



Provanhall Housing Association Limited

EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

AUTHOR

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DRAFTED	APPROVED	NEXT REVIEW
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Provanhall Housing Association is committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. Throughout Provanhall Housing Association there will be a consistent approach in promoting equality and diversity.
- 1.2 The Management Committee, as employers, is jointly responsible for any acts of discrimination by Committee members, Staff or agents and as such aims to prevent and eliminate discrimination. The day to day responsibility of ensuring equal opportunities is maintained is delegated to the Management Team; with the Director retaining the overall equalities remit. All employees are required to abide by this policy.

2. Aims of Policy

- 2.1 The Association aims to ensure that it provides equal opportunities, and embraces diversity:
 - A. In the services it provides to residents, owner occupiers, applicants and other customers.
 - B. In access to membership of the Association, the Management Committee, engagement of members and other volunteers in its activities.
 - C. In its recruitment and employment of staff.
 - D. In procurement.
 - E. In promoting and delivering tenant participation.
 - F. In all Provanhall Housing Association publications, policies, practices and all other public documentation.

3. Implementation of the Policy

- 3.1 The Director is responsible for the policy's day to day implementation.
 - 3.2 Provanhall 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 Provanhall Housing Association. Copies of the policy will also be freely available and displayed in Provanhall Housing Association's offices.
 - 3.3 Appropriate training and guidance will be available to promote equality and diversity among staff.
 - 3.4 This policy applies to everyone in Provanhall Housing Association and all have 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
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equality and diversity policy will be regarded as misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

4. Equalities Legislation

4.1 The main legislation the Association complies with is The Equality Act 2010 which harmonised and replaced previous legislation. Details of the main points for this and other relevant legislation and how they impact on the Association in terms of equal opportunities is as follows:

a) The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone.

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

You're also protected from discrimination if:

- you're associated with someone who has a protected characteristic, e.g. a family member or friend
- you've complained about discrimination or supported someone else's claim

b) Housing (Scotland) Acts 2001 & 2010

These Acts places a statutory duty on housing associations to encourage equal opportunities. They stipulate such areas as tenant participation and consultation, allocations, homelessness strategies, grounds for recovery of possession and rights under the Scottish Secure Tenancy must meet the requirements of this Act.

5. The Management Committee

5.1 This policy confirms the Management Committee's absolute commitment to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and taking responsibility for embedding this within the organisation. The Committee shall ensure that the principles of Equality are inherent in all of its policies and service delivery.

5.2 The Management Committee will:

- Monitor outcomes on an annual basis and take swift action where discrimination is evident or likely to occur.
- Ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the composition of Provanhall Housing Association Ltd.'s Committee, is representative of the communities it serves.
- Make public, details of the Provanhall Housing Association Ltd.'s performance each year.

5.3 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. has stated its clear commitment not to discriminate, or allow discrimination, against anyone. Listed below are specific commitments in relation to different areas of discrimination:

6. Race, Ethnicity and Nationality

6.1 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will demonstrate its commitment to equality of practice in terms of race, ethnicity or nationality by ensuring that:

- When requested, or deemed appropriate, documents and correspondence are made available in languages other than English.
- Offer to provide interpreters for all individuals who do not feel that they can communicate effectively enough in spoken English.
- Advertise the availability of access to information in other languages in the reception area.
- Ensure that staff, especially those dealing with tenants on a day-to-day basis, are sensitive to any requirements that may exist, and act in a way that is sympathetic to these.
- Ensure that demands are being addressed and that the services that Provanhall provides are known and understood.

7. Disability and Age

7.1 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their age or disability. Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will:

- Provide documents and correspondence in large print, on audiotape and in Braille.
 - Offer to provide sign interpreters for individuals who do not feel that they can communicate effectively in spoken English, but are able to sign.
 - Advertise the availability of information and document in alternative formats and access to sign interpreters.
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- In the allocation of houses, there will be no points awarded or deducted because of a person's age, and age will not be a factor in determining who should be made an offer (unless the housing is for a specific age group). All allocations however must be made to persons 16 years or older.
- Test the degree to which Provanhall Housing Association Ltd.'s
 - (i) premises and
 - (ii) Services allow compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- Where rehabilitation or new build programmes are being considered, barrier free or the current standards at that time, as directed by DRS and any legislative or good practice guidance as appropriate, shall be adopted.
- Conduct home visits on request on any aspect of the Association's service delivery.

