

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

AS WITH ALL OF THE ASSOCIATION’S POLICIES and PROCEDURES, THIS GUIDE, IN FULL AND IN PART, CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN SUMMARY, ON TAPE, IN BRAILLE, AND IN TRANSLATION INTO MOST OTHER LANGUAGES –

**PLEASE ASK A MEMBER OF STAFF IF YOU WOULD LIKE
A VERSION IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT**

Relevant Regulatory Standard(s)	Standard 1 The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. Standard 2 The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities. Standard 5 The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.
Approved By	Committee of Management at the meeting on 28 FEBRUARY 2024
Date Next Review Due	FEBRUARY 2027

Equality and Diversity Policy



Date Reviewed	Reviewed By	Summary of Updates
FEBRUARY 2024	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	INTRODUCTION OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. Throughout Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association there will be a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity across all areas within Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association through the entire employment relationship from the recruitment process to termination and references.
- 1.2** All employees are required to abide by this policy. This policy also covers discrimination by and towards members of the public, governing body members, contractors and staff from other agencies. Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination in relation to employment.
- 1.3** Tackling inequality is not something new. UK Governments have been addressing equality and diversity issues for many years. Although progress has been made, inequalities still exist in Scotland and within the UK. As the Government continues to tackle discrimination, promote equality, address inequalities and inconsistencies that were present in the previous discrimination legislation, the new Equality Act 2010 was introduced. The introduction of the act saw previous discrimination legislation abolished and replaced with one single piece of legislation. This policy will be compliant with the current legislation and promote a culture of dignity and respect for all.
- 1.4** Lack of equal opportunities is not only a serious moral issue but also has a significant impact on business performance. Studies have shown that high levels of motivation are achieved in an environment of respect and fairness. Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will aim to ensure that all employees are treated with fairness and respect and not be discriminated on the grounds of marriage & civil partnership, sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity and sexual orientation, or disadvantaged by any conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance. Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will therefore ensure all employees are provided with equality of opportunity in the course of their employment starting from recruitment.
- 1.5** The following details the specific acts relating to discrimination law.

Equality Act 2010

2. Aims and Objectives

This Equality and Diversity policy aims to:

- Ensure integration with equality and diversity practices into all Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association does, and ensure that employees are treated with fairness and respect from each other and from members of the public, committee members, and contractors.
- Require Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association to implement fair and just employment practices ensuring that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on any grounds.
- Ensure people are recruited and employees promoted solely on the basis of their own merit, experience, ability and potential. This applies throughout the entire duration of employment as all decisions will be based on only relevant merits.
- Provide an environment appropriate to the needs of those from all walks of life, and offer a culture that respects and values each other's differences and promotes dignity, equality and diversity.

3. Policy

3.1 Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will ensure that all new employees and management committee members will receive induction on this policy. The policy will be widely promoted and integrated into all policies and procedures within Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association. Copies of the policy will also be freely available and displayed in Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Associations offices.

Appropriate training and guidance will be available to promote equality and diversity among staff.

This policy applies to everyone in Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association and everyone has a responsibility to be alert to discriminatory behaviours and practices should they occur. Unacceptable behaviour and practices must not occur, however if a situation arises, it will be dealt with immediately. Breaches of the equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

3.2 Recruitment & Selection

It is Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's policy that all recruitment decisions will be based completely on the merits and abilities of candidates alone and no other criteria will be used. In order to achieve this, equality and diversity practices will be integrated into every stage of the recruitment and selection process.

A fair recruitment process will remove barriers to the employment of people of different

backgrounds. This will enable Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association to recruit from the widest pool of talent, potentially raising the standard of their intake and therefore increasing the opportunity of a more diverse workforce which reflects the community it is serving. A more diverse workforce will improve the organisation's service delivery, as it will include staff with more knowledge and experience, meet and aid in meeting the needs and aspirations of service users and potential service users.

To highlight Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's commitment to promoting equality and diversity from the beginning of the employment relationship, all vacancies will be aimed at as wide a group as possible and any advertisement for a vacancy within Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will state that an equality and diversity policy is in place. In addition the advert will also display any signs of equality bodies that Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association is affiliated with.

