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Lochfield Park
Housing Association

Lochfield Park Housing Association

Equal Opportunities Policy

FUNCTION	DOCUMENT	DATE	
Management Committee Control & Accountability	Equal Opportunities Policy	Review:	March 2017
		Approved:	March 2017
		Implemented:	March 2017
		Next review:	March 2019

Lochfield Park Housing Association strives to be an equal opportunities Association. This means that:

- In every area of activity of the organisation we will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for everyone and commit ourselves to ensuring that no one is discriminated against for any reason whatsoever.
- No person or group of persons applying for contracts with the Association will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin or because of their religion, sex, sexuality, physical disability, appearance, marital status or family responsibility.
- In carrying out its equal opportunities policy, the Association will actively assist disadvantaged groups to benefit from its housing services.
- The Association will seek to identify the needs of disadvantaged groups in its area of operation by establishing close relationships with those groups wherever possible.
- In hiring Contractors and other agencies to work for it, the Association will be mindful of its commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Housing Applications are welcome from all sectors of the community regardless of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, social background, marital status or religion, sexual orientation or political opinion.

The Association will keep the waiting list open and encourage applications to be submitted and assessed throughout the year.

To ensure compliance with our equal opportunity statement, the ethnic origin of all applications will be monitored, collated and reported through our monitoring channels.

It is the policy of the Association:

- That there is equal opportunity for employment and advancement and that all employees be recruited trained and promoted on the basis of ability, job requirement and fitness for the work.
- That there shall be no discrimination on any grounds whatsoever.
- That it is the duty of the Association to ensure that the terms of the policy are observed.
- That although the Association is non discriminatory, we recognise that it is essential to remain on guard against some of the more subtle and unconscious varieties of discrimination which may not easily be identified.

General

In addition to the introduction, the Association will have policies and procedures which include clear guidelines to staff and committee members on their responsibilities and possible course of action covering the following: -

1 Publicity

The Association will:

- Ensure their publications will not perpetuate discrimination
- Ensure that language used will be non-discriminatory and concise.
- Ensure all materials are accessible to their target population

2 Health and Safety

The Association will ensure that all members of staff and Committee members are aware of their responsibility regarding updated health and safety policies and procedures.

3 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

The Association will ensure that all members of staff and committee members are aware of their responsibility regarding the grievance and disciplinary procedures.

4 Community Representation

The Association will ensure that membership of, participation in, and influence over, the affairs of the Association, are open to all, irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, disability or political opinion.

5 Confidentiality

The Association will ensure that confidential information will be respected and maintained as such.

6 Monitoring, Reviewing and Record Keeping

The Association will adopt an efficient target setting, monitoring, reviewing and record keeping systems to ensure effective development and implementation of our policies, procedures and practices. Reports on monitoring and action taken will be submitted regularly to staff and committee members.

7 Responsibility

The Association will:

- Expect all members of staff and committee members to challenge discriminatory behaviour and draw to the attention of management any instances of discrimination.

- Expect all members of staff and committee members to ensure this Code of Practice is applied in practice.
- Ensure the co-ordination of the implementation and monitoring of this Code will be the responsibility of the Chairperson and Director.

1 Employment

The Association will develop, implement and monitor good employment practices covering recruitment, selection, retention, training and staff development of all staff regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, disability or political opinion

The Association will:

- Ensure that there is no unlawful or indirect discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexuality or disability when recruiting staff.
- Identify groups which are under-represented and adopt positive measures as outlined in legislation to correct any imbalance.
- Ensure that other under-represented groups not covered by anti-discriminatory legislation e.g. people living in areas of priority treatment / multiple deprivation / high unemployment are not discriminated against, and adopt positive action measures to redress any imbalance.

2 Training

Training and guidance on equal opportunities policies will be provided to all members of staff and committee members within the Association to ensure that they fully understand their responsibility under the relevant anti-discriminatory legislation on employment, good practice guidelines and the Association policies.

