



Equality and Diversity Policy

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Section 1: Yorkhill Housing Association – Strategic Commitments

1.1. Promoting equality and diversity

Yorkhill Housing Association Limited promotes its commitments to equality and diversity through all of its services. This is known as mainstreaming of equality and diversity in all that we do. Equal opportunity is recognised as a core part of our governance strategy and covers both employment and all housing services. For example, we incorporate equality and diversity matters into the following:

- Governance;
- employment and human resources;
- finance and IT;
- housing management;
- property management; and
- repairs and maintenance (asset management).

Our equality and diversity policy is essential so we can meet a wide range of regulatory standards, including good practice guidance (see section 2).

Note

Yorkhill Housing Association Limited is referred to as “we” in this document; and the equality and diversity policy is generally referred to simply as “the policy.”

1.2. The format of the policy

The policy is divided into ten sections to provide a strategic framework.

Section 1 explains how the policy is central to organisational governance and is, therefore, central to our activities.

Section 2 summarises some of the regulatory guidance that underpins the policy.

Section 3 contains our key equality and diversity policy principles.

Section 4 summarises how we use our action plan and impact assessments to mainstream equality and diversity objectives throughout all of our services.

Section 5 explains how equality and diversity training is provided to promote organisational objectives.

Section 6 sets out how we manage and monitor performance.

Section 7 explains how we promote equality and diversity matters, including the important notion of positive action.

Section 8 describes our policy consultation procedures and involvement of Committee members in the development and review of the equality and diversity policy.

Section 9 summarises how we address complaints and its links to equality matters.

Section 10 describes how we review the equality and diversity policy on an ongoing basis.

Note

The policy is written in sections to allow for regular updates, as appropriate.

Section 2: Regulatory guidance

Section 2 outlines key regulation on which this policy is based. This includes legislation and good practice guidance.

Key issues explained in this section are: equality law; housing law; and other guidance. This summarises issues in plain language and is not intended as a precise statement of law.

2.1. Equality law

(a) The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 is the main equality law that governs our services, although a wide range of other equality related law exists.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out “protected characteristics that are the grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate. This Act also protects individuals from harassment and victimisation.

The protected characteristics are as follows:

- age;
- disability;
- gender re-assignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

In line with our policy, we also seek to address other forms of discrimination such as unfair discrimination on grounds relating to social class.

An important part of our equality and diversity strategy involves, not simply eliminating unlawful discrimination, but taking steps to promote equality and diversity objectives. In practice, this means promoting services in line with the public sector

equality duty. For instance, in supporting the social model of disability, we promote good relations between disabled people and non-disabled people.

(b) The Scotland Act 1998

The Scotland Act 1998 is very important as it provides a statutory definition of equal opportunity, namely:

“Equal opportunities” means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on the grounds of sex or marital status, or racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions”

(The **Scotland Act 1998**, Schedule 5, L2)

As evident, this definition covers grounds not listed under the protected characteristics such as social origin (or class) as well as language and personal attributes.

2.2. Housing law

Housing law is also important from an equality perspective as it imposes duties on social landlords to promote equal opportunity.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, for instance, requires social landlords to “act in a manner to encourage equal opportunities.” This provision applies to all of the services that we carry out.

2.3. Other guidance

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has developed a range of statutory and non-statutory codes; these codes provide good practice guidance in employment and service delivery and we will consider these and any other good practice in our operational activity.

In delivering our housing services, we also meet the Scottish Social Housing Charter standard that relates to equal opportunity. This standard requires us to ensure that, when delivering services:

“Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

(Scottish Social Housing Charter, 2012)

2.4. Summary

This section outlines the regulatory framework that underpins our equality and diversity policy. This framework is also used in shaping our equality and diversity action plan that is the means by which we implement our equality objectives. The next section explains our core equality and diversity objectives.

Section 3: Key policy principles

Our equality and diversity policy comprises nine key principles. These principles are implemented throughout all of our organisational policies and practices.

