

# **HOMESDALE (WOODFORD BAPTIST HOMES) LTD**

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & ANTI DISCRIMINATORY POLICY & PRACTISE**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Homesdale (Woodford Baptist Homes) Ltd is an Equal Opportunities Association. In the provision of housing and related services and in the recruitment of the staff, the management Committee will endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity for all persons. No person shall be treated less favourably than other persons or groups because of their nationality, age, ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

We are committed to achieving equality & fairness in all our activities. We value diversity and promote an inclusive culture that reflects our ethos of treating others as we ourselves would wish to be treated. We therefore undertake to comply with the relevant legislation which prevents discrimination and promotes equality. This includes

Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000  
Sex Discrimination Act 1975 & 1986 (as amended)  
Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2005  
Human Rights Act 1998  
The Protection from Harassment Act 1997  
Equal Pay Act 1970, Equal Pay (Amendment) Act 1984  
Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Religious Beliefs) Regulations 2003  
Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006  
Crime & Disorder Act 1998  
Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984  
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974  
Local Government Act 1998  
Civil Partnership Act 2004  
Gender Recognition Act 2004  
Equality act 2006  
Racial & Religious Hatred Act 2006

The policy applies to all activities, including the housing service (Residential & Sheltered Housing), employment, housing management, appointment of contractors & consultants and the Management Committee.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Overall responsibility for the Equal Opportunities policy and compliance lies with the Management Committee. The Management Committee monitors and reviews policy & procedure with reference to law and good practise on an ongoing basis. A report will be made annually to the Management Committee on equal opportunities performance.

All staff are responsible for implementing the policy. Homesdale will provide training and guidance for employees to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the equal opportunities policy.

## **ACHIEVING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Access to Housing**

Homesdale (WBH) Ltd has Application, & Assessment & Support Policies which explain our allocations procedures for both Sheltered Housing & Residential Care.

Homesdale (WBH) Ltd is committed to equal opportunities in the provision of its housing service, and will ensure its policies & procedures are fair and non discriminatory and open to all.

It will do this by

- Regularly reviewing the assessment criteria for applicants to ensure there is no criteria that discriminates, and which cannot be justified by reference to housing need.
- Ensure staff involved in the allocations and assessment procedure are adequately trained.
- Ensure sufficient guidelines are laid down to ensure staff do not have to use their own discretion.
- Ensure subjective judgements are not made about suitability of applicants.
- Target socially excluded groups
- Maintain an ethnic record keeping and monitoring system.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times

### **Housing Management**

Homesdale will ensure it delivers its housing management service free from discrimination

It will do this by

- Ensure the Complaints Procedure is accessible
- Monitoring complaints, investigating any which allege that Homesdale has been discriminatory in relation to the equal opportunities policy.
- Ensure the maintenance procedure is carried out in a fair and non discriminatory way.
- Present documents in alternative formats if required, including languages, print size, audio
- Ensure buildings are accessible
- Undertake Equality Impact Assessments in all areas of service delivery
- Ensure consultation procedures are accessible to all

### **Contractors & Consultants**

Homesdale is responsible for ensuring there is no discrimination in the allocation of work to contractors or consultants.

It will do this by

- Review procedures regularly on selection of contractors & consultants.
- Ensure that contractors & consultants comply with our equal opportunities policy when carrying out work for us.
- Monitor Contractor satisfaction

## **Employment**

Homesdale has policies & procedures concerning employment & recruitment.

Homesdale will

- Ensure our equal opportunities policy is applied to all employees and job applicants
- Ensure 2 senior staff members are involved at each stage of recruitment, and ensure the staff have had the relevant training
- Ensure decisions made during the recruitment process are documented with reasons.
- Maintain a record of the ethnicity of employees and monitor
- Ensure selection for training is non discriminatory
- Ensure new staff receive equalities training as part of their induction

## **Management Committee**

Homesdale is controlled by a Management Committee made up of individuals from the local community

We undertake to

- Be fair and accountable in the recruitment of Committee members ensuring it is free from discrimination
- Review the membership of the Committee and monitor the gender and ethnicity
- Ensure the members are informed about equal opportunities

## **Evaluate**

- Review the Equal Opportunities Policy every 3 years
- Measure performance in a systematic way against Equality Action Plan
- Ensure systems are in place to audit and monitor service delivery and satisfaction
- Prepare an annual Equality & Diversity Report to the Management Committee

Area to be monitor include

- Housing application
- Offers and acceptance
- Staff
- Employment applications
- Management Committee
- Contractors

## **HARASSMENT**

Homesdale believes that as an organisation it should be free from harassment. Homesdale has developed comprehensive procedures to deal with harassment. These procedures ensure prompt and supportive response from staff.

We undertake to

- Ensure the workplace is free from discrimination or harassment. Promote respect within the workplace.
- Ensure the tenants and staff are aware issues of harassment and of Homesdale's stance on harassment, and the measures that will be taken against perpetrators of harassment.
- Monitor incidents of harassment, and the action taken.
- Support staff and tenants who are being bullied, harassed or victimised.
- Regularly review policies that address harassment, bullying and intimidation, including policies that link to these issues. These include Harassment at Work, POVA, Whistleblowing, Safety of Staff and Lone Working.

## **ANTI DISCRIMINATORY PRACTISE**

Homesdale will not discriminate against any individual, or have policies which operate in that a way that could be indirectly discriminatory.

This includes

### **Racism**

Homesdale will not discriminate against any person because of their racial origin. Homesdale will ensure that all have equal access to housing, and are involved in the Homesdale community.

### **Gender**

Homesdale will ensure that both genders have equal access to housing and the housing service. Appropriate measures will be taken to inappropriate behaviour or comments. Homesdale will provide security for female tenants & staff.

### **Sexual Orientation**

No staff member, applicant or tenant will be placed at a disadvantage because of their sexuality. Homesdale will ensure that different lifestyles are treated with respect, and that harassment policies are implemented.

### **Disability**

Homesdale recognises that disabled individuals have different housing needs, and will endeavour to provide suitable housing if possible. Homesdale will ensure all communal areas are accessible for disabled individuals, and provide reasonable adaptations to property as seen fit. Homesdale will consider all applicants with a disability for a job vacancy and will consider them on the basis of ability. Homesdale will ensure staff have the required level of disability awareness.

### **Age**

A person under the age limit as detailed in the eligibility criteria cannot be given a tenancy, but aside from this Homesdale will not treat anybody less favourably because of their age. Homesdale will review regularly all recruitment procedures to ensure there are no hidden age barriers.

### **HIV Status**

Homesdale will not tolerate harassment of any person because of their HIV status. Homesdale will seek to inform and educate where necessary. Homesdale seeks to create an atmosphere where individuals can disclose their status without fear.

**Religious Beliefs**

Homesdale is a Christian organisation, but does not discriminate against other beliefs in either employment or access to housing. Homesdale will ensure that all individuals can feel part of the community regardless of their religious beliefs. Homesdale recognises the individuals' right to their religious beliefs and aims to promote good relations between all members of its community.

Signed .....

Printed .....

Date .....

Review Date .....