

St Georges Community Housing



St Georges
COMMUNITY HOUSING

Equality & Diversity Policy Statement

2007



St Georges
COMMUNITY HOUSING

A strong future together – investing in homes,
neighbourhoods and lives

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INTRODUCTION

Foreword

“At St Georges Community Housing, we believe that everyone has the right to be treated equally, with respect and to feel safe and secure in their own home and neighbourhood. Everyone has a right to make use of the opportunities offered by our organisation and to use all parts of our service. We will promote equality and diversity in the provision of our services and employment and we will not tolerate discrimination.

We will make sure that no person or group applying for housing services or employment will be treated less favourably than any other person or group because of their individual characteristics. We will work together with all of our service providers and customers to ensure that this commitment is met across our entire organisation.

SGCH believe that we have a key role in promoting equality both as an employer and as a service provider. Equality of opportunity for both our community and our workforce underpins all that we do”

(Message from Chair of St Georges Community Housing)

1. **SGCH Mission Statement**

A strong future together – investing in homes, neighbourhoods and lives.

2. **Valuing Diversity**

- 2.1 SGCH' Equality and Diversity Policy sets out SGCH' vision and commitment to ensure equality of access and opportunities for all our residents and staff.
- 2.2 SGCH is committed to ensuring the provision of equality of opportunity and valuing the diversity of the people that are involved with the organisation and in the ways we work with each other.
- 2.3 We are committed to challenging all forms of inequalities and discrimination in the delivery of our services and employment and to provide services that are consistent with best practice.
- 2.4 There is a compelling business case for valuing diversity within SGCH' processes. By involving a diverse range of residents as providers and users, we will embrace the skills, experiences and perspectives of our diverse communities. We will be, therefore, more effective in providing value for money and quality services that are accessible and appropriate to all sections of the community.

COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

3. **Achieving Equality & Valuing Diversity**

3.1 SGCH is committed, under this policy, to protect its employees and the people it serves from unlawful discrimination on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Ethnic or national origins, race or colour
- Marital status
- Politics, religion and belief
- Responsibilities for children or dependants
- Gender and gender identity
- Sexual Orientation
- Social and economic background
- Any other unjustified grounds

3.2 The policy applies to all employees, contractors and residents and to the services we provide. It underpins all our other policies, service plans, procedures and systems.

3.3 We are committed to adopting good practice guidance from the CRE, EOC, DRC, Audit Commission and other regulatory and inspection agencies. Our Equalities Action Plan will set targets which will be systematically monitored.

3.4 We will follow the above methodology, in accordance with the framework defined by the Equality Standard for Local Government, to ensure that we are compliant with equalities legislation. A failure to follow this approach would have implications relating to our budget and reputation.

4. **Providing Services**

4.1 SGCH is committed to providing relevant and accessible services that meet the needs of our diverse communities and ensure that high standards of quality and equality are always maintained.

4.2 SGCH will continuously develop mechanisms and structures to widen resident participation and reduce barriers to their access to services and equitable involvement in different processes, taking into consideration their diverse needs.

5. Employment & Training

- 5.1 SGCH is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and demonstrating that we value the diversity of our workforce. We aim to create a workforce that is as diverse as the community we serve.
- 5.2 We will ensure that equalities underpin all aspects of our employment policy and practice. We will not unfairly discriminate against any job applicant or employee and, when recruiting, will only consider factors that are relevant to the effective discharge of the job role.
- 5.3 We intend to become an employer of choice by promoting and developing policies that support an effective work-life balance, equal pay and ensuring that we maximise employment opportunities for all.
- 5.4 Employees at all levels of the organisation are entitled to fair opportunities for promotion and development and training, which will be an integral part of every employee's personal development. Information on training courses will be available on the website, in newsletters and through team briefings.
- 5.5 SGCH will implement the Department of Employment's 2 ticks initiative and will comply with responsibilities contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 in making all services accessible.
- 5.6 We will provide a safe working environment and will act promptly on any complaints of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- 5.7 Staff will be expected to treat members of the public with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times ensuring that they adhere to SGCH policies and procedures designed to promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice in the workplace.
- 5.8 We makes it a condition of service that all employees follow SGCH' Equality and Diversity Policy. All staff are given a copy of the Policy Statement with their contracts.
- 5.9 The meaning of the policy will be made clear to all staff by their line managers as part of their induction programme and all staff must attend equality training.

6. Partnership

- 6.1 We will work with other organisations where necessary to address the needs of our diverse residents groups and those likely to experience discrimination but who are not expressly covered by equality legislation e.g. single parents, low income earners, ex-offenders etc.
- 6.2 We believe that the process of promoting equality in SGCH must be continuous and undertaken in partnership with all our community / voluntary groups, staff and other stakeholders.
- 6.3 We will ensure fair and consistent practices in attracting tenders from contractors. All contractors will be briefed on this policy to ensure that they abide by it in all working practices. Contractors should make available their own equality or diversity policy covering areas such as staff conduct etc. This policy must be acceptable to SGCH.
- 6.4 Complaints against contractors will be closely monitored. SGCH will take seriously any allegations of discrimination or harassment made against contractors and investigate them in a thorough and timely manner. Contractors will be expected to take prompt and appropriate action against any of their staff found to be acting in a way that breaches this policy.
- 6.5 Community and voluntary groups are consulted through working groups and partnerships. We will maintain strong links with Residents Associations and Community Groups based on our estates, through SGCH's Tenant Participation Team.

REVIEW

SGCH' Executive Team will receive quarterly reports to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and will review it annually in the light of experience and change in legislation and on advice from specialist organisations.