Principle 1: We will meet all relevant regulatory standards concerning equality and diversity.

Principle 2: We will implement our equality and diversity objectives through our equality action plan.

Principle 3: We will gather a diverse range of equality and diversity data in order to provide services appropriate to the needs of our tenants and other service users.

All equality and diversity related data are processed in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant guidance.

Principle 4: We will assess policies and procedures against law and guidance standards so that they promote equality and diversity objectives.

Principle 5: We will work with a range of organisations to promote our equality and diversity objectives in the Yorkhill area of Glasgow.

Principle 6: We will use a performance management system to assess how effectively we are meeting our equality and diversity objectives.

Principle 7: We will provide staff and Committee Members with equality and diversity training based on their roles within the association.

Principle 8: We will implement positive action programmes to promote access to association services.

Principle 9: We will consult with tenants and other service users through our Customer Engagement Strategy; and we review the policy regularly, as appropriate.

3.1. Summary

The objectives above determine the activities within our equality and diversity action plan. In short, section 3 sets out our organisational activities by which our performance can be assessed. Section 4 now explains how we implement policy objectives into practice.

Section 4: Policy principles into practice

This section describes how we incorporate our objectives into practice. This is explained by reference to our equality and diversity action plan and checked through our equality and diversity impact assessments for each policy.

4.1. Our equality and diversity action plan and impact assessments

Our equality and diversity action plan and impact assessments are a comprehensive method for incorporating equality and diversity issues throughout all organisational services; this includes housing and employment services. This process is sometimes referred to as mainstreaming of equality and diversity.

The action plan is divided into a number of inter-dependent sections that cover activities such as equality data and diversity information collection, policy assessment, monitoring and training. The aim of this approach is to establish an organisational culture committed to equality, diversity and social justice (Impact Assessment Template Appendix-3, Action Plan Appendix 4).

4.1.1. Assessing organisational policies and practices

One major part of the equality and diversity policy is impact assessments; concerned with assessing our policies and procedures to ensure that they eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunity. This activity is done on an ongoing basis and is linked to our regular review of organisational policies.

4.2. Summary

Our equality and diversity action plan and impact assessments are the process that we use to mainstream equality and diversity commitments throughout all organisational services.

Section 5: Our development and training strategy

Our development and training strategy is comprehensive and based on a thorough assessment of staff and Committee members' training needs. These needs are assessed during the internal staff development review process (staff appraisal).

Training activities enable policy principles to be implemented effectively. This section now explains the range of equality training that might be considered.

5.1. Range of equality and diversity training

Equality and diversity training consists of a variety of activities that vary in terms of scope and complexity. The key point is that our training is aligned to the roles of staff and Committee members. Examples of equality and diversity training are as follows:

- equality legal duties and related good practice guidance;
- our equality and diversity policy action as an outcome of impact assessments;
- consciousness raising such as making housing staff aware of types of discrimination and harassment means and of redress; and
- monitoring of organisational performance in implementing equality and diversity policy objectives (particularly relevant to Committee members).

5.2. Assessing equality and diversity training

Equality and diversity training is very important as it is used to promote an organisational culture committed to social justice. We monitor the results of training courses, therefore, and provide reports to the Committee, as appropriate.

5.3. Summary

We recognise that equality and diversity training, if it is to be effective, should be linked to specific roles of housing staff and Committee members. Equality and diversity training outcomes are reported to Committee.

Section 6: Equal and diversity monitoring

6.1. How we manage performance

We monitor employment and service activities in various ways to assess if equality policy principles are being met in practice.

(a) Reporting to the Scottish Housing Regulator

We monitor our performance each year and report to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This is done to demonstrate compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

(b) Specific indicators

We will incorporate equality and diversity performance indicators into specific organisational policies, as appropriate. This ensures that we monitor more comprehensively than is required by the Charter monitoring framework that covers all services, not just equality issues.

(c) Satisfaction surveys

We will consider the views of tenants and other service users. For example, through our residents surveys which ~~to~~ cover equality issues.

