of every employee to work in an environment that promotes dignity and respect and outlines the organisation's response to inappropriate behaviour. Any incident of discrimination or harassment will be viewed as a serious disciplinary matter.
- 3.7.2 Work towards the elimination of harassment in our housing schemes. Publicise our stance on harassment to customers (e.g. through the Occupancy Agreements and Handbooks) and take swift action against the perpetrators of harassment. This includes safeguarding our staff from harassment by customers or members of the public.
- 3.7.3 Work with local authorities and other local agencies to ensure support is provided for the victims of harassment.
- 3.7.4 Work to ensure an effective degree of multi agency co-operation and Information exchange in tackling harassment.
- 3.7.5 Regularly review our policies covering harassment, bullying and intimidation. We will ensure these policies are implemented effectively by rigorous monitoring.

### 3.8 Access to Housing

We recognise that certain minority groups are disproportionately represented amongst those in housing need and that this must be addressed within our lettings policy.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.8.1 Ensure that access to our properties is transparent and accountable and give equal access to all groups of applicants.
- 3.8.2 Monitor all lettings to ensure our lettings to BME households and

disabled customers are in proportion with local housing needs.

### **3.9 Resident Satisfaction with Service Delivery**

We recognise the need to ensure that our services are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities within which we operate.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.9.1** Be proactive about publishing available services to all customers, focusing on under represented groups within the community.
- 3.9.2** Adopt non-discriminatory housing management and maintenance policies and procedures.
- 3.9.3** Monitor service take-up and resident satisfaction with the delivery of service by ethnicity and other minority groups.
- 3.9.4** Encourage all customers to indicate clear preferences in order to provide a fair, equitable, relevant and sensitive service.
- 3.9.5** Monitor by ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation, all legal action taken by the Group.

### **3.10 BME Housing Associations**

We recognise the fundamental role of BME housing associations in empowering BME communities and the added value that BME associations bring in terms of understanding the needs of BME communities.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 3.10.1** Provide opportunities to BME contractors and suppliers to demonstrate their capabilities, using fair and transparent processes for the selection of partner organisations and the establishment of partnership arrangements.
- 3.10.2** Be proactive in seeking work with BME associations in delivering services particularly to BME communities.

## **4 Policy Framework: Challenging Discrimination and Promoting Equalities and Diversity**

### **4.1 Challenging Discrimination**

**4.1.1** We acknowledge the fact that in our society, discrimination can exist. There are unintended institutional barriers which disproportionately affect some groups of the community more than others. For example, ethnic minority groups; women; young people; older people; disabled people; people of different religions or faith; lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people.

**4.1.2** We are committed to identifying and eradicating any discriminating practices within the Group in order to ensure equal access to our services by all the people in the community on the basis of need. We will make equalities and diversity an integrated part in all of our work with our partners, contractors and suppliers.

### **4.2 Categories of Discrimination**

#### **4.2.1 Racial Discrimination**

Racial discrimination is defined as treating a person, or group of people, less favourably based on their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin. This can take the form of, for example, withholding facilities, services or opportunities from someone who should be entitled to them and who is denied them on the basis of race. Such discrimination can involve exclusion, oppression, stereotyping and marginalisation.

Genesis Housing Group works in some of the most ethnically diverse areas in the country. We recognise that employing staff, who reflect the racial and cultural diversity of our communities, at all levels of the organisation, will assist in the delivery of effective services. We also recognise the general disadvantage of BME communities amongst our customers, although there are important differences between the experiences of different BME groups. We will strive for racial equality.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

**4.2.2** Continue to support the Edge Forward programme which is run by the Housing Diversity Network. Mentoring as either group or individual mentoring is available for any staff members who consider themselves to be a minority group rather than exclusively BME. Genesis Housing Group also encourages its senior managers to act as mentors.