8. Gender and Gender Reassignment

8.1 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender:

- All housing will be allocated in accordance with policy regardless of the gender of the applicant.
- All job opportunities will be awarded on merit regardless of the gender of the applicant
- Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will aim to offer flexible working arrangements to support those members of staff who have childcare responsibilities

9. Religion, Sexual Orientation and Political Beliefs

9.1 The preceding sections describe some of the ways in which Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. is able to be proactive in equal opportunities. However, there are certain areas where we believe that to ask individuals details would be inappropriate and intrusive and, as such, it is our policy not to ask them. These include questions relating to sexual orientation, religion and political beliefs. Therefore we will not set targets and monitor our performance in these areas.

9.2 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd.'s approach in these areas will be reactive, discrimination will not be tolerated and action will be taken to ensure that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religion and political beliefs is not tolerated.

10. Contractors/Consultants Equality Compliance

10.1 As recipients of public subsidiary, the Association will seek to ensure that public funds are not used to promote practices that may be based on discrimination. Consequently the Association will seek to award to those Contractors and Consultants who develop and implement an Equalities Policy or agree to abide by the Associations Equalities Policy.

11. Setting Targets and Measuring Achievements – The Equality Action Plan

- 11.1 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. is committed to measuring its performance against the objectives of this policy, to ensure the promotion of equalities. This will be done by setting targets and monitoring performance against these. The areas to be monitored will be outlined in the Equality Action Plan. **Appendix 1**
- 11.2 The Equality Action Plan will cover a one to three-year period, synchronised with the period for review of this policy statement. Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. Management Committee will have the responsibility of approving the findings or changes recommended through the Action Plan

12. Recruitment and Selection

- 12.1 It is Provanhall 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.
- 12.2 A fair recruitment process will remove barriers to the employment of people of different backgrounds. This will enable Provanhall 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 and aid in meeting the needs and aspirations of service users and potential service users.
- 12.3 To highlight Provanhall 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 Provanhall 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 Provanhall 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, Provanhall Housing Association will ensure that all applications will have clear instructions for completing forms and application forms will be free from personal questions that are not relevant to the vacancy and that may lead to discrimination.
- 12.4 Provanhall 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
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process will not discriminate either knowingly or unknowingly by asking any questions which may lead to discrimination.

- 12.5 PHA are Disability Confident Employers and will offer a guaranteed interview to those who identify as having a disability but meet the essential criteria of the post advertised.

13. Terms and Conditions of Employment

- 13.1 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.

14 Training & Development

- 14.1 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.

15. Redundancy Selection

- 15.1 Redundancy selection will be made according to the statutory requirements and in-line with Provanhall Housing Association's 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.

16. Confidentiality

- 16.1 All information given in relation to this policy will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be discussed with external parties without their permission. Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 in this regard.

17. Dissemination of Policy

- 17.1 To maximise awareness, this policy is distributed to all employees, Contractors and Consultants, it forms part of the Committee Members Handbook and is displayed in the Associations office. It will be available on
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request, free of charge, to any member of the public. This policy is available in any other format or language as may be required, upon request. The Association shall also arrange the use of an Interpreter or Advocate where required.

18. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy

18.1 Provanhall Housing Association Ltd. will not tolerate discriminatory practices or breaches of equal opportunities legislation.

18.2 Any complaints raised will be dealt with as follows:

Informal Stage

- Where possible, incidents should be dealt with informally. If the employee, member of the public, committee member, contractor or agency worker feels able to do so, they should inform the bully or harasser if possible at the time, that they find their actions/remarks and behaviour to be unacceptable. If the situation warrants the need for a witness individuals are advised to ask a colleague to accompany them when approaching the alleged bully or harasser. The individual should then report the matter to their line manager if the employee is the victim or the matter should be reported to any manager should the behaviour be directed at a member of the public, committee member, contractor or agency worker from a member of staff at Provanhall Housing Association, as soon as possible. It maybe that the discriminatory action is unconscious and easily resolved once the situation is highlighted. However, a file note should be kept on the complaining employee's file of the details of the situation and the outcome.
 - If the employee does not feel able to speak to the individual in person, they can ask their manager or where appropriate another manager to do this. It will then be the responsibility of the manager to discuss the situation and explain what will happen if any further incidents occur. It will be made clear to the individual that continuation of such conduct may result in refusing services altogether which could result in either the withdrawal of a service or refusal of access to Provanhall Housing Association premises. Where the situation involves an employee of Provanhall Housing Association being the bully/harasser then this could lead to disciplinary action. Any action will be carried out in line with Provanhall Housing Association's Disciplinary and Grievance policy. Regardless of future action a file note will be kept in the complaining employee's file providing details of the incident and the action taken, where applicable.
 - If informal action proves insufficient to deal with persistent inappropriate behaviour, the employee or management may instigate formal action.
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Formal Stage