Quantitative and qualitative monitoring

We will use measures that cover both quantitative and qualitative monitoring.

Quantitative monitoring relates to “**numbers**” of things, for instance, assessing numbers of our staff against the protected characteristics.

Examples for employment activities include monitoring numbers of:

- disabled and non-disabled staff;
- female and male staff; and
- staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Examples from services include monitoring numbers of:

- people affected by harassment covering the different protected characteristics;
- applicants for housing covering various protected characteristics; and
- numbers of positive action programmes in place.

Qualitative monitoring focusses on the quality of our services, for instance, we assess the quality of our information and the quality of advice that we provide.

6.2. How we use this information

We gather equality and diversity information only for specified purposes, namely to enable us to:

- identify and address discrimination; and
- amend policies and services, as appropriate.

6.3. Summary

We assess how well we are performing through a range of performance management methods. Information is processed in line with data protection law and guidance and used for specified purposes.

Section 7: Promoting equality and diversity

We will promote equality and diversity through all of our organisational policies and practices. As explained above, this is done through our equality and diversity action plan and equality impact assessments. This section explains how we promote particular equality and diversity programmes through positive action initiatives.

7.1. Positive action explained

Positive action is used to address patterns of discrimination that has affected certain groups historically. For example, statistical information demonstrates that women have been under-represented in certain work areas historically; while disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic groups are under-represented in the social housing sector.

Positive action is covered in law and guidance, for example, it is promoted in the Equality Act 2010. Our equality and diversity action plan thus contains a commitment to promoting appropriate positive action programmes that are relevant to the Association's context and area of operations.

Positive action is quite different, it is stressed, from positive discrimination that is mostly unlawful.

7.2. Positive action programmes within Yorkhill

We will base our initiatives on information gathered through general statistical information and local equality and diversity data. Local equality and diversity; data is gathered on an ongoing basis.

7.3. Summary

We will promote positive action programmes in line with equality law and good practice guidance. Positive action represents clear commitment to developing an organisational culture that promotes equality and diversity objectives.

Section 8: Consultation procedures

8.1. Consultation and regulatory standards

We promote consultation with tenants and other service users in line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

For example, Charter standard 3 requires us to manage the association so that:

“Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord’s decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.”

In line with our Customer Engagement Strategy we consult with tenants and other service users on a diverse range of organisational policies. This includes consultation on the equality and diversity policy. This strategy also sets out the methods of consultation such as meetings, focus groups and so on.

It is also important to note that we consult with staff and Committee on the equality and diversity policy and the related action plan (Appendix 3). This is done through training and staff meetings so that staff can influence the development of policy and practice.

8.2. Summary

We encourage consultation with tenants, other service users and staff. This approach promotes greater awareness of the equality and diversity policy and its intended objectives.

Section 9: Our complaint handling process

We address complaints about our policies and practices through our standard complaint handling procedure. This procedure applies across all social landlords and was established by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Information about how to complain is given to all tenants when they sign their tenancy agreements and copies of complaints leaflets are available at the Association's reception area in the office.

Section 10: Reviewing the equality and diversity policy

We review organisational policies based on our internal governance system. Regular reviews ensure that we keep up-to-date with developments in law and relevant guidance.

As a general rule, we review the equality and diversity policy every three years; or earlier if required. For instance, we may need to update the equality and diversity policy depending on legal changes.

Appendix 1

Yorkhill Housing Association Equality and Diversity Statement

Yorkhill Housing Association Limited (the Association) promotes its commitments to equal opportunity through all of its services. This is known as mainstreaming of equality and diversity. Equal opportunity is recognised as a core part of our governance strategy and covers both employment and all housing services. For each area of policy development and implementation and all policy reviews we will carry out impact assessments.

This will ensure mainstreaming of equality and diversity in everything that we do. Equality and diversity training will be an integral part of our training and development activity.

In developing and implementing policies covering all aspects of our work, the Association will ensure that our strong principles of, and commitment to equality of opportunity are evident.