**4.2.3** Take a proactive stance against discriminatory behaviour, combating

racial prejudice, raising awareness and challenging unfair practices and racial stereotypes. We will regularly review our policies covering racial harassment and other forms of discriminatory behaviour to ensure that these policies are effective and implemented fairly. We will monitor satisfaction with our approach to combating harassment.

- 4.2.4 Monitor lettings within permanent and temporary housing, and home-ownership sales, by ethnicity and other categories, and report this information regularly to the Equalities and Diversity Committee.
- 4.2.5 Strongly promote 'value for money' in service provision and will encourage the involvement and consultation of the diverse communities within which we operate.
- 4.2.6 Ensure that information about services and standards is widely publicised in plain English and provided in alternative formats and languages to accommodate speakers of other languages.
- 4.2.7 Measure and analyse customer satisfaction and explore areas where satisfaction is lower in certain groups than for customers as a whole.

### 4.3 Sex Discrimination

Sex discrimination is defined as treating a person or group of people, less favourably on account of their gender, marital status or gender reassignment.

Genesis Housing Group is committed to ensuring women, men and transgender people are fully and properly represented at all levels of the organisation and are rewarded equally for their contribution.

#### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 4.3.1 Implement the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan and ensure progress is monitored and reported to Diversity Group and Diversity Committee.
- 4.3.2 Encourage men and women to take up training and development opportunities in areas and levels where they are under-represented.
- 4.3.3 Challenge gender stereotypes and sexist language and behaviour.
- 4.3.4 Ensure that female employees are not treated unfavourably on the grounds of pregnancy and / or child birth. This will also include unfavourable treatment on the grounds of the effects of pregnancy or maternity/paternity leave, for example, any temporary lack of capacity during pregnancy.

- 4.3.5 Recognise the importance of family-friendly policies (e.g. those relating to flexible working arrangements), in assisting to promote gender equality in employment, especially through supporting the needs of those with caring responsibilities. As a minimum, we will meet our statutory obligations in this respect. Within the constraints of effective service delivery, we undertake to give fair consideration to other requests for different working arrangements.
- 4.3.6 Ensure that men and women are valued equally and that salaries, pensions and other financial rewards and benefits reflect parity and are free from any form of bias.
- 4.3.7 We recognise that people who plan to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone gender re-assignment can face discrimination and / or harassment. We will ensure that transgender / transsexual employees and customers are not discriminated against in relation to employment or service provision and will seek to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.

#### **4.4 Sexual Orientation Discrimination**

Sexual orientation discrimination is defined as treating a person, or group of people, less favourably based on their sexual orientation or their perceived sexual orientation (i.e. on the grounds that they are gay, lesbian, heterosexual or bi-sexual).

We recognise the very real discrimination and harassment that people experience on the basis of their sexuality and are committed to the fair treatment of all employees and customers, irrespective of sexual orientation.

##### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 4.4.1 Encourage respect for different lifestyles and challenge negative stereotypical views. We will be proactive in enforcing this message to employees and this is an important element of the 'Welcoming Diversity' course, which is mandatory for all staff.
- 4.4.2 We will ensure that our employment policies are not based on the assumption that everyone is heterosexual.
- 4.4.3 We will ensure that our harassment policies are implemented effectively, rigorously monitored and regularly reviewed. We will work with other agencies to ensure that support is provided to victims and will promote multi agency cooperation and information exchange in tackling harassment of this nature.

#### **4.5 Age Discrimination**

Ageism is unjustified discrimination against a person, or group of people, on the grounds of age. Ageism usually displays itself in one of two forms: discrimination against young people and discrimination against older people.

The Group seeks to cultivate an environment which values all people regardless of their age.

##### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 4.5.1** Ensure that all employees are aware that the Equalities and Diversity Policy includes being positive about age. We will challenge misconceptions and stereotypes based on age, both in employment and in the delivery of services.
- 4.5.2** Promote the benefits of a mixed-age workforce and will work towards becoming an Age Positive Employer. This means that we are committed to tackling age discrimination and taking practical steps to address any discriminatory practices in our day to day operations.
- 4.5.3** Review our recruitment, selection, training schemes and promotion processes to ensure there are no hidden age barriers.
- 4.5.4** Encourage employees of all ages to develop their potential and will promote a good spread of ages at all levels of the organisation.
- 4.5.5** Ensure that we do not consider age as a factor when making decisions about redundancy.
- 4.5.6** Endeavour to offer employees fair and flexible retirement options.

