

FIRST CHOICE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 First Choice Housing Association is committed to equality and Diversity across all its services. This policy sets out the framework to explain how we work to ensure that discrimination and inequality of opportunity do not occur within the association.

2. Background

- 2.1 As a specialist provider of accommodation for vulnerable people we aim to ensure that no one is treated less favourably for a reason that cannot be justified.
- 2.2 The association works in partnership with its local authority social services departments in the identification and planning of accommodation for people with a learning disability. Social services departments have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that the needs of people with learning disabilities are met.
- 2.3 We will work towards ensuring that the services we provide are without bias and prejudice and accessible to all our Tenants
- 2.4 We will work with other organisations to tackle the barriers that our tenants face.
- 2.5 We will work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- 2.6 We want all employees, job applicants, tenants and board members to feel valued and respected and able to participate and contribute.

3. Application of Policy

- 3.1 The policy will apply to
- Recruitment and employment of staff
 - Service Provision
- 3.2 It will be the responsibility of all staff and Board members to implement this policy.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 The Association will comply with the Equality Act 2010 which identifies nine characteristics / strands of diversity which are protected from all forms of discrimination. These are defined within the Act as:

- Race
- Disability
- Sex or gender
- Gender identity
- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity

4.2 In addition to those who possess a protected characteristic listed above, those who are perceived to possess a characteristic and those who are associated with someone who possesses a characteristic (e.g. family members or friends, but can also include anyone who provides unpaid support i.e. carers) are also protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Our Values

5.1 Our values describe how we will work and recognise that fairness and equality are fundamental to our work. Our values are:

Our Values

- Integrity – openness, honesty, sincerity; doing the right thing for the right reason
- Equality – to provide equal opportunity for all
- Excellence – investing in, respecting and developing staff to ensure we strive for excellence in all we do
- Passion – doing the best for all our tenants

6. Policy statement

6.1 The association has a number of function and relationships and will have due regard to the Equality Act 2010 in the areas identified below:

6.1.1 Partners and Contractors

- Ensure that the partners/contractors with whom we work have an Equality Policy in place or understand and are willing to adopt our policy.
- Invite our contractors to attend equality and diversity training organised by the association.

6.1.2 Staff and Board Members

- Ensure that all staff and Board members are aware of and fulfil their obligations with regard to equality and diversity issues.
- We will challenge and investigate discriminatory behaviour and enforce the disciplinary procedure when necessary.
- Take steps to ensure diversity within the staff team and at board level
- Equip staff to provide a tailored service to Tenants based on the Tenants needs
- Provide equality and diversity training
- Have a job evaluation process in place to ensure jobs are equal pay for equal value
- Commit to be a disability confident employer
- Ensure that our recruitment and selection practices are fair and that all appointments being made on merit
- Report to Board of management on an annual basis on compliance with the above
- Appoint a Board member to champion and oversee compliance of this policy

6.1.3 *Access and Service Delivery:*

- We will ensure that our services are accessible and fair to all tenants and that they are provided free from discrimination.
- Monitor nominations made to our homes by local authorities and raise concerns with them, reporting to our Board of Management if necessary
- Collect and use profiling information to ensure fairness and tailor our services to meet the needs of individual tenants
- Provide information to our tenants in a range of accessible formats
- Adapt as far as possible our properties to meet the needs of the resident
- Monitor satisfaction, attendance at our events and allocations by diversity strand and report outcomes to the Board of Management annually

6.1.4 *Policies and Procedures*

- We will screen all new policies for equality impact to ensure that the policy does not discriminate against any equality strand. If the screening identifies possible discrimination we will carry out a full equality impact assessment