

THE CADARN HOUSING GROUP

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY



...supporting people and communities...

THE CADARN HOUSING GROUP

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OUR COMMITMENT

The Group is committed to working towards equal opportunities to ensure that we receive and deliver services and employment opportunities fairly to all sections of the community. We will endeavour to treat all people equally and fairly whether they are:

- ⇒ Tenants and customers
- ⇒ Persons seeking employment or are already employed by the Group.
- ⇒ The general public
- ⇒ Contractors and partners providing or receiving services

Our equal opportunities policy aims to ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment on grounds of race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, age or any other irrelevant characteristic. It also aims to ensure that there are no conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justified.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

In applying the policy the Group will take account of the following legislation and associated codes of practice:-

- ⇒ Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- ⇒ Race Relations Act 1976 (and its amendments of 2000 & 2003) and specifically the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Racial Equality in Housing 2006
- ⇒ Religion or Belief Regulations 2005
- ⇒ Sexual Orientation Regulations 2003
- ⇒ Age Regulations 2006
- ⇒ Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- ⇒ Human Rights Act 1988
- ⇒ Equal Pay Act 1970 (amended 1983)

PROVIDING HOUSING

The Group's approach to providing housing is that it will seek to serve all its customers and potential customers equally and fairly and ensure that its policies and procedures do not discriminate intentionally or unintentionally against any group or individual for reasons that cannot be justified.

Meeting Housing Needs

The Group is committed to fair housing policies. This involves an objective assessment of the housing needs of all applicants and the equal treatment of all residents, alongside a sensitive response to the special needs of particular groups and individuals. The following actions will be taken:

- ⇒ Liaison with local authorities and local communities to assess and prioritise the needs of local communities.
- ⇒ To contribute to the production of the local authority BME Housing Strategies and to adopt the relevant action points into the Equalities Plan.
- ⇒ Regularly review our contribution to meeting the needs of the local communities.
- ⇒ Further develop partnership working with specialist and community-based organisations.

Development and Maintenance

In developing and maintaining housing the Group aims to be responsive to general equal opportunities' considerations and those that are specific to an individual project or development. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

- ⇒ Develop and refurbish homes that meet the needs of the community in which we work.
- ⇒ To retain a record of all properties adapted for use by people with specific requirements so that they can be matched to suitable applicants quickly.
- ⇒ Work to promote balanced and sustainable communities.
- ⇒ Develop appropriate methods for consulting with BME communities where appropriate.
- ⇒ Seek feedback on the satisfaction with housing design and layout and whether it meets the needs of all sections of the community.

Access to Housing

Targets for lettings will be set and ethnic monitoring of applicants, allocations and nominations will be carried out. Results will be monitored regularly. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

- ⇒ Ensure equality of access to housing through fair allocations and lettings policies.
- ⇒ Develop and maintain links with a wide cross section of groups and organisations in the wider community.
- ⇒ Publish information on access to housing that is accessible to all.
- ⇒ Set and monitor targets for access to housing that reflect local needs.

THE HOUSING SERVICE

The Group supports the right of every resident to live in their home free from any form of harassment. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

- ⇒ Ensure that all housing policies reflect the needs of all residents recognising the diversity of local communities and to foster good relations between communities.
- ⇒ Implement a policy of treating all reports of harassment as a serious and priority matter and monitor the incidence of reported harassment.
- ⇒ Promote resident involvement to all residents on a non-discriminatory basis.
- ⇒ Provide sensitive services that recognise differences in needs, language and culture.
- ⇒ To seek the preferences and needs of tenants, applicants and other customers in respect of language and assistance for people with visual or hearing impairments.
- ⇒ Provide targeted services for particular black and minority ethnic communities where this is identified as a need.
- ⇒ To screen tenants and applicants to ensure that information held on their household characteristics and associated needs is up to date.

CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS

We will aim to ensure that where we are providing local employment opportunities through the use of contractors and consultants that those opportunities are open to all. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

- ⇒ Operate non-discriminatory purchasing and procurement practices and ensure that contractors and consultants comply with the Group's equality policies and do not discriminate in the execution of its contracts.
- ⇒ Request details of contractors' and consultants' equal opportunities policies and ensure that selection criteria requires policies to be in place.
- ⇒ Selection of contractors and consultants will be fair and non-discriminatory.
- ⇒ Promote equality in contractors and consultants own employment practices.
- ⇒ Actively support local initiatives that aim to promote the employment of consultants or companies which are owned by people belonging to communities or groups which experience discrimination.