- Where formal action is the most appropriate way to deal with the person in question, they will be written to officially by the relevant senior manager informing them that their comments, actions, behaviours are not acceptable and are potentially discriminatory. The letter will state that further incidents will not be tolerated and that they may result in the withdrawal of services. In the situation of an employee of Provanhall Housing Association acting inappropriately towards a member of the public, committee member, contractor or agency worker, then they will be investigated under Provanhall Housing Association's Disciplinary Procedures, where formal disciplinary action may be an outcome including dismissal. In cases of physical violence or serious threats the senior manager should also involve the police, if appropriate.
- In cases where the discrimination involves contractors or staff from other agencies, the stages as detailed above will be carried out. However, due to the specific nature of the relationship between the organisation and these individuals/organisations, the following additional step should be included in the informal stage:
 - The manager will contact the appropriate senior person within the company/organisation concerned to advise them that this type of behaviour is unacceptable and that if it is repeated then the individual concerned may be refused entry to the organisation's premises.

19. Review

- 19.1 The monitoring of equal opportunities is delegated to senior managers and findings presented to the Management Committee. This policy will be reviewed three years after it is implemented or as otherwise deemed necessary by the Management Committee.
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APPENDIX 1

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

AIM OF THE PLAN

The aim of this Equality Action Plan is to actively promote the Association's continuous commitment to equality and diversity in all areas of its operation. This plan supports the Equality and Diversity Policy and consolidates equality issues from other organisational policies and procedures.

APPRAISAL OF THE CURRENT POSITION

As part of the Equality and Diversity Policy review, committee members are provided with statistics for monitoring purposes. These figures cover issues relating to: Residents Profile, Association Membership, Ethnic Monitoring, Employment Monitoring etc. These figures are studied and any necessary action is implemented.

TARGETS AND ACTION 2024-27

It can be difficult setting realistic targets that reflect the needs of all customers. In terms of equality and diversity the Association strives to set various targets, these include:

No	TARGET AREA	ACTION DATE
1	Governance	
1.1	The Complaints Handling Procedure provides access to all customers who wish to lodge a complaint against Association practice. This policy is reviewed every three years.	
1.2	The Association has a Policy review timetable in place. The Association will ensure that Equality and Diversity are included in every policy and procedural review undertaken.	
1.3	All Association policies are available in a variety of formats including Braille & large print; residents will be reminded of this in the next newsletter. This information is also displayed in the Association reception area.	
1.4	In recognition of the number of residents with poor mobility, the Association offers a home visiting service; residents will be reminded of this in the next newsletter	
1.5	The Association will aim to ensure that the Management Committee is representative of the local community.	In place and on-going.
1.6	Committee members, and representatives from other groups within the area are actively encouraged to participate in training, this includes training in equal opportunities.	
1.7	Carry out necessary investigation to identify	