#### **4.6 Disability Discrimination**

Disability discrimination can be defined as treating a person, or group of people, less favourably than others because of a particular disability or for a reason related to a disability. Discrimination also occurs if an employer or service provider fails to comply with their legislative duty to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of a disabled person and the failure to do so cannot be justified.

The Group is committed to achieving disability equality by eliminating unlawful discrimination and the disadvantage experienced by people with a disability, wherever reasonably possible.

We adopt the Social Model of Disability which instead of focusing on people's impairments, we aim to remove the barriers that disabled people face in every day life. These might be in terms of attitudes, social support, information or physical structures.

**To achieve our aims we will:**

- 4.6.1** Implement the Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan and ensure progress is monitored and reported to Diversity Group and Diversity Committee.
- 4.6.2** Challenge stereotypes about people with disabilities and will seek to focus on what people can do rather than what they cannot.
- 4.6.2** Regularly review the progress of our work in respect of disabled customers in order to ensure our commitment to the 'Two Ticks' Disability Award is maintained.
- 4.6.3** Interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum requirement for a job vacancy and will consider them on the basis of ability.
- 4.6.4** Ensure that there is a system in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees and board members what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.
- 4.6.5** Make every effort when employees and board members become disabled to make sure that they stay in employment.
- 4.6.6** Undertake to make appropriate adjustments in the workplace (e.g. to working arrangements and the work environment) to help people with disabilities to be, and remain, employed and to achieve their full career potential.
- 4.6.7** Take action to ensure that all employees and board members develop the right level of disability awareness needed to deliver our commitments.
- 4.6.8** Continue to provide a full range of housing services, addressing the wide variety of needs of disabled customers, including the provision of adaptations to support independent living, floating tenancy support and supported housing accommodation.
- 4.6.9** Maximise access to our housing and services and will strive to provide services which are relevant to the needs of people with a disability. We will provide information in ways that are accessible to those with sensory impairment or other special communication needs (e.g. through use of sign language translators, home visits, alternative formats). Similarly, we will assist customers to communicate their needs (e.g. through use of text phones or induction loops).

#### **4.7 Religion or Belief Discrimination**

Religion or belief discrimination involves treating a person, or group of people, less favourably on account of their religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief. Discrimination can also take place on the grounds of a mistaken perception of someone's religion or belief.

Genesis Housing Group recognises individuals' right to freedom of belief and protection from intolerance. We undertake to treat people fairly irrespective of their religion or belief and aim to promote good relations between people of different religions and beliefs.

##### **To achieve our aims we will:**

- 4.7.1** Develop employment practices in ways which recognise and respect religion and belief. We will seek to improve the understanding of religion and belief among our staff.
- 4.7.2** Deliver our services in ways which recognise and respect religion and belief. We will work with other agencies and community organisations to promote understanding and good relations between people of different faith communities.
- 4.7.3** Tackle unlawful discrimination and harassment. We will ensure that our harassment policies are implemented effectively, rigorously monitored and regularly reviewed. We will work with other agencies to ensure that support is provided to victims and promote multi agency cooperation and information exchange in tackling harassment of this nature.

### **5 Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

#### **5.1 Our Approach**

We have adopted an integrated approach to deliver the aims set out in this Policy. We use the Group's business planning and performance management frameworks to ensure that our equality duties as set out in the Gender Equality Scheme 2008, Disability Equality Scheme 2008 and the Diversity Strategy 2006, are embedded in employment and service planning at every level in the Group.