In recognition of our duties and aspirations we take account of all applicable legislation. Therefore we operate in line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the Equality Act 2010 and relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Our Policies recognise the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act which are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender re-assignment;
- marriage/civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The Association ensures that none of our policies or procedures directly or indirectly discriminate or disadvantage any particular individual or group.

Appendix 2

Terms

Discrimination, as described in the Equalities Act 2010, is detailed below. When considering these definitions we take cognisance of potential impacts on protected groups. In Policy and Procedure development and review we note as appropriate and include any necessary mitigating steps to remove or reduce negative impacts.

Direct Discrimination happens when a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic in the same or similar circumstance. The Equality Act 2010 extends Direct Discrimination to disability but not to pregnancy/maternity and marital status/civil partnership.

Indirect Discrimination happens when a policy, provision, practice or criterion is applied equally to everyone, but:

- It can only be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from particular equality groups;
- Is to their detriment and results in disadvantage and/or exclusion; and
- Cannot be objectively justified.

Dual Discrimination makes it possible for an individual to claim that they have been directly discriminated against because of a combination and maximum of two protected characteristics, this does not, however, apply to indirect discrimination.

Discrimination by Association/Perception – Direct discrimination can also occur when a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic even though that person does not have the characteristic. This includes a person being treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

Appendix 3

Yorkhill Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment Tool			
Name of Policy/proposal to be assessed		Is this a new policy or a revision?	
Person responsible for the assessment.			
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy.			
Who is intended to benefit from the policy/proposal (e.g. applicants, staff, tenants, contractors).			
What outcomes are wanted from this policy/proposal (e.g. the benefits to customers).			
Which protected characteristics could be affected by the proposal? (tick all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability		
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity		
<input type="checkbox"/> Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief		
<input type="checkbox"/> Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation			
If the policy/proposal is not relevant to any of the protected characteristics listed above state why and end the process here.			
Describe the likely positive or negative impact(s) the policy/proposal could have on the protected characteristics identified.	Positive impact	Negative impact	
What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment? (This might include; collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).			
Date Equality Impact Assessment Completed			Date:

Appendix 4 – Action Plan

Strategic Objectives	Operational Objectives	Social Housing Equality Framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination • Promote equality of opportunity for all • Foster good relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a register of vulnerable persons • Implement robust record keeping processes • Improve and promote communication methods • Analyse, review and amend policies as required • Establish regular effective monitoring and reporting procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing your customers • Leadership and organisational commitment • Involving your customers • Responsive services and customer care • Skilled and committed workforce

Task	Action	Timescale
1. Knowing and involving our customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents Survey • Establish a register of vulnerable persons • Focus Groups and working groups established through residents survey outcomes and Customer Engagement Strategy • Equalities data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2023/24) • Current and Ongoing • 2022/23 - 2023/24. • 2022/23.
2. Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement robust record keeping processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and ongoing in relation to equalities, data protection, freedom of information and environmental information
3. Improve and promote communication methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents' survey outcomes, newsletter, focus groups, working groups • Establish through Customer Engagement Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents Survey 2023/24 • 2022/23 – 2023/24

4. Publishing Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to Information (Publication Scheme) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review (2022/23)
5. Analyse, review and amend policies as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy review cycle including impact assessments on each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and ongoing
6. Establish regular effective monitoring and reporting procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda item for the Governance and Finance Sub-committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee cycle
7. Skilled and committed workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Induction training • Staff appraisal • Staff training • Staff Planning days • Strategic review weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff • Appraisal cycle • Current and ongoing • Away day cycle • Strategic review cycle
8. Leadership and organisational commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing body decisions • Governing body appraisal • Governing body training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee cycle • Appraisal cycle • Current and ongoing
9. Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing body reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report by exception

10. Policy and Procedural Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing though policy development and review
11. Positive action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes of actions in this plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing