

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND FAIRNESS POLICY

Aims of the equality diversity and fairness policy

The following are aims of the equality diversity & fairness policy:

- To recognise that groups and individuals have suffered, and continue to suffer from discrimination, that is direct (whether intentional or unintentional) and indirect.
- To recognise the need for equality of opportunity and the management of diversity in all aspects of our operations including the provision of housing and employment. It is our intention to ensure that nobody receives less favourable treatment from us or agents acting on our behalf on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, marital status, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender reassignment, social status, political, cultural or religious beliefs.
- To take practical actions to eliminate discrimination, unfairness, inequality and disadvantage, developing initiatives and interventions to promote and value diversity at all levels of the organisation. The co-op expects agents and contractors working for it to actively recognise and manage diversity in the workplace.
- To ensure that all committee members and others working on behalf of the co-op are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the promotion of equal opportunities and valuing diversity, that they are properly equipped to take account of the different and special needs of particular groups and make provision for those groups.

Delegated Authority

- 1 The committee will work with staff to ensure that the Equality, Diversity and Fairness Policy is implemented.

Legislation

- 2 The co-op accepts and endorses its legal responsibilities as laid out in a variety of legislation which includes, amongst others:
 - the Equal Pay Act 1970 & 1983
 - the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2002
 - the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the DDA Act 2004
 - the Human Rights Act 1998
 - the Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
 - Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
 - Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
 - Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
 - Equalities Act 2010
- 3 The co-op will also adhere to the Commission for Race Equality's Code of Practice.

The co-op as a democratic organisation

- 4 The co-op will collect demographic data about its members and applicants for membership. The committee will periodically consider whether demographic information about applicants and members reflects equivalent demographic data in the Belgrave area of Leicester. The committee will consider any steps that can be taken to redress any imbalances identified.
- 5 All members will be encouraged and supported to attend general meetings of the co-op. The committee will consider taking steps to

tackle and real or perceived barriers for particular groups of members not being able to attend general meetings.

- 6 The committee is democratically elected by co-op members. The co-op will encourage all members to put themselves forward for election to the committee, and the committee will consider any barriers that may prevent particular groups from standing for election.
- 7 If the democratic process does not result in committee membership that reflects the demographic mix of the co-op's membership, the committee will consider co-opting additional committee members in order to redress the balance.
- 8 The co-op shall ensure that committee members and any other involved members are aware that the use of sexist, racist, homophobic or ageist language, as well as general derogatory comments about a person's physical appearance, is unacceptable and the use of such language will be considered a breach of the code of conduct.
- 9 The co-op shall ensure that its committee members attend and complete training in equality and diversity issues.

The co-op's relationship with agents

- 10 The co-op will ensure that agents working with the co-op or acting on the co-op's behalf have comprehensive equality, diversity and fairness policies that include:
 - a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity
 - an aim to recruit the best possible staff using an appropriate recruitment policy
 - ensuring that their staff are aware that the use of sexist, racist, homophobic or ageist language, as well as general derogatory comments about a person's physical appearance, is unacceptable and the use of such language will be considered a disciplinary offence for staff
 - ensuring that diversity issues are covered as part of the induction programme for new members of staff

- ensuring that any staff involved in recruitment have satisfactorily attended and completed training in equality and diversity issues in relation to recruitment and recruitment policy and practice
- ensuring that all staff are given training on equal opportunities issues, diversity, diversity awareness and diversity management
- ensuring good employment and staff management practices are adopted which promote ownership and understanding of diversity throughout the organisation.

The co-op as a housing provider

- 11 The co-operative is committed to:
 - ensuring that issues of equal opportunities and valuing diversity are considered and included in all policies and procedures
 - ensuring that any person who applies for housing or any person or organisation which uses our services or approaches us for assistance receives equal treatment
 - ensuring that all property is let fairly in accordance with the co-op's allocations policy
- 12 The co-op will ensure that contractors, consultants and other bodies who work for the co-op are committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity and have an equality and diversity policy commensurate with the co-op's policy.
- 13 The co-op will consider if appropriate action can be taken if those who work for the co-op's contractors do not reflect the demography of the local area (ie. particularly in relation to ethnic groups and gender).
- 14 The co-op will ensure that premises where co-op business takes place meet DDA requirements and that meetings with the co-op's membership are held in premises that are properly accessible to all members.
- 15 The co-op will ensure that applicants for housing who are physically disabled are not treated less favourably than others because of their disability or for a reason relating to it. The co-op will maintain records of all suitably adapted properties that we own or manage to ensure that such information is made available to the relevant referral agencies when available for letting. The co-op will assist, where

possible, in the adaptation of homes to meet the needs of disabled applicants who apply for housing. Where adaptation is not possible, the co-op will seek to assist such applicants through practical working relationships with other agencies.

- 16 Complaints concerning breaches of the co-op's commitment to equality and diversity will be treated seriously and properly investigated and reported to the committee. The co-op will periodically review the demography of those who have made complaints to ensure that no particular group feel discriminated against.
- 17 The co-op will respond proactively to allegations of harassment in accordance with its Anti-Social Behaviour and Harassment Policy and allegations of racial harassment in accordance with its Racial Harassment Policy.
- 18 The co-op will periodically review its policies and practices to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage, either directly or indirectly or intentionally or unintentionally.
- 19 The co-op will periodically review its approach to equalities and diversity, considering demographic data collected on its membership and contractors working for it. The co-op will consider taking active steps if comparisons of demographic data show that there are imbalances in the co-op.

Risks to be avoided:

- A member or someone else feels discriminated against as a result of something the co-op has done or has not done
- The co-op, or someone working for the co-op, says or does something that is intentionally or not intentionally discriminatory
- The co-op becomes complacent regarding equalities issues and does not value diversity
- The co-op does not comply with its legal requirements in relation to equalities and diversity