

# HARROGATE NEIGHBOURS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Title: Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedure**

**Policy: HN-HR-1**

## **1. Purpose.**

- 1.1. To ensure that all members of staff can work in an environment to the best of their skills and abilities without the threat of discrimination or harassment.
- 1.2. HNHA is committed to ensuring that all members of staff and job applicants receive equal treatment, regardless of any protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- 1.3. This policy applies to all aspects of employment with HNHA. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment
- 1.4. To support HNHA in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

### **Key Question      Key Lines of Enquiry**

SAFE	S1: How do systems, processes and practices keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse?
WELL-LED	W2: Does the governance framework ensure that responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed?

- 1.5. To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that (HNHA) is registered to provide:
  - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (Amendment to Parts 4 & 5)
  - Care Quality Commission (Registration) and (Additional Functions)
  - Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Equality Act 2010: Chapter 1 (Protected Characteristics) Chapter 2 (Prohibited Conduct) and Chapter 3 (Services and Public Functions)
  - Data Protection Act 2018
  - Gender Recognition Act 2004
  - UK GDPR

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The following roles may be affected by this policy:
  - All staff
- 2.2. The following Clients may be affected by this policy:
  - Clients
- 2.3. The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
  - Family
  - Commissioners

## **3. Objectives**

- 3.1. To set out the zero-tolerance approach of HNHA to the perpetrators of discrimination in the workplace.
- 3.2. To ensure that HNHA has an open and transparent approach to all aspects of employment, free from discrimination.
- 3.3. To ensure that all members of staff are able to thrive in an inclusive environment.
- 3.4. To create a working environment which enables everyone to work to the best of their skills and abilities without the threat of discrimination or harassment in the workplace

## **4. Policy**

- 4.1. HNHA takes a zero-tolerance approach to any discrimination, bullying, harassment and/or victimisation which one member of staff may perpetrate against another and/or against any other person, including but not limited to former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors.
- 4.2. Equally, this policy not only applies in the workplace but also outside of it when the member of staff is dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts, or when wearing a work uniform and on work-related trips or events including social events.
- 4.3. The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:
  - **Direct Discrimination:** Treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic; for example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because of their sexuality
  - **Indirect Discrimination:** A provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular protected characteristic more than others and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time may adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified
  - **Bullying:** This is categorised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can leave an employee feeling

vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Bullying is dealt with further in our Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure

- **Harassment:** This includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in our Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure and our Harassment Policy and Procedure
- **Victimisation:** Retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment
- **Disability Discrimination:** This includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability

4.4. Any data collected as part of this policy will be processed in accordance with current data protection legislation, the Privacy Notice issued to staff and the Data Security and Data Retention Policy and Procedure of HNHA. HNHA appreciates that certain health data and medical reports will be special category data and HNHA will process this data accordingly

4.5. HNHA complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in all its processes regarding employees

## **5. Procedure**

5.1. HNHA will provide appropriate training on Equal Opportunities. HNHA is committed to following the European Human Rights Commission Employment Statutory Code of Practice and has appointed an appropriate senior manager to have responsibility for Equal Opportunities training

### **5.2. Recruitment and Selection**

Any selection exercises including recruitment, promotion and redundancy selection, amongst others, will be carried out with regard to objective criteria which specifically avoid any issues of discrimination. Similarly, where possible, HNHA will ensure that such exercises are carried out by more than one person.

Any vacancies will be advertised to as wide and diverse an audience as possible. Such advertisements will not discourage any individual or group from applying. Job applicants will not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a protected characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law, for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job, for example, heavy lifting (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might

be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

### **5.3. Disabilities**

If a member of staff is disabled or becomes disabled, HNHA encourages them to tell their manager about their condition so that HNHA can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

### **5.4. Part-time and Fixed-term Work**

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

### **5.5. Disciplinary Procedure**

Any member of staff found to be in breach of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct, resulting in dismissal.

### **5.6. Grievance Procedure**

If a member of staff believes that they have suffered discrimination, then they should raise these issues through the Grievances Policy and/or Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policies of HNHA. A member of staff will not be bullied or victimised for raising issues under this policy. However, if a complaint is made in bad faith and/or is knowingly false, the member of staff may be subject to the Discipline Policy and Procedure of HNHA.

5.7. All staff should understand their responsibility to show consideration to and to not discriminate against disabled colleagues, and this will be reinforced in supervision. Employees are informed and reminded of their responsibility to notify the CEO of any disability that might not be obvious, in order to enable HNHA to take necessary steps to enable the employee's rights.

## **6. Definitions**

### **6.1. Protected Characteristics**

- Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation

### **6.2. Disability**

- A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The effect must have lasted for 12 months or be likely to last 12 months. An effect that is likely to recur is treated as continuing for this purpose

### **6.3. Special Category Data**

- Special Category Data is a category of data which is more sensitive than normal personal data. This includes data which relates to:
  - Race

- Ethnic origin
- Politics
- Religion
- Trade union membership
- Genetics
- Biometrics (where used for ID purposes)
- Health
- Sex life; or
- Sexual orientation

#### 6.4. **Direct Discrimination**

- This means refusing to employ someone because of a disability, when the effects of this could be minimised through reasonable adjustments, for example, using a hearing loop for someone who is deaf

#### 6.5. **Indirect Discrimination**

- This is when unnecessary specifications are attached to a role, such as a height restriction or a requirement to take part in active sports, that are not essential for the role

#### 6.6. **Harassment**

- Care must be taken proactively to prevent anyone intimidating or bullying an employee or volunteer because of their disability

#### 6.7. **Victimisation**

- A person with a disability who has complained about discrimination must not be treated adversely because of this

#### 6.8. **Bullying**

- This is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that can leave an employee feeling vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened

### **Key Facts – Professionals**

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- Issues of discrimination, harassment and victimisation should be treated with the utmost care and attention
- HNHA should ensure that all decisions on recruitment and internal promotions are made with reference to objective criteria which do not discriminate against any individual or group
- This policy applies both in the workplace and outside of it where the individual is representing HNHA
- Procedures must ensure that reasonable adjustments are made in a timely manner to enable workers with disabilities to enjoy equality with colleagues

### **Key Facts – People affected by the service**

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- Clients and those involved in their care who make derogatory statements that are of a discriminatory nature to any staff should be aware that they will be challenged about their behaviour
- Similarly, HNHA may receive reports of derogatory statements made by staff from Clients and will endeavour to investigate such reports as fully and fairly as possible

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**Signature of Chief Executive**

**Review as HNHA KPI**

**Due November 2025**