PARTNERSHIPS

In partnerships with other organisations the Group we will ensure that arrangements are made on the basis of equality of opportunity and that agreements reflect the need to comply with, and monitor performance on equal opportunities. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

- ⇒ Selection of partnerships will be fair and non-discriminatory.
- ⇒ Partner organisations will comply with equal opportunities policies.
- ⇒ Support will be given to local initiatives and partner organisations which represent and involve people from groups or communities that experience discrimination.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

The complaints procedure will be made accessible to the public, tenants and other customers. Complaints from tenants will be monitored by age, disability, ethnicity and gender.

EMPLOYMENT

The Group believes that as an employer the workforce should reflect the community that it serves. The Group will aim for fair and equal opportunity in all areas of employment and provide a safe, secure working environment that values the identities and cultures of all the Group's employees. To achieve this the following action will be taken:

Recruitment and Selection

- ⇒ a job description and person specification outlining desirable and essential qualities, skills, knowledge and personal qualities must be drawn up for every vacancy and provided to all prospective employees
- ⇒ information about job vacancies be made widely available, senior positions will be advertised both internally and externally
- ⇒ all job applicants should be given details of the selection process in advance
- ⇒ all short-listing criteria must be based on the person specification
- ⇒ all selection decisions must be made on the basis of merit
- ⇒ all job advertisements will advise applicants that the Group is an Equal Opportunities Employer

Training and Development

- ⇒ all employees will be supported to undertake the training and development they need to help them to achieve and maintain a high standard of performance and be encouraged to achieve their full potential
- ⇒ all staff, and in particular those who provide services to customers and those involved in recruitment, may require Equal Opportunities training. Equal Opportunities training will be made available to all staff and Board members.

Harassment at Work

- ⇒ Harassment or bullying within the workplace is unacceptable and any employee who feels that they are a victim of harassment can complain without fear of being victimised or isolated.
- ⇒ The Group has a Harassment and Bullying at Work statement providing further details on bullying and harassment and the process used for handling such complaints
- ⇒ Instances of harassment and bullying will be monitored to ensure that any discriminatory practices are identified and addressed.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

- ⇒ Allegations of unfair discrimination, harassment and bullying of employees, tenants, customers or members of the public will be treated very seriously and investigated thoroughly and promptly.
- ⇒ Discrimination and instances of sexual, racial or other harassment will be treated as disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- ⇒ Particular care will be taken to deal effectively with all complaints of discrimination, victimisation, bullying or harassment. All employees have the right to seek redress for their grievances and the Group will ensure that this right is made known, all employees will be supplied with copies of the harassment and grievance procedures.

Monitoring of Employment Practices

The Group will monitor its employment practices to ensure that the Equal Opportunities Policy is being implemented by collecting, analysing and acting on information and by providing relevant reports to the Boards and setting appropriate targets.

- ⇒ Annual Staff Survey - The annual staff survey will seek responses to questions about equal opportunities and diversity.
- ⇒ Recruitment and Selection - Staffing reports will be prepared which will contain equal opportunities information on recruitment, selection and staff turnover and performance against targets and will be provided to the Boards quarterly. Board recruitment will be monitored and targets set. The Boards will be provided with a report annually. The Group will provide comprehensive monitoring information on job and Board member applications and recruitment and achievement of targets to the Boards every two years.
- ⇒ Bullying and Harassment - The Group will monitor formal complaints of bullying and harassment on an annual basis and will ensure that the monitoring is capable of identifying any discriminatory practices.
- ⇒ Disciplinary and Grievance - The Group will monitor disciplinary and grievances on an annual basis and will ensure that the monitoring is capable of identifying any discriminatory practices.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POLICY

All members of staff have a role to play in creating a climate which supports equality of opportunity. All staff have a duty to ensure that their personal conduct conforms to policies and codes of conduct. All employees will be issued with a copy of this policy and will be expected to comply. Employees have a personal responsibility for the practical application of the Group's Equal Opportunities Policy, which extends to the treatment of members of the public and employees.

Directors and line managers will be responsible for implementing the policy within the organisation and for ensuring that staff are familiar with, and act in accordance with the policy, and that adequate monitoring arrangements are in place.

The Chief Executive will act as the Equality Champion for the Group and has overall responsibility for the policy and for ensuring consistency across the Group in all practices and in monitoring the outcomes of this policy. An Equality Action Plan will be used to coordinate the action necessary to meet the requirements of this policy.

COMMUNICATION

All employees will be informed of this policy and their responsibilities to it.

All Managers will be responsible for ensuring that those they manage are made aware of the policy and that it is brought to the attention of new recruits as part of the induction process.

This policy will also be made available to the public, tenants, customers, contractors and service providers on request or in order to clarify the Group's stance on equal opportunities and diversity. This policy will be made available on the Group's website.