- 5.1.1** By this approach, we are committed to:
  - Implementing equalities impact assessment of key functions and policies;
  - Consulting and involving our customers in what we do;
  - Monitoring the impact of our work and address any adverse impacts on any groups;
  - Ensuring equal access to information on what we are doing;

- Publishing the equalities and diversity implications of our work;
- Tackling institutional discrimination in race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, and religion or belief;
- Promoting good relations and community cohesion;
- Utilising our procurement function to promote equalities and diversity;
- Providing a safe and secured physical environment for our customers;
- Recruiting and developing a diverse workforce to ensure our employees reflect the community they serve and are able to realise their full potential.

## 5.2 Responsibility for Equalities and Diversity

In the current Board Member and officer structures, responsibility for equalities and diversity are as follows:

- 5.2.1 The Board:** The Board of Genesis Housing Group has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Equalities and Diversity Policy. The Board has delegated this authority to the Equalities and Diversity Committee.
- 5.2.2 The Equalities and Diversity Committee:** The Equalities and Diversity Committee has delegated responsibility from the Board for approving this Policy and for ensuring that adequate resources are provided to implement this Policy. The Committee receives regular update reports on developments and progress on equalities issues.
- 5.2.3 The Executive Team:** The Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for providing management leadership by being accountable for their actions and their impact on the Group's Equalities and Diversity Policy.
- 5.2.4 Group Director of Corporate Services:** This role is responsible for ensuring that a framework of policies and procedures surrounding diversity and equalities issues are developed and implemented. The Group Director is accountable to the Equalities and Diversity Committee and chairs the Equalities and Diversity Group.
- 5.2.5 Group Head of Diversity:** This role is responsible for planning, coordinating and monitoring of the Equalities and Diversity Policy. This will be achieved through the provision of information and advice to staff members and managers in relation to the application of the Policy within the workplace.
- 5.2.6 All Managers:** All managers are responsible for ensuring that they manage staff within the requirements of the Equalities and Diversity Policy. Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the requirements of this Policy and that any breaches of this Policy are challenged and corrected.

- 5.2.7 The Equalities and Diversity Group:** The Group serves as a platform for Equalities and Diversity Champions and other key officers to discuss and coordinate equalities issues at Group and subsidiary level. The Champions are 'experts' in the subsidiaries/directorates and they are responsible for communicating equalities issues with the Group and within the subsidiaries/directorates.
- 5.2.8 All Staff:** All staff are responsible for the implementation of the Policy across Genesis Housing Group. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that they are fully conversant with the requirements of the Policy. Individuals are encouraged to speak out against any behaviour which they believe is in breach of the Policy.
- 5.2.9 Partnership Arrangements:** We are able to influence and support our partners, both with the private sector and with public bodies, to promote equalities and diversity as a fundamental part of good management practice.
- 5.2.10 Grant Aid Arrangements:** The Group, through one of its subsidiaries, Genesis Community provides a proportion of its budget in grant-aid to a number of local organisations. It is a condition of grant-aid that the organisations we fund adopt and implement an equalities and diversity policy. It is our responsibility to monitor these organisations to ensure compliance with our grant aid conditions.
- 5.2.11 Procurement Arrangements:** The Group's Procurement Strategy and practices are compliant with related equalities legislation. As a major procurer of goods, services and facilities, we use procurement to promote equalities and diversity in the delivery of services for our customers.

### **5.3 Learning and Communication of the Policy**

- 5.3.1** This area is a vital component which underpins the implementation of our Equalities and Diversity Policy. The Group is committed to ensuring that relevant training and information is provided to enable staff and Board Members to fulfil their responsibilities under this Policy and that open debate is encouraged. In addition, we will ensure that our position on equality issues is communicated to those people who may be subject to discrimination. We will make use of the following means:
- 5.3.2 Recruitment packs:** A summary of this Policy is included within the job application packs provided to prospective employees.
- 5.3.3 Staff induction folder:** A summary of this Policy is now included in the induction pack which is given out with the new starter's recruitment packs.
- 5.3.4 In-house training programmes:** The importance the Group attaches to

equalities and diversity is emphasised to all staff through the mandatory attendance requirement attached to the 'Welcoming Diversity' Course. In addition, tailored training is made available for those staff who need additional skills and knowledge to fulfil their roles (e.g. cultural or disability awareness training for front-line staff and specific training for those recruiting staff).

