

Equality, diversity & inclusion Policy

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1 Policy information

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2 Policy Statement

This policy sets out how South Liverpool Homes (SLH) is committed to supporting and promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) within our organisation and communities. We aim to create an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, where diversity is valued, and where everyone can reach their full potential and be themselves. We recognise that this will require a strong and collaborative commitment from all within the organisation. Our organisation and the support we give to our customers and colleagues and others will be impartial, neutral, and universal. This commitment is embraced by our Board and informs all our activities.

This policy applies to everyone, including but not limited to; those who receive a service from us, are employed by or volunteer their services to SLH. We will also seek to ensure that anyone who works on our behalf demonstrates a clear commitment to EDI and alignment with our organisational values and behaviours.

It is an expectation that all colleagues, including those who may be working on behalf of SLH, will behave in an acceptable manner, treating others with courtesy, fairness, respect and consideration and conduct themselves professionally when interacting with tenants, colleagues, and the wider community.

3 Policy aims

As outlined in our 2023-27 EDI Strategy, we want to be an organisation for everyone. A respected employer and provider of homes in thriving neighbourhoods where everyone feels able to be themselves. This includes our tenants, colleagues and all those with whom we interact.

Through the delivery of this policy, we aim to:

- Make better informed decisions as a result of diverse thinking with EDI being a guiding principle in all that we do.
- Prevent discrimination, eliminate prejudice, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity within the organisation and our communities.
- Treat all people fairly and with respect taking account of the diverse nature of their culture and background.
- Foster a fair and inclusive housing service that fully considers and embeds equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Lead by example by ensuring colleagues are aware of their responsibilities and know how and where to seek support to actively uphold and champion equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Enable us to attract and retain people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences at all levels within the organisation.
- Actively promote our services and opportunities to a wide range of diverse communities from all backgrounds to ensuring these are accessible to all so that we can reach as many people as possible.
- Ensure robust diversity-related data collection to better understand our tenants and colleagues and use this to improve our services, policies, practices and relationships.

4 Equality, diversity & inclusion policy

4.1 Our Values

As an organisation committed to achieving inclusivity, our services will take a person-centered approach, with diverse considerations incorporated into processes and delivery to ensure they are considerate and accessible to all. We will achieve this through the completion of equality impact assessments on all policies and procedures and data analysis. This will assist in preventing discrimination and protecting the dignity of our tenants, customers and colleagues.

We expect all our colleagues to use appropriately inclusive language and behave in a way that will uphold the dignity of tenants, colleagues and stakeholders. Unacceptable behaviour including bullying, harassment and victimisation or discrimination will not be tolerated, and any allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately under our Dignity at Work and Anti-social Behaviour Policies.

4.2 EDI Monitoring Information

We aim to provide an inclusive environment for all by ensuring that EDI considerations are central to policy development and decision-making processes.

We will ask tenants, colleagues, and job applicants about their personal characteristics to assist in:

- building a picture of our diversity profile both as an employer and a landlord.
- the evaluation and understanding of how our policies and processes will impact all tenants, customers and colleagues.
- building a diverse, engaged and inclusive workforce.
- identifying and resourcing the services we need to best support tenants and customers' needs.

Whilst we will actively seek to improve the proportion of our tenants and colleagues who provide responses to our EDI monitoring questions, we also recognise that some may not want to provide this personal information. We respect that decision and value all who disclose this information and those who do not. Tenants and colleagues are reassured that disclosure of this information is voluntary and is subject to the strictest levels of confidence and security and in compliance with GDPR legislation and our Data Protection and Information Security Policies.

4.3 Our service commitments

We are committed to working towards the reduction and elimination of any disadvantage that marginalised groups within the communities we serve may experience. We will seek to achieve this by:

- Inclusive and accessible services for all our tenants, customers and stakeholders.
- Ensuring all our written and digital communications follow accessibility guidelines and communication accessibility standards. Providing information in alternative formats on request in accordance with our

Interpretation Policy

- Responding to citywide and local and community needs in the fair allocation of our homes and applying a local lettings scheme to create sustainable communities and provide support to certain customer groups through priority allocations.
- Closely monitoring and reporting on the allocation of our homes by protected characteristic to ensure equity in the allocation process.
- Monitoring and reporting on customer satisfaction levels by protected characteristic on a regular basis with a view to using this information to continuously improve and shape our services.
- Regularly consulting with all customers and residents on the services they receive through informal and formal involvement. Actively encouraging them to participate in the decision-making process through the delivery of our Resident Involvement Policy.
- Supporting our tenants to maintain independence through the implementation of our Adaptations Policy which aims to provide support and alterations to their home enabling them to live in an environment which is suitable for their needs.

