

'Providing you with the home that you need.'	Equal Opportunity	Control ID	TPP ID P 100009
		Effective Date	22 nd September 2009
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		Approved By	<i>P. Woodcock</i>

The Company is an 'Equal Opportunities Employer', committed to ensuring that the talents and resources of all employees are utilised to the full. As such, it is committed to adopting, implementing and monitoring a 'Policy of Equal Opportunities' for all employees, to ensure a total absence of discrimination in the workplace, and that the culture of equal opportunities does genuinely exist. The Company recognises that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity is a feature of the Company's employment practices and procedures, the Company has made the decision to adopt a formal 'Equal Opportunities Policy'. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action. Whilst this policy is particularly focused on the needs of staff, as the Company operates in the field of supported tenancies and working in housing partnerships which furnish the needs of the most vulnerable in society, the practices concerning equal opportunities, the suppression of prejudice and the abolishment of discrimination will also be translated into the sphere of client and householder working.

A further aim of the policy is to ensure that no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.

The Company will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment, if requested. Likewise, the policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant codes of practice.

The Company will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

Implementation and management of this policy is the responsibility of department and team heads.

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

It is important to define prejudice as part of this policy, to ensure that all staff work to eradicate this premise. Prejudice happens when one individual makes a judgement about another, using too little information to ensure a holistic appraisal of the circumstance. Prejudice is considered irrational and based on ignorance. It is usually expressed through feelings, attitudes or opinions considering the person or their 'group'. The Company is committed to excluding prejudice from its services to staff, householders, and clients alike.

As part of this definition series on equal opportunity and prejudice, it is important to add that of 'discrimination'. This is where individuals act on the basis of their prejudices. It manifests itself as part of overt behaviour, and can be seen by people putting others down, restricting their citizenship rights etc. The Company is committed to excluding discrimination from its services to staff, clients and householders alike.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The Company will endeavour through appropriate training, supervision and instruction to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or subconsciously, in making these decisions. The following criteria will underpin the recruitment, selection and promotion processes:

1. Job descriptions, where used, will be revised when appropriate to ensure that they are in line with the Company's equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications. The Company will constantly review its terms of employment to ensure that no discrimination or prejudice exists and that employees are not disadvantaged by way of any personal circumstances or cultural background.
2. The Company will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies. In addition, the Company will not confine its recruitment to areas or media sources, which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
3. For employee recruitment and selection, to eliminate possibilities of discrimination or prejudice prior to interview, employment application forms will not include questions concerning race or ethnic origin, creed, colour, religion, political affiliation, parenthood or sexual orientation. Thereafter, employee selection criteria will proceed purely according to the

merits and abilities of the candidate to perform the tasks and duties listed in the relevant job description. Employee recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed periodically to ensure that the elements of this policy are maintained. Likewise, all employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.

4. The Company will not disqualify any applicant because he or she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
5. All applicants who apply for jobs with the Company will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
6. More than one person will carry out short listing and interviewing, where possible, and interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature. On completion of the process the selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff. Selection decisions will be recorded.
7. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.

TRAINING AND PROMOTION

Senior staff will receive supervision, guidance or training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions. Further considerations will be:

1. All promotion will be in line with this policy. This Company actively encourages all employees to develop their career, as it prefers to promote from within, subject to satisfactory work performance and the individual's ability to meet the requirements of the higher or different post. Available promotion opportunities will be open to individuals regardless of their background. As in the recruitment procedure, all staff involved in the promotion process will be trained, supervised and instructed accordingly. Promotional prospects will not be affected by any element of discrimination and all applicants will be given an opportunity without prejudice.
2. Training allocation will be achieved within the ethos of this policy. The Company positively encourages training for all personnel including those subjects who are not directly linked to the tasks being performed and is available equally to all employees, where budgets allow.
3. Senior management, individuals, or their immediate supervisors or representatives may instigate training requirements and proposals.

MONITORING

The Company will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy. Monitoring may involve:

1. The collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin, the sex and disability of all current employees.
2. The examination by ethnic/national origin, sex and disability of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants.
3. Recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.

The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed periodically to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.