The information contained in the advert and all vacancy literature will be clear and accurate to attract the most appropriate candidates from all groups across society, to allow them to decide their own suitability for the vacancy and whether they wish to proceed with applying. For those that wish to apply Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will ensure that all applications have clear instructions for completion and application forms will be free from personal questions that are not relevant to the vacancy and that may lead to discrimination.

Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association will ensure all staff involved at any stage in the recruitment and selection process will receive equality and diversity awareness training. This will ensure that those involved in the recruitment process will not discriminate either knowingly or unknowingly by asking any questions which may lead to discrimination.

3.3 Terms & Conditions of Employment

As part of the employment relationship being covered under this equality and diversity policy all contracts of employment will be issued in accordance with the job role and not the job holder. Employee's terms and conditions will be standard across all employees regardless of any of the protected characteristics. Employees will not receive less favourable terms and conditions for any reason other than relating specifically to the job role and the grade it attracts.

3.4 Training and Development

Equality and diversity will apply throughout all training activities and resources. Training and development opportunities will be given to all employees according to their job role. It is crucial that all employees are able to participate and enjoy any training opportunities or activities without discrimination or fear of harassment. Every attempt will be made to ensure learning materials will provide a positive image of people reinforcing an image and of equality of opportunity.

3.5 Redundancy Selection

Redundancy selection will be made according to the statutory requirements and in line with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Associations Redundancy Policy. Criteria will be discussed with the Trade Union and or nominated representatives. The criteria will be set out and will be objectively fair and consistent. This will ensure that employees selected for redundancy are selected according to the chosen selection criteria and not in any discriminatory way either indirectly or directly.

3.6 Complaints: Employees

This procedure is complemented by Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Associations Dignity at Work policy. For further details please refer to the policy.

Where an employee feels they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed by another employee (including managers), the aim should be to deal with it informally in the first instance.

3.6.1 Informal Stage

An employee should aim to resolve the matter informally as it may be that the discriminatory action is unconscious and easily resolved once the situation is highlighted. This is often the most efficient way with dealing with such circumstances and helps maintain good working relations.

The employee should raise the issue informally with their line manager (if the complaint is against their manager then the manager next in line.) The manager will speak to the employee whom the complaint is against. If it is found that the behaviour was in breach of this policy, an appropriate level of sanction will be decided in line with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's Disciplinary Policy.

In addition, a file note of the incident will be kept on the complaining employee's file, including a statement that the note will only be taken into account if there are any further incidents.

Dealing with the matter informally does not remove the complaining employee's right to have the matter dealt with formally.

3.6.2 Formal Stage

If the employee is dissatisfied with the outcome, or the complaint is very serious, they should raise the matter in writing, detailing the complaint to their line manager. The complaint should then be dealt with under Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's Grievance Policy. In line with this process an investigation into the complaint will be carried out. Employees who feel they are being subjected to harassment should raise the issue in line with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Associations Dignity at Work Policy.

If the outcome of the investigation is that a formal disciplinary hearing should take place this will be conducted in line with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's Disciplinary Procedures. (Please

refer to the Disciplinary Policy for full details)

Complaints made against employees

Where a complaint is made against an employee by another employee, Board/Committee member or stakeholder, it will be investigated and dealt with under Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's Disciplinary Policy.

3.6 Complaints: Stakeholders

The right to be treated equally with dignity and respect extends to outside contractors, partners, service users, customers and any other agencies that are associated with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association. Therefore, stakeholders also have a right to have any issues addressed under this policy. Any complaints will be investigated by Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association and appropriate action will be taken.

If a stakeholder feels that they are being discriminated against in the course of their working day with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association, the following procedure should be followed.

3.6.1 Informal Stage

Where possible, incidents should be dealt with informally. The stakeholder should report the matter to their lead contact within **Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association** as soon as possible. It may be that the discriminatory action is unconscious and easily resolved once the situation is highlighted.

The manager will discuss the situation with the individual whom the complaint is against and explain the expected standards of behaviour and the consequences of failing to comply with these. It will be made clear to the individual that continuation of such conduct may result in being refused access to **Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's** premises, or services.

3.6.2 Formal Stage

Where informal action is not appropriate or the matter is of a serious nature the complaint will be dealt with using the formal procedure. Where the formal procedure is instigated a thorough investigation will take place in the first instance. Where it is found that the individual has acted in an inappropriate manner, they will be written to officially by the relevant senior manager informing them that their comments, actions, behaviours are not acceptable and potentially discriminatory. The letter will state that further incidents will not be tolerated and that they may result in being refused access to **Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's** premises, or contact with its customers/employees/board members. In cases of physical violence or serious threats the appropriate manager will notify the police.