4.4 Meeting housing needs

We will liaise with local government and statutory agencies to share their assessment of the housing needs of local communities, especially those groups facing discrimination so that these are recognised and prioritised. We will regularly review how we can contribute to meeting these needs by using our existing stock or working in partnership with specialist agencies where we feel they are better equipped than ourselves to meet the needs.

In developing new homes, we will ensure that the design of homes meets the diverse needs of the households that need rehousing.

4.5 Access to housing

As a housing association we will support the local community by providing safe and affordable homes to all. We will promote fair access to housing by monitoring the allocation of our homes, including the quality of accommodation, to ensure that discrimination does not occur. Ensuring that our priority system for assessing the rehousing needs of our tenants reflects equality principles and is delivered in line with our Allocations Policy.

4.6 Managing & supporting tenancies

We will ensure that we consult tenants effectively through a wide range of inclusive engagement methodologies including but not limited to mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups and our Customer Service Committee and Scrutiny Panel to ensure that our housing services meet the diverse needs of our tenants and customers. Any person who feels they have been unfairly treated in any way has a right to contact us in line with our Customer Feedback Policy which sets out how customers can provide feedback in line with the Social Housing Ombudsman Compliant Handling Code. We will ensure that this procedure is accessible to all, and the feedback received is given proper consideration.

We will seek to ensure that our housing service responds sensitively to the needs of vulnerable residents and will provide a Tenancy Sustainability support service to those in need and where possible, additional support services including Mental Health and wellbeing support will be provided in response to the needs of vulnerable residents through our safeguarding procedures, internal referrals and partnership work with other organisations and agencies.

4.7 Our support services

We recognise the important role SLH plays in promoting and championing the diversity of our tenants and residents and the impact this can have upon the diversity of our communities. We are therefore committed to ensuring that all the housing and other services we provide are accessible and considerate of all that need them. As part of this commitment, we will actively work in collaboration with partners who represent minority or disadvantaged groups.

We will ensure that tenant involvement and participation activities promote the full and active involvement of all groups of tenants and residents. Our dedicated engagement team will work to support our tenants, customers and volunteers to give their views which will help shape our services, strengthen our communities and create opportunities for improvement.

4.8 Harassment, antisocial behaviour and domestic violence.

SLH tenants are expected to adhere to this policy and the terms set out within their tenancy agreement by ensuring their behaviour respects our commitment to promoting community cohesion and the needs and cultures of all people within their community. We will not tolerate harassment of residents and will take the strongest possible action against perpetrators. Specific anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and harassment policies have been developed to ensure that we have an adequate, transparent and fast method of dealing with issues.

We are committed to taking a proactive approach in co-operating with other agencies to deal with all forms of harassment taking an active role in city-wide actions and initiatives to prevent all forms of discrimination, including being an active member of the Hate Crime Joint Agency Group and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference which forms wider strategic partnership working between agencies in relation to hate crime and domestic abuse.

4.9 Recruitment & employment

We recognise that diverse teams make better decisions and having different people with different perspectives and backgrounds will lead to better services for our customers. As an employer we will therefore actively promote a culture which values talent, difference and supports people to be themselves and reach their full potential. We will seek to enable everyone to be able to contribute to the best of their ability through an environment which is safe, inclusive and free from discrimination. We will do this by modelling best practice in identifying and preventing discrimination, bias or other unfair treatment, acting quickly to ensure any such behaviours are appropriately addressed.

We will commit to providing and supporting opportunities for our colleagues to have their voices heard through a variety of platforms, events and mechanisms. Any individual who experiences or witnesses' discrimination or harassment will be encouraged and supported to speak up, with all complaints investigated

thoroughly and dealt with in a sensitive and effective manner through the appropriate procedures.

