



Equalities Policy

POLICY PURPOSE

This Equality Policy sets out our commitment to equality and diversity.

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Author	Taranjit Singh Lalria
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1. Introduction

1.1. Whether you are a job applicant, employee, a volunteer, Board Member, one of our customers, a partner we work with, we hope that we can provide you with services and employment opportunities, without any barriers to equality. If you do face any barriers, we hope we can sort them out.

1.2. Any Equality and Diversity Policy needs equality objectives to work towards. Here are our Statutory Equality Objectives for 2017/2020 demonstrating how we are going to promote equality, diversity and inclusion...

- Develop better engagement between Derby Homes and communities, groups and individuals.
- Develop effective joint working on equality and diversity with other statutory bodies and partners.
- Making sure our services are fair, accessible and inclusive.
- Improve the quality and range of equality information held and used by us, in particular equality monitoring around our services.
- Improve equality in employment and procurement processes and procedures.

2. Our commitment to equality and diversity and making it happen

2.1. We believe in treating everyone fairly and with respect. We see the diversity of our city as a real strength. We want to build strong communities with a sense of togetherness and we want to tackle disadvantage. We also want to build a strong cohesive workforce that reflects the community we serve. We want everyone to be able to reach their full potential and to benefit from the cultural, social, economic and civic strength of our city. We recognise that it's only by meeting people's particular needs, having accessible services and a diverse workforce, just like the community we live in, that we will achieve equality.

2.2. We will challenge unfair treatment, prejudice, discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying on grounds of:

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

This also includes discrimination by association and perception.

2.3. Equality and diversity lies at the heart of all our work, across Derby Homes – we believe this makes good business sense, is cost effective and makes for a much happier workforce, which in turn results in satisfied customers. It also has an impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities. Here is how we will make sure it happens.

In plans, policies and practices we will:

- design services that meet the needs of our communities by using detailed research and consultation and our experience of good practice
- make sure that our plans, policies and practices do not unfairly discriminate against people with protected characteristics by doing robust equality impact assessments and acting on the results
- make sure that all our employees, volunteers, customers, residents, partners and contractors are aware of this Equality Policy.

In service delivery we will:

- make sure our services are relevant to the people of Derby and take into account people's and communities' different needs
- actively engage with as many sections of the community as possible when we consult about our services
- celebrate the variety of lifestyles and cultures in Derby
- do all we can to review and monitor our services to make sure they do not discriminate unfairly, and identify where we can improve services
- make sure we provide services that comply with relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice
- continue developing good practice policies and practices over and above that required by legislation
- treat all our customers positively, with dignity and respect
- act promptly, investigate and respond to complaints of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying

- analyse and understand findings when things go wrong or when we need to do better
- listen to our customers to make sure their views are continually taken into consideration to shape decisions.

In employment we will:

- do everything we can to make sure our workplace is free from discrimination, oppression, bullying, harassment and victimisation and will act promptly on any complaints
- recruit and retain a workforce that is as diverse as the community we serve in all our services and at every level
- treat all employees, volunteers and job applicants fairly and provide reasonable adjustments when required
- make sure we take into account carers' and disabled employees' requirements when we do restructures, change jobs or change workplaces
- make sure all our employees and volunteers receive equality and diversity training
- provide our employees with clear information about job selection, training and development and encouragement to reach their full potential
- provide a safe working environment and demonstrate that we care about the health and wellbeing of our employees
- make sure that we work to relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice
- continue to develop good practice employment policies and practices over and above those required by legislation
- listen to our employees ideas and suggestions for improving services and ways of working, through regular surveys and our employee equality networks.

In partnerships and contracting we will:

- make sure that our partners and contractors have the same values and principles and approach to equality and diversity as we do
 - make sure that equality and diversity is embedded in any contract specification and that contracts are monitored for equality
 - take appropriate action for any breach of equality requirements and conditions by contractors delivering our services.
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- share our knowledge of our diverse communities, their requirements, and aspirations, with our partners and contractors to help shape and improve the services they provide
- listen to the views of our partners and contractors to help us to improve our work and practice.