- 5.3.5 Employee briefings:** Managers receive regular updates on equality and diversity issues, with the intention that this information is cascaded throughout the organisation through the GenBrief process. This is an important means of communicating the organisation's values and policies in this area.
- 5.3.6 Staff representatives:** Members of the Genesis Forum are encouraged to raise any issues and concerns in relation to equalities and diversity issues.
- 5.3.7 Intranet (Genie):** The Group's internal intranet, Genie, allows up to date information on equalities and diversity issues to be made available to all staff (e.g. minutes of the Equalities and Diversity Committee, Action Plans, progress reports, or forthcoming legislation).
- 5.3.8 Customers Handbooks:** A summary of this Policy will be included within the handbooks issued to customers at the commencement of their occupancy.
- 5.3.9 Website:** The Group's external website will publicise a summary of this policy.

Tailored **training** is available  
for staff who need additional  
**skills and knowledge**  
to fulfil their roles

#### **5.4 Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

- 5.4.1** We will achieve the aims of this Equalities and Diversity Policy through our Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Diversity Strategy, together with their action plans.
- 5.4.2** The business or service plans will be the main vehicles through which the Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Diversity Strategy and hence this policy will be implemented.
- 5.4.3** The schemes and actions plans are shaped by related legislation, Audit

Commission Housing Inspection Frameworks and Housing Corporation Good Practice. They are also closely linked with the aims and objectives of the Genesis Housing Group.

**5.4.4** It is expected that subsidiaries or directorates will develop local action plans or identify equalities targets within their business plans for implementing the objectives set out in the Disability Equality Scheme, Gender Equality Scheme and Diversity Strategy.

**5.4.5** We monitor and review our achievements in equalities and diversity on an on-going basis in at a number of levels:

- The Group will monitor and review Group wide achievements through regular review of the equality schemes, Diversity Strategy and action plans and the performance management system.
- At a subsidiary and directorate level, we will monitor and review achievements through review of business plans, or local equalities action plans, and equalities performance indicators set in the performance management system.
- At the individual officer level, we will monitor and review achievements as an integral part of work reviews and performance appraisal.

For more information, please contact:

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Company Number: 3802456  
Tenant Services Authority No: L4286

## **Appendix 1 Legal Obligations**

Genesis Housing Group has a duty under various legislation to promote equal opportunities and civil rights. These include:

### **Equal Pay Act 1970**

The Act provides individual rights to the same contractual pay and benefits as a person of the opposite sex in the same employment where the man or woman are doing the same work, or work rated as equivalent or work that is proved to be of equal value.

### **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**

The Act prohibits sex discrimination against individuals in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises.

### **Race Relations Act 1976**

It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin. All racial groups are protected from discrimination for employment, training and services.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The Act promotes disabled peoples' rights in the areas of employment, education, access to goods, facilities and services and buying or renting land or property as well as minimum standards for public transport.

### **Human Rights Act 1998**

The Act covers:

- Right to life
- Prohibition of torture
- Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
- Right to liberty and security
- Right to a fair trial
- No punishment without law
- Right to respect for private and family life
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Freedom of assembly and association
- Right to marry
- Freedom of expression
- Prohibition of discrimination
- Protection of property
- Right to education
- Right to free elections
- Abolition of the death penalty

### **Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**

The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 requires named public authorities to review their policies and procedures; to remove discrimination and the possibility of discrimination; and to actively promote race equality. It amends the Race Relations Act 1976, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origin. This includes a positive duty to promote racial equality.

The Act applies to the fields of employment, planning, housing, the exercise of public functions (including private provision), the provision of goods, facilities and services and education and we must have a Race Equality Scheme.

