



The Langstane Group

Equality and Diversity Policy

Approved by Senior Management Team	21 July 2022
Board of Management	24 August 2022
Approval Date	24 August 2022
Implementation Date	24 August 2022
Review Date	21 July 2025
Version	V3

Policy Version	Date of Approval	Changes made to Policy
Version V1	10 November 2009	First issue
Version V2	15 July 2019	Re-write
Version V3	24 August 2022	Minor Changes: policy amended to meet policy template; Roles and Responsibilities added; grammatical change; change relating to the Association's Human Rights Approach to Housing and an amendment from Support Services to Customer Services

1. Introduction

Langstane Housing Association is a Co-operative and Community Benefit Society and a registered social landlord with charitable status.

The Langstane Group consists of Langstane Housing Association Limited, and its wholly owned subsidiaries. This policy applies to the Langstane Group.

Langstane Housing Association is committed to promoting equality both in the provision of services and in employment practices and ensuring that services are accessible to everyone.

Characteristics which are protected are set out in the Equality Act 2010 in respect of which discrimination, harassment or victimisation is unlawful. The protected characteristics are defined as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Association is committed to opposing and eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Equality Act 2010 provides a single framework to strengthen the law around discrimination and remove inconsistencies which previously existed.

The Association is not a Public Body as described in the provisions of the Equality Act (2010) but will adopt the following general duties to ensure no individual or group is disadvantaged:

- eliminate any type of discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not

Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and includes protection of these rights under Article 14, 'Protection from Discrimination'. The Association will adopt the human rights principles of accountability, participation, transparency and non-discrimination. The Association will

have regard to a 'Right to Adequate Housing' and the seven 'dimensions' a home should meet to be considered adequate as set out in the United Nation's International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 s39

The Housing Association has a duty to act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and complies with legislation.

The Scottish Housing Regulator expects, under standard 5.3 of the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management, that the Association:

'pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.'

2. Aims and objectives of the policy

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework within which the strategic aims of the Association's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Business Plan can be met.

The Association as a landlord, service provider and employer will ensure respect, fairness and understanding is delivered across all areas of the business and will embrace diversity and eliminate discrimination.

- To achieve these aims the Association will gather and analyse information that enables the Association to understand the needs and preferences of tenants, residents and other customers and use this to shape policies and services
- identify and remove barriers preventing or restricting access to services
- ensure services meet the diverse needs of customers
- eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ensure equality of opportunity is embraced and promoted across the Association through training and working practices.

3. Links to other strategic documents and policies

The Group's Equality and Diversity Policy is linked to a number of strategic documents. Every policy, including human resources and recruitment policies will contain a statement promoting the Association's commitment to equality and diversity across all areas of work and will confirm that discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

In particular this policy links to the Business Plan; Equality and Diversity Strategy; Tenancy Sustainment Strategy; Tenant Participation Strategy; Community Investment Strategy and Communication Strategy.

4. Policy

Equality is not always about treating everyone the same but about recognising differences and treating people accordingly, so that the outcome for each person is the same.

Diversity is the range of individual differences demonstrated amongst the population. By embracing diversity the Association attaches value to individuality, including background, culture, skills, attitudes and experience as well as personal characteristics.

This policy reflects a number of the strategic aims set out in the Equality and Diversity Strategy:

- Provision of accessible and responsive high quality services

The Association collects data in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator relating to the protected characteristics, for existing tenants, new tenants, housing applicants on the waiting lists, governing bodies and employees .

The Association will analyse this information to understand the needs and preferences of the tenants, employees , governing body members and other customers in order to provide continuous improvement in the delivery of services, to ensure that there is no conscious or unconscious bias in the delivery of services and to remove any barriers preventing or restricting access to services and activities.

In addition the Association will engage contractors, consultants and partners that can demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity through upholding the values of respect, fairness and understanding.

- A range of communication methods, appropriate to the needs of a diverse society, is used to promote equality of opportunity

The Association will actively promote activities and services including identifying and engaging with minority or hard to reach groups, ensuring that a range of communication methods are available to facilitate this. Translation and interpretation services will be provided where required.

- A diverse, talented and motivated governing body and workforce that understand and reflect the needs of the communities worked with, is recruited, developed and retained.

The Association will ensure that employment opportunities are accessible to all.

The Association will provide a working environment that recognises the individual needs of employees, where each employee feels respected and able to give their best. Employees will be trained and equipped to respond to specific individual needs of tenants, residents and other customers.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment allows the Association to take proactive steps to identify and remove potential discrimination or adapt a policy or practice to better advance equality.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland states that a policy or practice which proactively considers equality, particularly using relevant evidence and consultation or involvement, is likely to be a better quality policy in terms of it being more responsive to the needs of those affected.

When new policies are produced or existing policies reviewed consideration will be given to whether the policy affects tenants, employees or the wider community, whether there is a significant impact in terms of equality or if there are known inequalities.

Where this is the case an Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out and appended to the policy.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management and Chief Executive

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the Policy with day to day implementation and adherence delegated to the Chief Executive.

Directors

Directors are responsible for:

- promoting the Equality and Diversity Policy at every opportunity and ensuring that employees are trained and equipped to deal with any form of discrimination.
- identifying and removing barriers preventing or restricting access to services
- ensuring services meet the diverse needs of customers

All employees

Equality and Diversity is every employees' responsibility. Employees must ensure they adhere to the policy, attend training and champion equality and diversity in their every day working lives.

6. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. An annual report will be provided to the Board of Management in relation to how the Association meets the requirements of the policy, including how the Association works with others to shape and influence the local and national agenda to improve equality and diversity across the north-east of Scotland and beyond.

7. Equality and Diversity

The Langstane Group / Langstane Housing Association is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all areas of work. Discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

Right to Complain

In the event you are not satisfied with the service you have received, please contact the Association for a copy of our Complaints Policy. This can also be viewed on Langstane Housing Association's website – www.langstane-ha.co.uk

If you would like this document sent to you in large print, please contact Customer Service on 01224 423000