



Sussex Housing & Care

### Equality & Diversity Policy and Procedure

<b>Ratified by:</b>	<b>Board</b>
<b>Date ratified:</b>	<b>February 2018</b>
<b>Name and job title of author/s:</b>	<b>Debbe Wordley HR Manager</b>
<b>Date issued:</b>	
<b>Review date:</b>	

Users should ensure they are consulting the current, valid version of the document.

#### **Change control details**

Record any changes to this document in the table below to provide a documentation audit trail.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Reason for changes</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Sussex Housing and Care (SHC) is committed to promoting equality and diversity and aims to be responsive to the needs of all its customers, staff and job applicants. It values the diversity of its residents and expects staff and contractors to do the same.
- 1.2 SHC will consult and work with residents and staff to continuously improve its approach to diversity and develop local approaches and solutions to meet residents' diverse needs.
- 1.3 SHC aims to comply fully with the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate against anyone, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity. SHC takes all possible steps to ensure discrimination does not take place.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all staff, board members, residents and contractors. SHC's board has overall responsibility for SHC's approach to equality and diversity and for statutory compliance. The day-to-day operation of our approach is led by the Strategic Management Team.

## 2. Principles

The principles that guide this policy are:

- The promotion of a culture of equality of opportunity and diversity within SHC and our communities;
- Treating each other, our residents, staff and stakeholder partners fairly and with respect;
- Recognising and valuing the different contributions that individuals make;
- Promoting an environment in our properties and offices that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment;
- Taking strong action against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Taking into account equality and diversity when designing and delivering services, adopting policies and in our employment practices;
- Monitoring the composition of our staff and residents and Board. In doing so we will be mindful of their composition and aim for these to be reasonably balanced.

- Identifying residents' different needs and aspirations, designing services that complement these;
- Ensuring opportunities for development are available to all staff;
- Ensuring that the needs of disabled people are recognised in the provision of services, particularly in making communal areas accessible where this is reasonable, and that our workplaces are accessible and free from barriers;
- Making 'reasonable adjustments' in relation to the employment of disabled people;
- Adjusting services where appropriate to residents' needs (for example in the provision of adaptations);
- Providing appropriate training and adequate resources to support these principles;
- Ensuring that legal and regulatory equality and diversity requirements are met.

### **3.0 Participation**

- 3.1 SHC wants to ensure that all staff feel comfortable raising a complaint regarding discriminatory conduct and understand that no individual will be penalised for raising such a complaint unless the substance of the complaint is untrue or is made out of bad faith, for example out of malice.
- 3.2 Action will be taken under the disciplinary procedure against any employee who is found to have committed an act of improper or unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or intimidation. Serious breaches of this equal opportunities and diversity at work statement will be treated as potential gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.
- 3.3 Employees should also bear in mind that they can be held personally liable for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may also be guilty of a criminal offence.

### **4.0 Direct and Indirect Discrimination**

- 4.1 Direct discrimination occurs when somebody is treated unfavourably because of a protected attribute. Indirect discrimination occurs when a requirement or rule that appears to be neutral and the same for everyone in fact has an effect disadvantaging someone because they have an attribute covered by the Equality Act 2010.

- 4.2 SHC takes positive and effective action to eliminate possible direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.

## **5.0 Employment**

- 5.1 All terms of employment will be reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that there is no unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.
- 5.2 All applications for employment are assessed on the same criteria. Training and opportunities for promotion are open to all employees. SHC offers, where feasible, flexible conditions of employment e.g. full time, part time, job share and flexitime.

## **6.0 Equal Pay**

- 6.1 SHC is committed to equal pay in employment. It believes its male and female employees should receive equal pay for like work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value. In order to achieve this, SHC will endeavour to maintain a pay system that is transparent, free from bias and based on an objective criteria.

## **7.0 Training**

- 7.1 SHC will provide training for all staff in relation to equal opportunities and diversity and help them identify discriminatory acts or practices or acts of harassment or bullying. Managers will be responsible for ensuring they actively promote equality and diversity within the departments for which they are responsible.

## **8.0 Residents and Access to Housing**

- 8.1 SHC takes positive and effective action to provide access to our housing for people who may feel disadvantaged because of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership.
- 8.2 SHC aims to ensure equal treatment of all residents in the provision of services including providing protection from harassment and all forms of abuse. SHC will provide support for victims and make clear that legal action will be taken against perpetrators.

## **9.0 Monitoring**

- 9.2 All employees and job applicants will be asked to complete a form denoting their sex, race, ethnic origin, age and any disabilities that they have. SHC guarantees that the information provided on such forms will be used solely for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and kept strictly within The Data Protection Act 1998
- 9.1 SHC will regularly monitor the effects of selection decisions and personnel and pay practices and procedures in order to assess whether equality and diversity at work is being achieved. This will also involve considering any possible indirectly discriminatory effects of its working practices. If changes are required, the organisation will implement them. SHC will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.