



Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

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Aims of Strategy

This strategy sets out Angus Housing Association's commitment to providing equality in all areas of our work. It links to the Association's vision and values and with our aims and objectives which state that we aim to:

- ***Provide an efficient, responsive, and personal housing management and maintenance service of the highest quality possible***
- ***Be accountable to the communities we serve, promote policies which offer a high level of tenant and stakeholder involvement in our decision-making processes***
- ***Promote equal opportunities across the entire range of our activities***

This strategy is the overarching document but should be considered along with the following policies and procedures:

- *Equalities Policy*
- *Equalities Action Plan*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Tenant Participation Strategy*
- *Customer Care Strategy*
- *Equalities Data Collection procedures*
- *Training and development Policy*

Some aspects of the strategy are required by either legislation or regulation however our vision is to deliver decent secure homes as a human right and our commitment to equalities is a significant part of how we achieve this. The Association is an ethical, social organisation with a culture committed to delivering fair and equitable services to all our customers.

Delivering equalities is the responsibility of all our staff and our voluntary Committee of Management and happens at both a strategic and operational level.

Business Rationale

In addition to the ethical rationale detailed above, there are sound business reasons for the Association's commitment to equalities:

- *Taking account of our customers diverse cultures and experiences allows us to deliver services which address individual needs. This in turn leads to higher levels of satisfaction.*
- *Embracing equality and diversity within our staff and governing body strengthens good organisational governance, enhances the larger view of our operations, and allows a more holistic consideration of our leadership and direction setting. Diversity within our Committee relates not only to the characteristics of people but also to diversity of thought. This improves the quality of constructive debate, brings complementary skills and experience to the Committee, challenges cognitive bias, promotes challenge and limits the risk of group think in decision making.*

Understanding the needs and aspirations of our stakeholder provides opportunities for us to:

- *Review our services with a view to improvement*
- *Determine the demand or need for the introduction of new services*
- *Facilitate data informed resource planning*

Legal Framework

Our Equalities commitment aims to meet all legal equalities requirements including those within equalities and associated legislation including:

- *The Equalities Act 2010*
- *The Equalities Act 2010 (Commencement No 13) (Scotland) Order 2017*
- *The Equalities Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, 2015 and 2016*
- *Housing (Scotland) Act(s) 2001 and 2010*
- *Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002*
- *Data Protection Act 2018*

The Equalities Act 2010 consolidated many pieces of anti-discrimination legislation into one framework. In general terms this legislation requires public sector organisations to have due regard (fair consideration and sufficient attention to) three general rules:

- 1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation*
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity*
- 3. Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not*

Regulatory Framework

As an RSL, regulation is performed by the Scottish Housing Regulator, and we adhere to the Regulatory Framework standards including:

Standard 1: the governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other customers”

Standard 4 requires governing bodies to base: “its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies a mitigates risk to the organisations purpose”.

Standard 5: the RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity” and specifically 5. 3 - “the RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work including governance arrangements.

The SHR’s Code of Conduct on Standards of Governance & Financial Management requires RSL’s to “seek out the needs, priorities, views and aspirations of tenant’s, customers and stakeholders. The governing body takes account of this information in its strategies, plans and decisions” (2.4)

In addition, the Scottish Social Housing Charter requires RSL’s to meet the requirements of Standard 1 - “all aspects of housing services (including customer services) must be performed so that: every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.

Protected Characteristics

The Equalities Act 2010 introduced nine protected characteristics as shown below. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a

protected characteristic and the legislation covers direct, indirect and associative discrimination, discrimination by perception, harassment and victimisation.

More detail on these 9 protected characteristics is within the Equalities Policy.



As the title of this strategy indicates, our aim is not only to deliver our services in a way that prohibits discrimination. It is to provide equity and opportunities for inclusion for all stakeholders.

Delivering the aims of the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Our commitment to Equalities runs through every aspect of the services the Association delivers. The Equalities Policy provides more details on how we will deliver our commitment and is accompanied by an action plan which details specific tasks and timescales for delivery of these.

Training

As mentioned above, everyone who either works for or governs Angus Housing Association has a responsibility to ensure that we meet our obligations on equality and that we promote diversity and inclusion. To this end the Association requires anyone involved to complete mandatory Equalities

training at induction of through a series of regular training. The Association has an Equalities Champion who at any given time is a member of the Management Team and works with the Senior Management Team and the Committee of Management to ensure that our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion commitment is being delivered.

Review and Monitoring

The Committee of Management has the responsibility for assessing compliance with our statutory and regulatory obligations and reviewing our performance in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The tools to allow the Committee of Management to find this assurance are:

- *Progress of tasks with the Equalities Action Plan*
- *Review of Equalities complaints*
- *Tenant feedback from targeted surveys and regular tenant satisfaction surveys*
- *Review of Equalities complaints from employees*
- *Use of the SFHA Annual Assurance Framework to review compliance against Regulatory Standard 5.3 “the RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristic in all areas of its work including governance arrangements*
- *Internal Audit function*
- *Cultural Audit*

Communicating the Strategy

As a key strategy allowing the Association to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Framework and of the Equalities Act, this Strategy will be shared with all stakeholders with a particular focus on our staff and Committee of Management. It will be more widely publicised to our tenants through our website and newsletters.