	underrepresented groups and seek to engage with them to enable their representation.	
1.8	During Tenant Satisfaction Survey, include in questionnaire question to determine views/issues re barriers or difficulties in accessing services and/or premises.	
1.9	Ensure compliance with policy via: Annual monitoring reports Disciplinary action for breaches by staff or Committee Legal action against tenants and others,	
2	Contractors	
2.1	It is a pre-requisite for any contractor wishing to be considered for a framework agreement to agree to abide by our Equality And Diversity Policy – or to provide a copy of their own policy –which is acceptable to the Association.	
3	Staff	
3.1	All vacancies within the Association are open to everyone to apply for. Advertisement will be undertaken to encourage applications from all sectors of society.	
3.2	An equalities assessment shall be carried out for all recruitment and a report shall be presented to the Staffing Sub Committee on this	
3.3	The Association's Equality and Diversity policy forms part of employees Induction. Staff are issued with an updated version of this policy upon each review.	
s	Staff awareness of Equality and Diversity shall be discussed at their annual appraisal.	
3.4	All Staff shall undergo equality and diversity training	
4	Tenant Participation/Consultation	
4.1	To support the Association's commitment to Tenant Participation a strategy has been implemented and is regularly monitored. Participation and consultation is via Focus & working groups, Newsletter, Policy review meetings etc. and the Association offers childcare provision and transport to ensure equal access. In addition, the location of meetings is considered to take account of mobility issues.	
4.2	The Association consults on a regular basis, via the Tenant Satisfaction Survey and the Tenant Participation policy review meetings, with residents to seek their preferred method of communication.	

5	Development	
5.1	The Association endeavours to reflect the needs of the community when developing new builds and renovating properties, this includes discussions with other agencies. This includes promoting independence by designing, where possible, homes to allow disabled people to gain access.	
5.2	The Association applies for funding to provide adaptations every financial year. It also provides funding for the stock transfer properties for such works. It will regularly advertise the availability of adaptations in the Newsletter. Staff will also discuss this with Tenants during house visits.	
6	Repairs and Maintenance	
6.1	The Association's target to remove graffiti is within 24 hours and immediately if it is of an offensive nature.	
7	Allocations	
7.1	The Association strives to provide equality of opportunities for all housing applicants by basing our Allocations Policy on guidelines, standards etc. produced by governing bodies. All allocations involve 2 members of staff. The Allocations Policy is reviewed every 2 years.	
7.2	The Association monitors ethnic origin from all applicants, this is part of the housing application form. From details supplied, records are kept on gender etc. and are used purely for monitoring purposes.	
7.3	The Allocations Policy allows for applicants who require carers to be considered for larger accommodation and in terms of areas, an allocation would not be made where there is potential of racial or any other form of harassment.	
8	Rents	
8.1	The Association is aware of tenant's income and this information is taken into account during the rent review process.	

Appendix 2

Definitions

Diversity

Is about valuing individual differences. Provanhall Housing Association (PHA) is committed to valuing and managing people's differences to enable all employees to contribute and realise their full potential. PHA recognises that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences can bring fresh ideas and perceptions that will benefit PHA and its customers.

Equality

Is making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. ***Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but recognises that their needs are met in different ways.*** Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, and described as the Protected Characteristics of race, sex, disability, age, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation

Protected Characteristics

The grounds on which discrimination claims can be made:

Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

Direct Discrimination

Is treating someone less favourably than others based on a protected characteristic?

Indirect Discrimination

A policy, practice, procedure, provision or criteria that applies to everyone in the same way but might disadvantage a particular protected group, and which cannot be objectively justified in relation to the job.

Harassment

Conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment. The intention of the perpetrator is irrelevant, it is the impact on the individual which determines whether harassment has taken place.

Victimisation

Treating someone less favourably and discriminating against them because they have pursued or intend to pursue their rights relating to alleged discrimination, complained about the behaviour of someone harassing them or given evidence in someone else's discrimination complaint.

Positive Action

Addressing imbalances in the workforce, by encouraging members of underrepresented groups to apply for jobs. Positive action may be applicable in setting equality targets. No quotas will be set by PHA but equality targets may be set to encourage people from a particular group or groups to apply for a vacancy in PHA in comparison to the local community where they are underrepresented.

Failure to make Reasonable Adjustments

Where arrangements disadvantage an individual because of a disability and reasonable adjustments are not made to overcome the disadvantage.

Associated Discrimination

Discrimination against a person because they have an association with someone with a particular protected characteristic. For example a non-disabled person is discriminated against because of the action they need to take care of disabled dependent.

Perceptive Discrimination

Discrimination against a person because the discriminator **thinks** the person possess that characteristic. For example a person is not shortlisted for a job on the bases that the recruiter assumes the applicant does not have the correct VISA to work in the UK as they have a foreign looking name on their application form.

Employees

All permanent, temporary fixed term staff, including all managers, Director/Chief Executive, and agency workers

Stakeholders

Contractors, consultants, tenants, customers, service users, other outside agency workers.
