



## **Equality In Housing**

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## Equality in Housing

### 1. Equality for whom?

- 1.1 The National Housing Federation (NHF) published in 1998 a Code of Practice on 'Equality in Housing'. This code laid down a policy framework for pursuing equal opportunities and is regarded as best practice.

It states that:

"The pursuit of equality has been hindered by a variety of subtle and not so subtle forces. These include fear, ignorance and prejudice, which often combine to discriminate against and disadvantage certain groups in society. The purpose of equality policies in Housing organisations is to recognise that certain groups or communities experience discrimination and are disadvantaged by it; and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices in the provision of goods and services, in employment and in the opportunities for participation."

- 1.2 A1Housing has agreed to adopt the NHF's code of practice, and ensure that we consider all equality issues in service provision, policies and procedures.

- 1.3 The policies adopted by A1 Housing should promote equal opportunities in all areas of our work, including:

- Governance
- Meeting Housing needs
- Development
- Access
- Housing Services
- Employment and training
- Contractors and consultants
- Partnerships

- 1.4 All our Equality Policies will be built on principles, which can be applied, to all communities and all activities. The key principles are:

- Information; to seek and use the fullest possible factual information on the existence and needs of communities and groups of people who may have experienced discrimination, wherever possible with their participation and involvement.
- Public Commitment; to ensure that the organisation's commitment to combat discrimination is widely known and appreciated, and that it is communicated to those people who may be subject to discrimination.
- Monitoring to develop and maintain monitoring systems, which provide the information with which to review the effectiveness of equality policies and help in the identification of discriminatory practices or outcomes.
- Review; periodically to review policies, monitoring information and implementation arrangements, and
- Positive Action to take lawful positive action to redress imbalances and under representation.

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## 2. Governance.

2.1 The accountability of A1 Housing is enhanced by the representation and involvement of individuals from the community we serve on our Board.

2.2 Good governance will be achieved through:

- Equality objectives promoted by the Board by striving to include representation from a cross-section of the community on the Board, Sub-committees, focus groups, joint working groups etc.
- Recruitment to the Board should be fair and transparent and conform to equality principles including positive action where there is under representation.
- Board Members should be trained on equality issues and training provided to all individuals involved in the governance of A1 Housing.
- Board Members should receive regular reports on equality, monitoring and analysis of performance indicators and targets.

## 3. Housing Needs.

3.1 Whilst Bassetlaw District Council has the strategic responsibility for assessing and prioritising Housing needs in Bassetlaw, A1 Housing also has responsibilities:

- To ensure that the principles of equality are applied to the provision of Housing. A1 Housing will work with BDC and other agencies (e.g.: Health Authority) to assess and prioritise the needs of the local community. A1 Housing will seek to influence other organisations to research and prioritise Housing needs of communities and groups experiencing discrimination.
- To review our contribution in meeting the needs of all communities in Bassetlaw. This will also be delivered by working in partnership to contribute to overall equality objectives.

## 4. Development.

4.1 The location and design of homes should not adversely affect or discriminate directly or indirectly against the needs of any particular community or group and should be sensitive to the needs of all communities.

- A1 Housing will identify locations, which may be unattractive to particular communities or groups because of the threat of harassment. A1 HOUSING will consider additional design features such as security and lighting or arrangements to tackle harassment and anti-social behaviour on estates.
- A1 Housing will work to promote balanced and sustainable communities in Bassetlaw.

## 5. Access.

5.1 All tenancies will be allocated in an open and accountable way that prevents direct

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and indirect discrimination and gives equal access to all groups of applicants. Allocations and lettings will take into account local needs and circumstances.

- A1Housing will promote fair access to Housing and we have procedures and training to prevent discrimination in allocating properties.
- A1Housing will establish and maintain effective monitoring and review systems for preventing discrimination.

## **6. Housing Services.**

6.1 The majority of tenants have contact with our Housing management and building repairs service. A1 Housing will take care when dealing with violence or harassment and provide support to households experiencing such problems.

- A1 Housing will consult tenants facing discrimination to ensure services provided meet their needs and ensure that tenant participation and involvement promotes the full and active inclusion of all groups.
- Our complaints procedure will be accessible to all tenants and feedback will be given serious consideration. We will provide interpreting, translation, large text and Braille documents as necessary.
- A1 Housing has policies that are sensitive to the needs of tenants experiencing harassment and are proactive in co-operating with other agencies and in dealing with perpetrators.

## **7. Employment and Training.**

7.1 A1 Housing recognise that our employment, training and staff development will be open and accountable. Staff will be treated fairly and that discrimination and harassment does not occur.

- We will review our employment, training and staff development and ensure that staff recruitment is conducted in accordance with equal opportunities principles.
- We will take appropriate forms of positive action to deal with under-representation amongst employees, at all levels, of groups, which experience discrimination.
- We will provide training in equality issues to all staff and put in place appropriate harassment policies to protect staff.

## **8. Contractors and Consultants.**

8.1 A1 Housing will not discriminate in the employment of contractors and consultants; all tenders will promote equal opportunities in employment practices of contractors and consultants.

- A1 Housing will ensure contractors and consultants will comply with our equality policies and do not discriminate in the execution of our contracts.
- All selection of contractors and consultants will be fair and non-discriminatory. A1 Housing will support local initiatives, which aim to

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promote the employment of companies that are owned by people belonging to communities or groups, which experience discrimination.

## **9. Partnerships.**

9.1 A1 Housing will work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. A1 HOUSING will support local tenant associations with financial and practical support. Each relationship is an opportunity to promote, communicate our commitment to equality.

- A1 Housing will ensure that the selection of partner organisations is fair and non discriminatory, that ensures that they comply with our equality policies and don't discriminate unlawfully in any way.
- A1 Housing will promote equality in our partner organisations, by encouraging the representation and involvement of local people belonging to communities or groups, which experience discrimination.
- A1 Housing will work with BME organisations to ensure that we provide practical support to local BME groups.