

PO02 Equality and Diversity Policy

Approval

Approved by Tenants' Forum	22 November 2007
Approved by Board	30 January 2008
Due for Review	November 2010

Review undertaken

Resident involvement <i>As agreed with Tenants' Forum</i>	Customer services and Community issues groups Tenant focus group 11 September 2007
Equality Impact Assessment	Due week beginning 5 Nov 07
Other consultation	SMT November 2007 Revised policy to be circulated to representative groups

Policy statement

Soha is committed to promoting equality and diversity across the services we provide, as an employer and as a developer of new homes.

We will demonstrate this through strong leadership and encouraging a culture of equality amongst staff and customers.

We recognise that good intentions are not enough. We therefore monitor the impact our services have on different people. This will help us to provide equal access to services and the opportunities we create, and to identify and eliminate discrimination.

1 Scope of policy

This policy guides our work in promoting equality and diversity, and in identifying and eliminating discrimination.

It is based on the need to address prejudice, promote equality and promote good relations on the following grounds:

- Race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality and culture
- Gender
- Gender reassignment status
- Disability
- Religion or faith
- Marital, civil partnership or family status
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Economic class
- Language
- Pregnancy or maternity leave
- Working arrangements; and
- Any other matter which may cause a person to be treated with injustice.

The policy applies across all areas of our work as a service provider and a housing developer.

Our commitments as an employer are fully laid out in our Personnel Equality and Diversity policy. This will adhere to the principals described in this policy.

2 Aims

Soha aims to have strong leadership and governance in promoting a culture of equality and diversity.

We aim to promote equality of opportunity and access to services.

We aim to maximize the involvement of residents in the development, monitoring and improvement of services

We aim to identify and eliminate discrimination

3 Implementation

3.1 Strong leadership

Soha's work on equality and diversity will be led by the Chief Executive. There will be a Board portfolio for Equality and Diversity.

All staff and Board members will receive training to meet our commitment to equality and diversity. This will include coverage of relevant legislation and good practice. Tenant representatives will be offered training.

3.2 Equal access to services and opportunities

We will collect and use information from tenants where:

- this is relevant to monitoring equality of access to services
- this will be helpful in making service improvements
- they are comfortable disclosing this information.

All information will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and procedures will outline the use of this information.

For each area of our service, we will outline how we will meet and monitor our commitments to equal access and opportunities. These include, but are not limited to:

- Governance – including recruitment of Board Members
- Employment and training – including recruitment
- Housing Management, including Anti-Social Behaviour, racial harassment and harassment of disabled people;
- Allocations, particularly supporting people where needed through Choice-Based Lettings
- Contractors and consultants will be required to comply with this policy.
- Repairs and maintenance, including aids and adaptations
- Communication

We will carry out Equality Impact Assessments on new and revised policies and service areas.

3.3 Identify and eliminate discrimination

Comprehensive targets will be set to check and demonstrate how we are meeting our commitments to equality in reality. These will be monitored regularly by senior staff and the Board. Soha will consider and take positive action to address imbalance and under-representation where this is appropriate and lawful.

Monitoring information, along with the involvement of customers and representative groups will be used to inform policy development.

3.4 Maximising the involvement of residents

We will monitor the involvement of residents and will have initiatives to increase engagement with under-represented groups.

We will work in partnership with representative, advocacy and advice organisations, as well as with other stakeholders, to achieve the above.

4 Responsibility

The relevant Director is responsible for implementing this policy in their work area. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility.

5 Monitoring and review

- Monitoring of progress on key equality targets will be reported monthly to senior management and quarterly to Board.
- Monitoring of comprehensive equality targets will be reported annually to Board.

7 Context

Soha will comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice, including:

- Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995 (2004), 2005

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- Equal pay act 1970, Sex discrimination act 1975, and Gender Reassignment regulations 1999
 - Equality Act 2006
 - Civil Partnerships Act 2005
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1998
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Housing Act 2004 Gypsies and Travellers
 - Race relations act 1976, Race relations amendment act 2000
 - Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) code of practice in rented housing
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
 - Work and Families Act 2006
 - Data Protection Act 1998
 - Housing Corporation Equality and Diversity Good Practice Note 2007
 - And any other relevant legislation as it becomes effected.