### **Employment Act 2002**

The Act covers:

- Work and parents
- Dispute resolution in the workplace
- Employment Tribunal procedures
- Equal Pay questionnaire
- Fixed term work directive
- Right to time off work for union learning representatives
- Work focussed interviews/working age benefits
- Data sharing provision

### **Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003**

It outlaws discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation.

### **Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations 2003**

It outlaws discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of religion or belief.

### **Civil Partnership Act 2004**

The Act creates a new legal relationship of civil partnership, which two people of the same-sex can form by signing a registration document. It also provides same-sex couples who form a civil partnership with parity of treatment in a wide range of legal matters with those opposite-sex couples who enter into a civil marriage.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 2005**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 updates the 1995 Act in the following ways:

It makes changes to the definition of disability from December 2005:

- cancer, HIV and MS are now covered from the point of diagnosis
- the requirement that mental health impairments are “clinically well recognised” is removed.

- it introduces a disability equality duty on all public authorities. The duty is divided into two parts, the general duty and the specific duty. This duty has a significant impact on the way in which all public services are provided and on improving the lives of disabled people.

- Illegal for operators of transport vehicles to discriminate.
- Allow adaptations to rented property.
- All of public sector must have a Disability Equality Scheme.

### **Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006**

It prohibits unjustified age discrimination in employment and vocational training covering:

- Default retirement at 65 - "duty to consider" procedure
- Service related benefits
- No age criterion in pay and benefits
- Exempt most age related rules in occupational pensions.

### **The Equality Act 2006**

- Established the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) and define its purpose and functions.
- Makes unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities and services, the disposal and management of premises, education, and the exercise of public functions.
- Creates a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between women and men, and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions.
- Makes unlawful (subject to exemptions), discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in delivery of goods, facilities and services.

### **Gender Equality Duty 2007**

The Equality Act 2006 also introduces the new gender equality duty which requires the public sector to promote gender equality. All public authorities as employers and service providers are required to have due regard to:

- the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and
- to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Under the specific duties there will be three key duties, which will have a focus on outcomes and actions:

- Publish a gender equality scheme and reviewing on a three year cycle.
- Publish an equal pay policy.
- Conduct gender impact assessment.

## Appendix 2

### Glossary of Terms

- **Equality and Diversity**

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways.

Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of ethnicity, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. In addition to the legislation which seeks to prevent discrimination in all these areas,

Diversity is about valuing individual difference. A diversity approach aims to recognise, value and manage difference to enable all employees to contribute and realise their full potential, or for all customers to benefit from the services we provide.

- **Ethnicity**

An ethnic group is a group of human beings whose members identify with each other. Ethnic identity is further marked by the recognition from others of a group's distinctiveness and the recognition of common cultural, linguistic, religious, behavioral or biological traits.

Ethnicity is an increasingly important means by which we can identify (and categorise) people, and through which people can identify themselves.

- **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 provides the following definition of disability. A person must have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, long-term, adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

- **Gender**

Classification of the two sexes, male and female. It also includes transgender and transsexual people.

Transgender – A term used to include transsexuals, transvestites and cross-dressers.

Transsexual - A term used to refer to people who feel a consistent and overwhelming desire to transition and fulfil their life as a member of the opposite gender.

- **Sexual Orientation**

This term refers to the broad sexual characteristics and preferences of a person. It includes but is not restricted to whether a person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual.

Lesbian – this term refers to a woman who is sexually and emotionally attracted to other women.

Gay - this term refers to a man who is sexually and emotionally attracted to other men.

Bisexual - this term refers to a person who is sexually and emotionally attracted to their own and the opposite gender.

Heterosexual - This term refers to a person male or female, who is sexually and emotionally attracted to people of the opposite sex. The opposite of this is homosexual.

- **Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) People**

The term Black is used by some African, Caribbean and Asian people as a conscious and political expression of racist oppression and/or to denote unity of origin.

The term ethnic minority people refers to groups of people who share historical, cultural or national origins and who are numerically a minority in this society.