Through our Recruitment Policy, we will work to attract and retain a workforce that is representative of our wider society. Positive recruitment practices will continue to be important. They will help us to find the right people with the right skills and experience for the right roles. We recognise that to attract diverse talent, we must also remove any barriers that may prevent candidates from applying for roles. We believe that a diverse workforce will enable us to drive better performance across our business and ultimately enable us to deliver an improved service to our customers.

Our recruitment will be conducted in an open and accountable way to ensure fairness and transparency is evident at all stages. Further details can be found in our Recruitment & Selection Policy.

4.10 Training

We will continually train colleagues to ensure everyone has a consistent awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues, as well as training to meet the specific needs of their post. We will also regularly review the distribution of training opportunities to ensure that all colleagues are being treated fairly and have equal opportunities for personal and professional development.

4.11 Procurement and supply chain

We will make sure that our values and behaviours are reflected by all external suppliers working on behalf of us and that they uphold the principles of this policy in all their dealings with our tenants, customers and colleagues. All our contractors, consultants and agents will be expected to have an EDI Policy in place and in the absence of one, they will be expected to adopt ours.

We will ensure that our selection of consultants and contractors is fair and non-discriminatory.

4.12 SLH Board, Customer Committee and Tenant Scrutiny Panel

We will work to ensure that our Board, Customer Services Committee and Tenant Scrutiny Panel are representative of the local community by having an open and accountable recruitment process and using positive action to recruit members from underrepresented groups.

Members will receive appropriate training and be regularly briefed on equalities issues and receive regular monitoring reports on key areas of activity, both on service delivery and employment.

4.13 Responsibilities

All colleagues and stakeholders have responsibility for ensuring that this policy is put into practice. We expect a personal commitment from all colleagues, volunteers and partners in making it effective, and in setting an exemplary standard for others to follow. Additional and specific responsibilities apply to those who manage colleagues and to those who participate in recruitment, training and development.

The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that this policy underpins all

aspects of SLH's work. The Executive Management Team have responsibility for developing the organisational culture in which this policy can operate effectively, and for ensuring that it is implemented.

5 Policy Review Considerations

This policy will be delivered and monitored and evaluated in conjunction with an annual EDI Action Plan

Effectively delivery will be measured by-

- Feedback & complaints from tenants and all other stakeholders including but not limited to colleagues, volunteers and partners.
- Levels of hate crime, both reported and resolved.
- Achievement of external accreditations and public pledges including but not limited to the Fair Employment Charter, Disability Confident Scheme and Investors in People.
- EDI Management Information reporting including annual EDI and gender pay gap reporting,

6 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken in the development of this policy.

7 Policy Assessment

Equality and diversity is a cross-cutting theme that has relevance to all SLH's activities and needs to be reflected in all aspects of our employment and service delivery.

This policy summarises SLH's approach to the equality and diversity agenda, to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements and to meet our moral obligations to work towards a just and tolerant society.

It will be subject to regular review to ensure it remains up to date. As part of the policy review, SLH's risk map has been updated. Through this policy and its effective management, we assess the risk presented as low.

8 Customer Influence

In reviewing this policy, we engaged with the Customer Services Committee who ensure that the services we provide are equitable, efficient and represent good value for money. Meaningful engagement with tenants, residents, colleagues and other key stakeholders has also helped to shape and influence this policy.

9 Statutory and Legislative Framework

We will operate this policy and all other policies and practices relating to it, in line with the legislation that is in force at any time such as the policy.

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Modern Slavery Act 2015

10 Associated Policies

Equality, diversity & inclusion Policy



- Adoption
- Adaptations
- Adult Safeguarding
- Allocations
- ASB
- Capability
- Customer Feedback
- Data Protection
- Flexible Working
- Grievance
- Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Information Security
- Maternity
- Professional Boundaries
- Recruitment & Selection
- Safeguarding Children
- Shared Parental Leave
- Sickness Absence
- Work and Life Balance
- Interpretation
- Speak Up
- Tenant Involvement