Responsibilities

- The Managing Director and Board Members are responsible for promoting Derby Homes approach and commitment to equality and diversity across the organisation and in the wider community, recommending changes and improvements where necessary.
- The Managing Director, Executive team, Heads of Service, Managers and supervisors have responsibility for developing a culture that promotes equality and values diversity in employment and in service delivery. They are also responsible for making sure that this policy is fully implemented and monitored.
- We will make sure that all our employees are aware of their personal responsibility for making sure that the principles of equality and diversity are met. This applies to their behaviour at work and in some situations even when they are not at work All employees, volunteers and contractors must make sure they **do not**:
 - discriminate against anyone
 - persuade or pressure another employee to discriminate
 - harass, bully, abuse or victimise other employees, volunteers or customers for any reason
 - condone harassment.

If an employee does not follow the principles of this Equality Policy, then this will usually be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

We will make sure that our partners and contractors are aware of and comply with this Equality Policy.

3. Forums and employee networks

Derby Homes Diversity Forum act as our critical friend in making sure equality and diversity stays at the heart of everything we do - when we don't get things right, we learn from this and try not to make the same mistake again.

4. Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty, equality impact assessments and monitoring

4.1. We are committed to complying with our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will make sure all our employment

policies and practises are up to date and that our services are meaningful and accessible for Derby's diverse communities. We will make sure all our employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of these legal responsibilities in everything Derby Homes or our representatives do.

4.2. We will use our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty to do all we can to encourage other organisations to work to the Equality Act so that the people of Derby experience a consistent approach to equality in the city.

4.3. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us as a public body to have 'due regard' to:

- eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't.

The Duty also requires us to take into account disabled people's impairments, when making decisions about policies and services, as the law recognises that disabled people's needs may be different from the needs of non-disabled people. This might mean making reasonable adjustments or treating disabled people better than non-disabled people to meet their needs. Our Disability Equality at Work Guide provides further guidance.

4.4. Having 'due regard' means:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different to from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where the participation is disproportionately low.

4.5. The Public Sector Equality Duty also has specific requirements that we are legally required to comply with and these are to publish:

- equality information about our employees and people affected by our policies and practices by 31 January every year
 - one or more equality objectives at least every four years to help us achieve the requirements of the general Public Sector Equality Duty.
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Equality impact assessments

4.6. We are committed to still doing equality impact assessments despite the change in the requirement to do them. This is so we can equality proof what we do to make sure we can demonstrate we have paid 'due regard' to equality. For example, when we are about to produce a policy, or review an older one, write a strategy or plan or review services or functions.

Equality monitoring

4.7. Equality monitoring is collecting information about employees, job applicants and customers. It's a sophisticated way of us better understanding our organisation, who are our employees, who applies for jobs and who are our service users – it can also tell us who are not using our services or who are not applying for jobs with us.

4.8. We collect equality information on our employees and job applicants and on certain service areas such as feedback and complaints and some other areas of service delivery where equality monitoring is a statutory requirement. When we do customer surveys and consultation exercises we ask people to give us their equality information. We do this not because we are nosy, but because we genuinely want to make things better and filling in equality monitoring forms helps us to do this.

4.9. We ask equality questions to make sure we are being fair and that people from all backgrounds are represented and so that we can make our services better by targeting them at the right people.

4.10. There are nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act and so we feel it is important that where appropriate when we ask monitoring questions, we use all nine of these.

4.11. When we receive equality monitoring forms we have strict laws to make sure we keep the information safe and secure and only use the information to make our services and employment areas better.

5. Monitoring this Policy and our Equality Objectives

5.1. We will monitor this Policy on a regular basis and take feedback from people who use the Policy and make changes as necessary. Our Equality Objectives will be monitored through our Diversity Forum, and our Senior Management team.
