



Arawak Walton Housing Association

Equality and Diversity Policy Statement

*As an organisation we embrace equality and diversity in all our activities.
We mainstream equality and diversity in everything we do and are vigilant in our continual
review and assessment of performance.*

We will not allow illegal discrimination to affect the level of performance we provide.

*As a Black led housing provider we aim to be a leader in all areas of
equality and diversity.*

Corporate commitment and governance

We recognise that:

- Board and sub-committee representation should reflect the diverse communities we serve. We will monitor information on Board and committee membership to ensure a diverse representation
- The Chief Executive and Management are committed to participating in equality and diversity activities to drive the strategic goals of the organisation
- The equality and diversity strategy and policy will be annually considered and endorsed at board level
- All reports to Board will be considered for equality impacts by using an equality impact assessment process

Staff responsibility

- All staff are expected to comply with the organisation's equality and diversity policy
- Staff are expected to be champions in equality and diversity and act in a way which demonstrates the organisation's commitment
- Any form of illegal discrimination will be investigated and all appropriate action taken.

Communication - Access to information

- We recognise that access to information is essential in achieving equality and diversity. We will do everything in our power to make all our communications fully accessible to all the customers and communities we work with
- We recognise that communication with our staff will make a difference in improving performance, and we will take action which makes sure all our staff understand the business case for equality and diversity
- We will make sure all our communication tools such as the organisation's Website, all our publications and any other forms of communication are open and fully accessible
- We will gather customer profiling to ensure we are communicating and providing an appropriate service for all our customer needs.

Recruitment and selection of staff and board

- We have developed a system for recruiting, both for the Board and in employment, which places emphasis on individual skills, abilities and experience rather than on formal qualifications. This will enable a full diversity of people to demonstrate their ability to do a job. Selection criteria contained within the job descriptions and person specifications is regularly reviewed to ensure that they are justifiable and do not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly, and are essential for the effective performance of the job
- Staff or Board members involved in interviews will have received training in equality and diversity. We will ensure that more than one person is involved in the selection process and where possible that the selection panel is diverse. We are committed to selecting fairly and within our commitment to equality and diversity
- Positive steps will be taken to ensure that knowledge of vacancies reaches all groups who are under represented within the workforce
- Equality monitoring questionnaires will be used for monitoring the selection process to ensure equality and diversity. The analysis of results will be reported to the board annually.

Employment and training and development

- All Board members and staff will receive training to reinforce the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity. An ongoing training programme will take place, which ensures that all new staff understand equality and diversity
- Managers will receive training to support them in the activity of equality and diversity impact assessing all the organisation's policies and processes so the organisation has evidence of all its achievements and outcomes
- Staff who are under represented within management tiers will be encouraged to apply for training and development opportunities wherever possible to enable them to compete on equal terms for jobs and promotion
- All staff training will be monitored and reported to ensure equal access
- Staff will be fully consulted on the development of equality and diversity
- Staff and board members will be briefed regularly on equality and diversity performance achievements.

Partners, Contractors, and Suppliers

- We will only work with partners, contractors and suppliers who have a commitment to equality and diversity. We have a code of conduct, which they are required to comply with
- We are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity with all our suppliers, contractors and partners
- We will review our tendering process and supplier policy on an annual basis and will endeavour to ensure an increasingly diverse list of suppliers.

Selection and allocation of housing and other services

- Decision on the selection and allocation of housing and other services will be made in a fair, reasonable and flexible manner

- To ensure implementation of the equality and diversity policy we will monitor all applications and lettings and evaluate and report on outcomes annually
- A complaints procedure will be in place for dealing with incidents of illegal discrimination.

Lettings and service delivery

- We will develop services that meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. We are committed to consult with our customers/tenants to establish their needs and requirements. We will work in partnership with other organisations to ensure that needs are met
- We will monitor and report the satisfaction of our customers with respect to standard of service and accommodation, quality of work etc. We aim to ensure services are suitable for current needs, and will respond to changes in customer and developing communities' needs.

Customer and staff harassment

- Harassment, bullying at work undermines the performance of our organisation and cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. We have a policy to deal with all forms of harassment and bullying of staff or customers, which includes the protection of anyone from victimisation. The harassment and bullying policy considers equality and diversity throughout
- All complaints from staff or customers will be dealt with swiftly and confidentially, and staff will be protected against victimisation from making, or being involved in, a complaint. Intentional false allegations will be considered a form of harassment and dealt with appropriately
- Discrimination, harassment/bullying and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure
- Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination, victimisation, or harassment via the grievance or harassment procedures.

Target setting monitoring and reporting

- We understand the business case for equality and diversity and will make sure that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation. A monitoring system will measure and report on performance and outcomes
- This system includes the routine collection and analysis of information on job applicants and employees in all areas of equality and diversity. Information regarding the self identification of all staff including those who identify as having a disability will also be updated annually
- Action on the outcomes of monitoring will be part of equality and diversity implementation
- Customer profiling will inform all activities and service delivery development
- We will be proactive in setting local equality and diversity standards which are in line with our customers needs.

Protected Characteristics

Arawak understands its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and its public sector duty and have agreed these following commitment statements regarding the Acts nine protected characteristics:

We will take due regard of all the protected characteristics when fulfilling our employment and service delivery responsibilities

Age

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

We will make sure all our employment opportunities and services are accessible to all and will justify any age restrictions within the law.

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A disability included long term and fluctuating condition.

We will make reasonable adjustment when employing or providing a service for people with a disability and will provide different and more flexible employment and services if this meets the needs of a person with a disability.

Gender reassignment

The process of transitioning from one gender to another may be called trans and along with people who are fully reassigned we will provide confidential, supportive and flexible employment and services.

Marriage and civil marriage and partnership

Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple.

Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples.

We will recognise all partnerships and will support employees and customers within these partnerships.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

We will provide family flexible policies which support all.

Reviewed October 2016

Race

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, caste and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

As a Black led housing provide we will lead in all areas of equality and diversity but in particular support our partners in understanding the complexity of Race.

Religion or belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

We will endeavour to support people of all religion or belief and within the requirements of the public sector duty:

1. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
2. Foster good relations between different groups.

Sex/Gender

A man or a woman.

We will make sure both men and women feel able to fully contribute to society and within the requirements of the public sector duty:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Sexual orientation

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes, including lesbian, gay men, bisexual people and heterosexual people.

We will support Gay Pride and work with the LGBT communities to improve our employment and services.