

HINCKLEY HOMELESS GROUP

LAWRENCE HOUSE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Equality & Diversity Policy

Hinckley Homeless Group (HHG) is committed to best equality practice in order to eliminate discrimination and inequality, create an environment where all are treated fairly and with respect, and to promote diversity. HHG is fully aware of its equality and diversity obligations and will strive to exceed the minimum that they represent both in terms of an employer and as a supported accommodation provider.

The Management Committee will take action to ensure that anyone who works for Hinckley Homeless Group, or applies for a job, or applies to become a resident at Lawrence House will not be treated less favourably than anyone else because, for example, of their colour, race, religion, gender, age, disability or sexuality and are willing to include minorities.

This Equality and Diversity Policy aims to provide a coherent equalities and diversity framework which underpins all of HHG's equalities, diversity and community cohesion work.

Equality & Diversity and the law

Equality and Diversity legislation provides a definition of what constitutes discrimination in law. Discrimination, as defined in the legislation below, is illegal. It is also unfair and prevents full consideration of an individual's potential.

The relevant legislation is:

The Equality Act 2010

N.B. This now incorporates:-

- 1) The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and amendments
- 2) The Race Relations Act 1976 and amendments
- 3) the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 amended 2005
- 4) The Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Equality Act 2010 also now incorporates the following in relation to employment and occupation-related matters only:

- 1) The Equal Pay Act 1970 and amendments (although this is now incorporated into the Equality Act 2010 it does also still exist).
- 2) The Employment Act 2002
- 3) The Employment Equality (religion or belief) Regulations 2003
- 4) The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003

- 5) The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- 6) The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- 7) The Employment Relations Act 1999

Equality & Diversity in Service Delivery

HHG will:

- ensure that services it supports and runs will be available to people on a fair and equitable basis. Potential users will not be excluded from services on grounds which reflect prejudice or unfair discrimination; ensuring that equality and cohesion is at the heart of service delivery.
- urge its partner projects to adopt policies which reflect good equality & diversity practice, promote social cohesion and will satisfy itself that they do not unfairly exclude people who may reasonable be expected to use the services.
- provide a cohesive service - where people from different backgrounds live comfortably alongside their neighbours.

HHG will not accept funds that it knows have been generated by illegal activity, but will not turn down funds on behalf of homeless people unless particular offers will damage its ability to pursue its goals. HHG welcomes support from the full range of ethnic and cultural groups that are within the community.

Equality & Diversity in Employment of staff and volunteers

HHG is committed to being a fair employer, will challenge and discourage unfair discrimination and promote diversity.

The Management Committee will:

- Provide a cohesive employment environment - where people from different backgrounds work comfortably alongside their colleagues.
- Design job descriptions and person specifications which will be a fair assessment of the task that needs to be done and the qualities of the person who will be able to do it.
- Ensure that interviews will concentrate on assessing a person's abilities and skills in line with the person specification.
- Advertise permanent vacancies and new posts simultaneously internally and externally, unless they are a result of reorganisation or restructuring. The Management Committee will cast its search for personnel, volunteers and supporters as widely as possible.

- When appropriate, the Management Committee will use the legislation enabling positive action. Both the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Relations Act (S37 & 38) allow employers to redress imbalances or under-representation of a particular sex or race within the work force under certain specific circumstances, by recruitment and training.
- Equality & Diversity awareness, including Social Cohesion, is considered to be an integral part of all staff development. All new employees are issued with a copy of this policy and regular training will be given to new and existing staff.
- Maternity and paternity provisions for staff will comply with statutory requirements. No employee will receive less favourable treatment or consideration on the grounds of maternity rights. Employees will not be disadvantaged by any conditions of employment or requirements that cannot be justified as necessary on operational grounds.
- Training and promotion opportunities will be available on the basis of ability, merit, and development potential and according to job requirements.
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures will provide scope for staff / volunteers to complain about or be disciplined for harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

Monitoring

The Management Committee will monitor the extent to which policies and their implementation are fair. A report will be considered annually by the Management Committee (in the first quarter of the financial year) covering the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Policy in the previous 12 months; both in terms of an employer and as a supported accommodation provider

Information which may expose unfair behaviour or policies will be sought. The Management Committee will monitor:

- Circumstances in which deviations from the policy have occurred.
- The use of the Resident's Complaints Procedure.
- The use of the Applicants' Appeals Procedure.
- The profile of those people who use services.
- The use of the relevant parts of the grievance and disciplinary procedure.
- The nature of job advertising.
- The profile of job applicants and the quality of selection and interview practice.

- The profile of its supporters, where practicable – e.g. funders and volunteers – and assess the extent to which it is encouraging support amongst a range of people and groups.

Responsibility

The Management Committee is ultimately responsible for the implementation of the policy. The Project Manager is responsible for taking all steps possible to eliminate discrimination and the Management Committee gives them particular responsibility for providing a supportive environment for all. Every employee and volunteer has a responsibility not to discriminate against anyone at work and in the services. There is a shared responsibility to promote a supportive environment where differences are respected and to develop an atmosphere where discrimination cannot flourish.

Hinckley Homeless Group will encourage members of staff to act as equality & diversity representatives. Their responsibility will be to stay up to date with legal and good practice issues. They will also provide advice and assistance to anybody who may have problems which they do not wish to raise with their line manager.

Any person dissatisfied with the Management Committee's response to a complaint can consult external bodies such as The Equality and Human Rights Commission and the National Disability Council.

The Management Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Equality and Diversity Policy is subject to full review on a regular basis, not to exceed a period of 5 years.