

Equality and Diversity Policy

Reason for Policy

This policy sets out the Group's commitment and principles in relation to Equality and Diversity. Newydd is committed to treating people fairly so that everyone has equal access to the provision of housing, services or employment and to ensuring that no one is discriminated against, harassed or victimised on the grounds of:

- race
- gender
- marital status and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity status
- disability
- caring responsibilities
- religion or belief
- age
- sexual orientation
- gender re assignment

Newydd's Equality and Diversity statement

We believe it is essential to treat everyone fairly, and with dignity and respect.

We believe that everyone matters, and we actively promote equality, diversity and fairness.

We embrace people with diverse backgrounds, skills and cultures.

We are an inclusive organisation.

We want you to feel that:

- you are valued as an individual and treated with respect
- you get fair access to our services
- we make reasonable adjustments, where we can, to meet your needs,

Working to the commitments contained in our policy and in accordance with our guiding principles and beliefs values we will positively promote equality and diversity in all areas of our work; we will challenge and not tolerate behaviour which does not accord with Newydd's values of honesty, compassion, innovation, enabling, and people focussed.

Newydd strongly condemns behaviour which is abusive or offensive and has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of hate related abuse.

Legal/Regulatory Requirements

The Equality and Diversity Policy will support compliance with the Welsh Government Regulatory Framework and Performance Standards and the Community Housing Cymru Code of Governance.

The group recognises its duties under the Equality Act (2010) and will:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This involves the organisation having due regard in relation to:

Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.

Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

We recognise the following forms of discrimination as identified by the Equality Act 2010:

Definitions of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination: Treating one person less favourably/worse than another person because of a protected characteristic.

Example: Refusing to provide housing advice to someone because of their sexual orientation.

Indirect Discrimination: Occurs when a service provider puts in place a rule or policy or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.

Example: A housing association has a policy of reminding tenancy applicants of forthcoming appointments by telephone. This puts deaf people who cannot use the telephone at a disadvantage, as they do not receive a reminder of their appointment.

Harassment: Occurs when a person engages in unwanted conduct which is related to a protected characteristic, and which has the purpose or the effect of:

- violating the dignity of another person, or
- creating for that person an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Example: A customer in the reception area overhears a staff member making

racist comments. This is harassment as it creates an intimidating, degrading and humiliating environment and violates the customer's dignity.

Harassment by a third party: Employers are potentially liable for the harassment of their staff or customers by people they do not themselves employ

Example: harassment by a contractor

Victimisation: This occurs when someone faces discrimination because she or he has made an allegation of unlawful discrimination or because she or he has assisted or supported a complainant.

Example: Refusing to consider someone for promotion because they gave evidence on behalf of a colleague who made a complaint of unlawful sex discrimination.)

Associative discrimination: This is direct discrimination against someone because they are associated with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

Discrimination by perception: This is direct discrimination against someone because others think that they possess a particular protected characteristic. They do not necessarily have to possess the characteristic – just be perceived to possess it.

Welsh Language and Equality Implications

The Group has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business it will provide information and services in the language and format preferred by the customer. If any person requires translation facilities or information in other languages or formats, including Welsh, Braille, large font or on CD or tape then this is available on request. The Language Line service is available, so customers are able to speak to someone in their preferred language. Delivery of this policy to tenants and other customers with specific communication needs will be appropriate to their needs. We will use profiling information to assess needs and deliver effective services.

EQIA -to be completed

Consultation

This policy has been developed in conjunction with staff and tenants.

Risk Assessment

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the Group's Risk Management Policy.

Aims

This policy aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations between different people, tackle prejudice and promote understanding of Equality & Diversity issues.

We want to ensure that all our employees, job applicants, residents, housing

applicants, Board members, partners and members of the public feel valued and respected and are encouraged to participate and contribute.

We want to make sure that our services are accessible and fair for all of our customers, collecting information about our residents to ensure that we do what matters to them and accommodate their needs and preferences.

