



**Muirhouse  
Housing  
Association**



**Muirhouse  
Homes Ltd**

<b>Title of Policy:</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy</b>
<b>Date of Adoption or Last Review:</b>	30 March 2020
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Stevie McAvoy, Chief Executive
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	March 2023
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes and Standards:</b>	1. Equalities Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing.
<b>Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management:</b>	Standard 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

# Policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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## **1. Introduction and Purpose**

- 1.1 Muirhouse Housing Association (MHA) is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and will not discriminate against any person or group of people, or treat anyone less favourably because they have one or more of the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the legal and regulatory requirements and how MHA will meet these requirements.
- 1.3 It will be a condition of service that all members of staff and Board Members must abide by the terms of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. We consider that it is the responsibility of each member of staff and Board Member to support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and ensure that this policy is applied in practice throughout the organisation.
- 1.4 All staff and Board members will be expected to challenge discriminatory behaviour and draw to the attention of senior staff any instances of discrimination. Breach of this policy will be considered a serious disciplinary offence which may lead to an appropriate disciplinary sanction.

## **2. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements**

### Equalities Act 2010

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 seeks to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It identifies nine “protected characteristics”:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage and civil partnership
  - Pregnancy and maternity
  - Race
  - Religion or belief
  - Sexual orientation
- 2.2 It is unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person because they have one or more of the protected characteristics.
- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 also created the public sector equality duty (the ‘equality duty’). This applies to most of the services provided by MHA, therefore MHA must aim to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
  - Advance equality of opportunity; and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

## Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

2.4 The Scottish Social Housing Charter identifies the following equalities obligations for social landlords:

- Performing all aspects of their housing services so that 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;
- Complying with equalities legislation; and
- Understanding the needs of different customers and delivering services that recognise and meet these needs.

## Standards of Governance and Financial Management

2.5 Standard 5.3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR's) Standards of Governance and Financial Management states that:

*The RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.*

2.6 Additionally, the revised SHR Regulatory Framework that was published in 2019 states that:

- Each landlord must have assurance and evidence that it considers equality and human rights issues properly when making all of its decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in its day-to-day service delivery;
- To comply with these duties, landlords must collect data relating to each of the protected characteristics for their existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff. Local authorities must also collect data on protected characteristics for people who apply to them as homeless. Landlords who provide gypsy/traveller sites must collect data on protected characteristics for these service users.

## **3. Eliminating Discrimination**

3.1 Unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation at a personal or institutional level, is unacceptable, whether direct, indirect, perceived or through association with others. We expect and require all staff and Board Members to adhere to the terms of this policy.

3.2 We will take all steps within our power as a landlord, service provider and employer to address the following:

- Direct discrimination (treating a person less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or because they associate with someone who has the protected characteristic);

- Indirect discrimination (applying any requirement, rule, policy or condition which, though applied equally to everyone, is such that it particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic, unless the requirement or condition can be shown to be justifiable or proportionate);
- Perceptive discrimination (directly discriminating against someone because it is thought that they possess a particular protected characteristic, even if they do not actually possess that characteristic);
- Associative discrimination (directly discriminating against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic);
- Harassment (unwanted conduct related to a relevant characteristic with the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them);
- Third party harassment (failure to prevent or protect someone from harassment by third parties);
- Victimisation (when someone is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint, raised a grievance, or supported a complaint or they are suspected of doing so).

#### **4. Advancing Equality of Opportunity**

4.1 We will seek to advance equality of opportunity by:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic;
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

#### **5. Fostering Good Relations**

5.1 As a community-based organisation, we believe we have an opportunity and a responsibility to foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not share it. We will strive to foster good relations through taking the following steps:

- We will respect community diversity and seek to ensure that our properties, services and job opportunities are accessible to all sectors of the community;
- We will use positive statements in advertisements aimed at encouraging applications for housing and jobs from groups which are currently underrepresented;
- We will make our communications and documents available in formats which reflect the diverse needs of our customers;
- We will ensure our office premises are accessible to all;
- We will identify and work with underrepresented groups within our community whose needs may not be being met;
- We will provide equality and diversity training for all members of staff and Board members and will encourage active participation by all in its delivery;

- We will comply with all existing relevant anti-discriminatory legislation, good practice guidance and codes of practice;
- We aim to be accountable to the community we serve and we seek to ensure that the composition of our Board is as representative as possible of all sections of the community. Where necessary and possible, we will co-opt Board members to redress under-representation of any particular section of the community;
- We will make changes to working practice, provision, pattern, workload or physical location to remove disadvantage from an employee with a disability as defined within the Act;
- Tenants and potential tenants from as representative as possible a cross-section of the community will be involved in the design process for development projects. Our 5 developments will be built to barrier free standards to promote independence and maximise choice;
- The equality impact of new or revised policies will be assessed before they are implemented. Upon the introduction of new policies and procedures or the review of existing ones, we will ensure that our equality, diversity and inclusion commitments are reflected;
- We will offer specific training and placement opportunities to black and minority ethnic, disabled individuals or socio-economically disadvantaged people by liaising and working with appropriate agencies;
- When considering job applications, we will offer interviews to disabled applicants who have the appropriate qualifications where they are specifically identified. Shortlisting and appointments will be made solely on merit. We will assist disabled applicants with arrangements for interview as appropriate;
- We will consider conditions of employment such as part time or job share working arrangements and appropriate leave for religious holidays.

## **6. Understanding our Customers' Needs**

- 6.1 We will comply with regulatory requirements and relevant guidance in relation to the collection of data relating to the protected characteristics.
- 6.2 In order to ensure we understand the needs of our customers, we will analyse this data and use it to inform decision making, service design and policy review.
- 6.3 We will use this data to help us to understand who is/is not using our services. Where barriers to are identified we will take action to remove them.

## **7. Review**

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years unless key changes are required earlier to comply with legislation, guidance or new learning.