3.7 Complaints made by stakeholders

Where stakeholders are in receipt of inappropriate behaviour from an employee of **Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association**, board member or another stakeholder in connection with **Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's** business, the stakeholder should also raise the issue with their lead contact. The lead contact will then investigate into the complaint and deal with it in accordance with the appropriate procedure (depending whether the complaint is against an employee, a board member, a contractor, a partner, etc.).

3.8 Complaints: Governing Body Members

Where a board/committee member feels they have been discriminated against, victimised or harassed, the aim should be to deal with it informally in the first instance.

3.8.1 Informal Stage

If a board/committee member feels they are in receipt of inappropriate behaviour from another board/committee member, an employee or any stakeholder in connection with Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association, they should raise this immediately with the appropriate senior manager. The manager will discuss the issue with whom the complaint is against, explaining the required standards of behaviour and the consequences of failing to comply.

3.8.2 Formal Stage

Where formal action is the most appropriate, and thorough investigation will take place into the complaint. The complaint then will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure (depending whether the complaint is against an employee, a board member, a contractor, a partner, etc.). In cases of physical violence or serious threats an appropriate manager will notify the police.

3.9.3 Complaints made against a board/committee member

Where a complaint is made against a board/committee member, Whiteinch & Scotstoun Housing Association's board/committee complaints procedure will be used as appropriate. The complaint will be investigated by the Chair or another authorised person. If it is found that the inappropriate behaviour occurred, the board/committee member will be warned and informed of consequences of failure to comply with the expected standards of behaviour, which may include removal from the board/committee.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association are committed to assessing all policies and services to ensure that wherever possible no protected categories are adversely affected. In this regard Appendix 1 displays the Equality Impact Assessment that will require to be undertaken when policy or service is introduced or renewed. Training will be provided to all staff involved, and the completed assessments will be issued to Committee in order that they may gauge the effects of

new or renewed functions.

Housing has been described as a basic human right and policies and services will also assess the impact of policies and services from a human rights perspective.

5. Equal Opportunities Testing

In accordance with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy, this Policy has been consciously considered to judge whether there is any likelihood that its presentation or operation could in any way lead, no matter how inadvertently, to discrimination. The conclusion of this exercise is that it is believed that the Policy should operate in a non-discriminatory way.

6. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix 1

Person responsible for the assessment:	
Name of policy/service/decision to be assessed:	
Is this a new policy/service/decision?	
Date of Assessment:	
Name of Policy or Function	

1. What is the main purpose of the policy/ service/function?

2. Are there any other objectives of the policy/ service/function, if so what are they?

3. Do any written procedures exist to enable delivery of this policy/ service/function?

4. Are there elements of common practice in the service area or function that are not clearly defined within the written procedures?

5. Who are the main stakeholders of the policy?

6. Is the policy associated with any other association policies?

7. Is the responsibility for the proposed policy or function shared with another department or authority or organisation? If so, what responsibility, and which bodies?



B: The Impact

Assess the potential impact that the policy could have on each of the target groups. The potential impact could be negative, positive or neutral.

If you have assessed negative potential impact for any of the target groups you will also need to assess whether that negative potential impact is high, medium or low.

1. Identify the potential impact of the policy on different equality target groups:

	Positive	Negative (please specify below if High, Medium or Low)	Neutral	Reason
Gender – both men and women, and transgender				
Race - include race, colour, nationality, ethnicity & national origins (NB: the experiences may be different for different groups)				

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Age Group - specify e.g.: older, younger etc)				
Sexual Orientation – Lesbian, Gay Men, Bisexual people				
Religious/Faith groups (specify)				
Disability				
Sexuality				
Pregnancy				

2.0 Human Rights Impact

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Life (capability to be alive)			
Physical Security (e.g. free from violence/fear)			
Health			
Education (learning and skills etc.)			
Standard of Living (independence, dignity & respect)			
Productive and valued activities (work, care & leisure)			
Individual, family and social life			
Participation, influence and voice (decision making)			
Identity, expression and self-respect			