The Association will:

- Ensure all members of staff and committee members undertake equal opportunities training
- Ensure that relevant members of staff and committee members undertake training on areas of their responsibility such as recruitment, selection, positive action, dealing with harassment, monitoring, health and safety.
- Make relevant training available on equal opportunities and the role of management committees for individuals interested in becoming committee members.

3 Staff Development

The Association will develop and implement effective policies with a view to improving staff efficiency in service delivery and improving staff development and career progression of all under-represented groups.

4 Support

In line with the Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Equality Act 2010, the Association will demonstrate a clear commitment to equal access in respect of service delivery and in particular the following:

4.1 Consultation

The Association will engage in regular consultation with their users / potential users with a view to providing affordable, quality accommodation and in suitable environment.

4.2 Information to Tenants

In order to enhance access to services, the Association will make accessible to all tenants, full, clear and accurate information about their particular tenancy in compliance with the law and good practice guidelines.

4.3 Allocations

The Association will ensure equality of opportunity in relation to allocations and lettings for all groups/individuals in housing need in the Association's area of operation.

4.4 Training

Training and guidance on equal opportunities policies will be provided to all members of staff and committee members within the Association to ensure that they fully understand their responsibility under the relevant legislation, good practice guidelines and Association's policies.

The Association will:

- Ensure all members of staff and committee members undertake equal opportunities training
- Ensure all relevant members of staff and committee members undertake training on areas of their responsibilities such as access, allocations, consultation, nominations, stock transfers etc.
- Make relevant training available on equal opportunities and the role of management committees for individuals interested in becoming committee members.

5 Management Services

The Association will ensure that management services provided by another organisation will be compatible with this Code of Practice.

6 Design Standards

The Association will ensure that all developments are built barrier-free and to agreed minimum standards and will be sensitive to the cultural, religious and health needs of their tenants.

7 Maintenance and Repairs

The Association will ensure that all tenants receive the same quality of service and that all properties are kept in good repair and installations maintained in proper working order.

8 Rent Arrears

The Association will ensure that all rent arrears will be dealt with sensitively and fairly.

9 Referral Arrangements

The Association will establish referral arrangements with appropriate agencies. When considering an application from such an agency the Association will ensure that the agency's Equal Opportunities policy is consistent with the Association's. If an agency does not have an equal opportunities policy or fails to meet the required standards, the referral agency will be expected to comply with the Association's own equal opportunities policy. The Association will monitor referral arrangements for accessibility to all groups and meet regularly with the referral agency to review results and decide appropriate remedial action, where necessary.

10 Nominations

The Association will inform their local authority with whom they have nomination agreements, of its Equal Opportunities Policy in relation to allocations and lettings work.

11 Waiting List

The Association will avoid being seen as inaccessible to those in housing need. As a result the Association will keep the waiting list open and encourage applications to be submitted and assessed throughout the year.

12 Harassment

The Association will have policies and procedures on harassment, which include clear guidelines to staff on their responsibilities and on possible courses of action. Channels of communication and responsibility will be clearly identified and a reporting system introduced. The Association will attempt to identify the perpetrators of any attacks and take appropriate action, which include reporting incidents to the police, seeking a court order for possession etc. The Association will also include a clause on Harassment within the Tenancy Agreement.

13 Victim Support

An effective support system for victims of harassment will be set up by the Association. This includes efficient arrangements to rehouse victims where this is their wish and where other housing stock (or referrals to other Associations) is available to the Association. Where the victims wish to remain in their property, the Association will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that the support mechanism is working effectively in practice.

14 Contract Compliance

As recipients of public subsidy, the Association will ensure that public funds are not used to promote discriminatory practices. Consequently the Association will only award contracts to contractors or consultants who:

- Develop and implement an Equal Opportunities policy or abide by the Association's equal opportunities policy.
- Comply with the relevant health and safety, employment and anti-discriminatory legislation.

This Policy will be reviewed in June 2019