Our Commitment

To achieve our aims, we will:

- Have effective leadership and governance in place to establish a culture where equality and diversity underpin all that we do
- Establish and maintain systems to scrutinise performance and set challenging targets to ensure our aims are achieved.
- Integrate equal opportunity principles into all aspects of our organisation and service delivery.
- Engender a culture that recognises, welcomes and respects diversity.
- Ensure that governance arrangements reflect the communities in which we work.
- Aim to ensure that our services are accessible to all
- Improve our knowledge of our customer profile; ensuring our services are shaped by our understanding of our customers.
- Regularly review the impact of our policies, procedures, strategies and services in terms of promoting equality & diversity and eliminating discrimination
- Ensure that our Recruitment and Selection practices take full account of equality and diversity requirements as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010 and that discrimination of any kind does not exist
- Expect all partners to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of this policy
- Ensure our procurement processes and supply partners reflect our commitment to equality and diversity.

Monitoring and Review

Progress against these objectives will be monitored on a regular basis by the Senior Management Team, including consideration of data and feedback obtained from staff and tenants and reported on an annual basis to the Board.

The Equality and Diversity policy will be reviewed annually by the Board. Evidence from the equality & diversity action plan which underpins this policy, will be used to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of compliance with this policy. Specific targets in relation to Equality and Diversity for the organisation will be included in the action plan, monitored and reported to Board.

Equality impact assessments will be used to test services, functions and policies for compliance with legislation and good practice. We will use EQIAs to ensure that potential discrimination is eliminated from our policies, procedures and working practices.

In reviewing other policies, the equality and diversity implications of policy impacts and policy changes will be considered and where appropriate external bodies who are

expert in the relevant equality field will be consulted on proposed changes or on opportunities to improve policy and practice.

Legal Obligations

In applying the policy, the Group will take account of the following legislation and associated codes of practice where they are applicable and where they are not to consider any good practice that may be applied in a voluntary capacity:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- Equal Pay Act 1970 and 1983.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.
- Gender Recognition Act 2004.
- Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.
- Human Rights Act 1998.

- Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Racial Equality in Housing.
- EHRC – Code of Practice on Employment.
- EHRC – Code of Practice on Services, Public Functions and Associations.
- Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing - Wales (2006).
- Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Rented Housing 1991 (CRE).
- Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Employment 1984 (CRE).
- Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Employment Act 1984 (CRE).

Responsibility for the Policy

All members of staff have a role to play in creating a climate which positively promotes equality and diversity in all areas of our work. All employees will be made aware of this policy and will be expected to comply. Employees have a personal responsibility for the practical application of the Group's Equality and Diversity Policy, which extends to the treatment of members of the public and employees. The Group employs a number of contractors to deliver services all of which will be made aware of and be expected to comply with this policy.

Tenant groups that are funded by the Group will be expected to comply with this policy, non-compliance may result in the withholding of further funding.

Directors and line managers will be responsible for implementing the policy within the organisation and for ensuring that staff are familiar with and act in accordance with the policy, and that adequate monitoring arrangements are in place.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the policy and for ensuring consistency across the Group in all practices and in monitoring the outcomes of this policy. An Equality & Diversity Action Plan will be used to coordinate the action necessary to meet the requirements of this policy.

Communication

All employees will be informed of this policy, so staff understand our vision and aspirations for equality and diversity and the role they play in advancing and promoting these principles.

All Managers will be responsible for ensuring that those they manage are made aware of the policy and that it is brought to the attention of new recruits as part of the induction process.

This policy will also be made available to the public, tenants, customers, contractors and service providers on request or in order to clarify the Group's stance on equal opportunities and diversity. This policy will be made available on the Group's website.

Contractors will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be required to abide by the spirit and principles of this policy to help ensure its effective implementation.

Training

All staff, Board members and volunteers will be trained in equality and diversity; both during the initial induction period and on a regular basis thereafter, i.e. refresher training every 2 years. Additional training will be provided to address the needs of particular roles or issues within the organisation. Employees and Board members will be given equal access to training and development opportunities.

Complaints

Any person who believes that the Group is not complying with this policy is encouraged to bring this matter to the notice of the Group. This can be done informally or formally through the Group's Concerns and Complaints Policy and the Harassment and Hate Crime Policy. In addition, employees are encouraged to raise issues in accordance with the Staff Handbook and the grievance procedures contained in that document. Harassment and discrimination will be investigated and treated as disciplinary matters.