

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Policy Statement

Southsea Self Help Housing Co-operative recognises that groups and individuals have suffered, and continue to suffer from discrimination, that is direct [whether intentional or unintentional], indirect and institutionalised.

We recognise the need for equality of opportunity and the management of diversity in all aspects of our operations. 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.

In working to eliminate discrimination, unfairness, inequality and disadvantage we will take practical action developing initiatives and interventions to promote and value diversity at all levels of the organisation.

As all forms of discrimination and harassment are totally unacceptable to us in our role as housing provider, we have adopted the following equality and diversity policy which should be read in tandem with other relevant policies. We seek to value diversity by going beyond just fighting discrimination.

We will ensure that all our members 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 thus make provision for those groups working positively towards the overall goal of the organisation.

Policy

Legislation and best practice

Southsea Self Help Housing Co-operative believes that it is essential to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations, equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all areas of our operations. We accept and endorse our legal responsibilities as laid out in a variety of legislation which includes, amongst others:

- 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
 - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
 - The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
 - Equalities Act 2010
-

We are committed to being an equal opportunities organisation which values diversity and to the following practices:

- In the provision of services, we will seek to actively promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity
- No person or groups of people applying for housing with Southsea Self Help Housing Co-operative, or serving on any committee or working group, will be treated less favourably because of their 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.

Southsea Self Help Housing Co-operatives as a housing provider

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

Allocations & lettings

- ensuring that all property is let strictly in accordance with the co-operative's allocations policy

Training and Development

- ensuring that all training for members includes equal opportunities training, diversity training and valuing diversity training

External Organisations

- ensuring that contractors, consultants and other bodies who work for us are committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity
- ensuring that ethnic minority groups and women who are under represented on our list of approved contractors are encouraged to become approved contractors

Disability

- ensuring that it meets its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and that it follows the codes of good practice for employment, premises and services
 - ensuring that our offices meet DDA requirements and that meetings with the co-operative's membership are held in premises that are properly accessible to all residents
 - ensuring 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. We 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. We will assist, where possible, in the adaptation of homes to meet the needs of disabled applicants who apply for housing with us. Where adaptation is not possible we will seek to
-

assist such applicants through practical working relationships with other agencies

Complaints

- complaints concerning breaches of the co-operative's commitment to equality and diversity will be treated seriously by the co-operative and properly investigated
- members should raise their service related complaints using the co-operative's formal Complaints Procedure
- members who have suffered from bullying, victimisation or harassment should use the co-operative's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy to ensure that the matter is thoroughly and promptly dealt with.

Monitoring and auditing

- procedures and practices throughout Southsea Self Help Housing Co-operative are regularly reviewed to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage, either directly or indirectly (intentional or unintentional), deliberately or inadvertently
- To aid us in monitoring the effectiveness of this policy, we will collect appropriate data in order to monitor the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy in the following areas:
 - those on our waiting list for housing
 - those nominated to us for housing by any outside agency
 - those housed by us
 - those organisations providing services to us, such as contractors, suppliers, consultants and other bodies

A monitoring report will be submitted to the Annual General Meeting.

Much of the equality and diversity monitoring data that may be collected will be classified as "sensitive personal data" under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The co-operative will ensure such data is handled in compliance with the provisions of the Act.
