



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Date Effective: September 2018
Date of Review: July 2019



Registered Scottish Charity No: SC042551

Policy: **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Date Approved: 19.9.17

Approved By: Board

Applicable to: Everyone who receives a service from,
or who is employed by Irvine Housing
Association

Lead Director: Paul Hillard

Review Date: July 2019

1. Purpose

Irvine Housing Association is committed to supporting and promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). This commitment is embraced by our Board and informs all of our activities and their impact on our customers, employees and other stakeholders.

We aim to:

- Prevent discrimination, eliminate prejudice, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity within the organisation.
- Be fair in our dealings with all people - board members, staff, customers, volunteers and partners– with whom we have relationships taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and backgrounds.
- Ensure that ED&I is embedded in everything we do.

Our policy covers all aspects of equality including race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age. It applies to everyone who receives a service from us, forms part of our governance, is employed by us, or volunteers their services. We will also seek to ensure that anyone who works on our behalf demonstrates commitment to ED&I.

The policy will help us deliver our vision of ‘transforming lives, revitalising neighbourhoods’ and uphold our values, particularly to ensure that we are ‘people-focused’ and ‘trusted’ by everyone we come into contact with. It links closely with several dimensions of our corporate planning, particularly those associated with customer interactions; our housing support services, and; the development of employees, board members and involved tenants.

It also aims to ensure that we comply with all our legal and regulatory responsibilities; current requirements are set out principally in the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights legislation, the Scottish Housing Regulator’s Regulatory Standards & Guidance, and the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which requires us to perform all aspects of our housing services so that,

“Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.”

2. Guiding Principles

We will

- Ensure that our Board and the Leadership team are accountable for the embedding of our ED&I approach and for monitoring our performance.
- Promote equality through all of our activities as employer, partner, influencer and service provider.
- Comply with all legal and regulatory requirements which apply to the protected characteristics of race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure our partners, suppliers and service providers are actively committed to ED&I principles.
- Actively encourage customers and staff to engage with us in shaping the organisation and its services.
- Promote community cohesion in our neighbourhoods.
- Ensure that colleagues comply with our policies, and that all policies and procedures conform with the ED&I policy.

To achieve this we will:

Adopt clear strategies

- Devise an action plan and review it each year, reporting the outcomes to Board.
- Put in place appropriate resources to deliver our objectives.

Use information and analysis to drive strategy and action

- Carry out equality analyses on all policies and significant change programmes to ensure they deliver our equality objectives.
- Collect, review, and measure data on a regular basis so that it informs us of our performance in relation to ED&I including governance, recruitment, staffing, lettings, complaints and satisfaction.
- Summarise the data gathered, within a demographic context where relevant, and report to the Executive Team and Board, appropriate recommendations to support assurance and management of risk.
- Provide a full explanation of why information is collected and what we use it for, treating sensitive personal data confidentially and only for the purposes of promoting and ensuring equality and fairness and improving outcomes.
- Take active steps to address any issues identified by the above reporting.

Embed best practice

- Ensure that all board members, staff and volunteers receive regular, relevant and up to date training and support to enable them to champion and meet the organisation's policy objectives.
- In particular, seek to help employees understand how to address prejudice and unconscious bias.

- Support individual commitment to and ownership of ED&I objectives by ensuring that appraisal conversations focus on the relevant behavioural competences.
- Ensure that ED&I informs every aspect of our approach to customer care.
- Support and promote Riverside's equality and diversity staff groups, allocating resources which are sufficient for their remit.
- Ensure that through our procurement processes we appoint partners and suppliers with a robust and compliant approach to ED&I.
- Provide guidance and support on all aspects of equality and diversity by reference to our best practice group and sector experts.
- Actively encourage people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Have in place reasonable and accessible procedures and approaches to support ED&I

- Make a clear commitment to stakeholders on how we meet their particular service requirements, for example when information is requested in different languages or formats.
- Support effective communication by providing a range of contact methods, shaped to customers' requirements, including effective use of digital services.
- Ensure that no current or potential customer is discriminated against by letting a property on less favourable terms due to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that all human resources and recruitment procedures reflect the principles in this policy including equality of opportunity; this includes flexible working arrangements, to help maximise the potential of all current and potential employees.
- Have up to date and recognised procedures for the management of incidences of, domestic abuse, hate crime and other forms of abuse and discrimination.
- Involve customers in shaping and scrutinising services.
- Have procedures in place to ensure our properties comply with our legal obligations to meet requirements arising from disability and other protected characteristics including Aids and Adaptations procedures for tenants.
- Recognise that disability includes mental health and that not all disabilities are visible.
- Ensure that our workplace is both compliant with legislation and welcoming to those with particular requirements regarding accessibility and that this extends to use of other venues and conduct of meetings.
- Recognise that some vulnerable groups of people may need particular support, and address this by having robust procedures in relation to child protection, adult support and protection, and modern slavery

3. Definitions

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all staff and service users are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.

Promoting **diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different and creating a working environment that values each customer and employee ensuring that services are delivered that suit all sections of the community.

Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.

Protected characteristics The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age.

4. Notes

This policy will be communicated to all key stakeholders and made available upon request.

Our Board must agree any changes to this policy.

All policies should contain the following wording:

'This policy conforms with our ED&I policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Analysis'