



## **Birnbeck Housing Association**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

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#### **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Birnbeck Housing Association is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. The purpose of this policy is to confirm our commitment; creating a working environment that is inclusive, free from discrimination and harassment, values differences and enables individuals to be their authentic selves.
- 1.2 We value diversity and recognise the benefits of employing a diverse workforce. As an affordable housing provider and employer, we will work to ensure the fair treatment of all of our communities regardless age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or beliefs, ethnic origin, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.
- 1.3 Our commitment is to ensure that no individual or group experiences unfair treatment in housing, lettings, repairs, rent collection and any other housing service we provide.

#### **2. Scope of Policy**

- 2.1 This policy applies to everyone who receives a service from us, including employees, committee members, residents, contractors and sub-contractors.
- 2.2 This policy aims to ensure that we comply with our regulatory and legal responsibilities.
- 2.3 This policy also aims to ensure that we are also aware of our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

#### **3. Legislation and Guidance**

- 3.1 The objective of this policy aims to understand and meet our obligations in relation to:
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - Care Act 2014
  - Modern Slavery Act 2015
  - Code of Governance 2020 (National Housing Federation)
  - Neighbourhood and Community Standard
  - Involvement and Empowerment Standard



#### **4. Duties under the Equality Act 2010**

4.1 As a social housing provider, we have responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity. The Equality Act 2010 makes discrimination unlawful in relation to nine protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

4.2 Social housing providers must treat all residents and tenants with fairness and respect, taking into account protected characteristics or those with additional support needs.

#### **5. Duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty**

5.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires housing associations delivering public services to have 'due regard' too:

- Eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment.
- Advance the equality of opportunity, particularly between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- To foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

5.2 Birnbeck housing are required to comply with the duty in the provision, allocation and management of social housing.

#### **6. Other Duties**

6.1 Birnbeck Housing also recognise that discrimination can go beyond the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and that as an employer and housing provider we have a moral duty to challenge discrimination on a variety of social and cultural characteristics, that may include:

- Socio-economic background
- Class
- Appearance
- Language
- Accents
- Education
- Political affiliation



- Learning styles

6.2 We are committed to championing diversity in the widest sense and will challenge discrimination on a variety of social and cultural characteristics in addition to the protected characteristics set out by the Equality Act 2010.

## **7. Discrimination**

7.1 Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else, because of a protected characteristic.

7.2 Less favourable treatment can be anything that puts someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared to someone who does not have that characteristic.

7.3 There is no legal definition of 'putting someone at a disadvantage' but it might include:

- excluding someone from opportunities or benefits
- making it harder for someone to do their job
- causing someone emotional distress
- causing someone financial loss

7.4 It can still be discrimination even if the less favourable treatment was not intended.

7.5 There are different types of discrimination as set out by the Equality Act 2010. These are

- Direct Discrimination – being treated worse by someone because you have a protected characteristic.
- Discrimination arising from disability – being treated badly due to something that happens because of your disability.
- Indirect Discrimination - where a person or organisation has practices or arrangements that seem to treat everyone in an equal, non-discriminatory way, but these practices or arrangements put you and others with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage compared with those who do not have a protected characteristic.
- Harassment - is behaviour from others that you do not want, that violates your dignity or creates an environment that is intimidating, degrading, offensive or humiliating in relation to a protected characteristic.
- Victimisation - is when an employer or organisation puts you at a disadvantage because you have made allegation about discrimination or supported someone who has made an allegation of discrimination.
- Failing to comply with duty to make reasonable adjustments - if a person or organisation does not make reasonable adjustments when it would have been reasonable to do, this will be unlawful discrimination.



## **8. Our Commitment**

- 8.1 Everyone working with Birnbeck Housing is responsible for promoting the values of the organisation.
- 8.2 We want everyone to be treated as an individual and expect staff to recognise and adapt their approach for individual needs of both our residents, colleagues and anyone using our services, recognising that the delivery of our services will never be a 'one size fits all' approach. Staff are expected to tailor their approach to meet the needs of the individual to achieve a successful outcome.
- 8.3 Staff are expected to champion diversity within their work, engaging with different colleagues and residents, recognising that differences, perspectives and past experiences can support us to be more successful in everything that we do. By taking a collaborative approach to work, we will be better placed to understand our residents and what will work to support them to meet their specific needs.
- 8.4 We are committed to being accountable and taking responsibility for our actions. This means that we are committed to listening to our customers and being clear about what we are and are not able to do.
- 8.5 We are committed to tailoring our services to meet the needs of our different communities by ensuring we adopt an individual approach to the services that we provide.

## **9. Equality Governance and Responsibilities**

- 9.1 All employees and committee members share a responsibility to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is promoted, respected and that our legal and regulatory requirements are.
- 9.2 The committee members have overall responsibility for ensuring that a current and appropriate policy is in place and that the commitment to the policy and principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are evident across the association.
- 9.3 The Chief Executive is responsible for the implementation of this policy, for ensuring there is appropriate monitoring and review of the policy, for staff awareness and training and policy development.
- 9.4 The Chief Executive and Management Team are responsible for acting as positive role models with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring that any discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour from staff is formally addressed.
- 9.5 All staff are responsible for ensuring that equality and diversity issues are actively addressed in their day to day work and that their own behaviour is in line with this policy.



## **10. Monitoring and Review**

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or in response to change in legislation or good practice, whichever is sooner. This policy will be reviewed by the Chief Executive.