

Equality & Diversity Policy

Operating Company(ies):	Aster Group		
Approved by:	Group Leadership Team		
Effective date:	22/12/2016	Review date:	01/11/2018
Author & responsible officer:	Rebecca Outram (Head of housing- Hampshire)		
Status:	Approved	Version:	5.00

1 Introduction

1.1 Aim

Aster Group will provide leadership and accountability in promoting equality and diversity. Equality ensures people are treated fairly and given fair chances. It recognises different needs and promotes fair and inclusive opportunity, access, participation and contribution. Diversity acknowledges and respects differences within and between groups of people.

1.2 Scope

This includes all aspects of service delivery in particular:

- lettings
- access to information and advice
- customer engagement
- customer satisfaction
- receiving feedback
- dealing with incidents like harassment (including domestic violence)
- procurement and supply
- governance
- employment
- development and regeneration
- asset management

1.3 Corporate Plan

Being financially strong and well governed

Delivering value and offering choice

Ensuring our business model is sustainable in terms of energy, culture, use of IT and employee skills.

1.4 Outcomes/Benefit(s)

- Deliver a good regulatory compliant standard of customer service.
- All customers treated fairly and with respect.
- Actively research and provide suitable services sensitive to diverse customer needs.
- Provide information in suitable formats to our customers.
- Ensure all employees know and meet equality and diversity principles.

1.5 Compliance Framework

Equality Act 2010 (Commencement no 11) Order 2016, Equality Duty 2011, Human Rights Act 1998, HCA Regulatory Framework 2015

2 Policy statement

2.1 We will endeavour to provide services, employment and a working environment equally accessible to all our stakeholders without discrimination or prejudice on the grounds of:

- race
- ethnic origin
- colour
- nationality
- religious faith and beliefs (or lack of religious faith and beliefs)
- cultural background
- gender
- transgender status
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- level of literacy
- HIV or Aids condition
- carer's responsibility
- un-related criminal activities
- age
- disability
- mobility
- mental health
- dementia
- complex needs
- pregnancy
- maternity

2.2 Recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce which understands and serves a diverse community.

- 2.3 Oppose direct and indirect discrimination of any kind.
- 2.4 Support employees, customers and non-executive directors who challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- 2.5 Follow guidance from regulatory bodies or by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- 2.6 Meet statutory and regulatory responsibilities.
- 2.7 Seek to influence positively the practices of key stakeholders and partners.
- 2.8 Make explicit reference to equality and diversity issues in our business plans, strategies and policies.
- 2.9 Deal promptly, firmly and consistently with any cases of discrimination or harassment reported by customers or employees.
- 2.10 In employment we will:
 - Provide equal employment opportunities through fair recruitment and selection procedures so the best people are appointed.
 - Communicate our recruitment advertising to a diverse range of potential applicants.
 - Work to recruit employees who ideally reflect the diversity of our communities.
 - Treat all employees on their merits and abilities, making any reasonable adjustments to enable them to do their job.
 - Apply equality and diversity to learning and development opportunities.
- 2.11 In appointing contractors and consultants we will:
 - Require our contractors and consultants to apply our equality and diversity principles.
 - Work with our contractors and consultants to encourage them to recruit people who reflect the diversity of the communities in which they work.
- 2.12 In board appointments we will:
 - Advertise widely when recruiting non-executive directors.
 - Recruit non-executive directors who have the skills we need whilst reflecting the diversity of our communities.
- 2.13 In development we will:
 - Work with our local authority partners to make sure we help meet the housing needs of the local communities.

3 Policy Implications

3.1 Service/Performance Standards

- Alleged breaches of this policy are treated with utmost seriousness.
- Customers, employees and non-executive directors know they'll be supported if they challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- Involved customers, employees and non-executive directors, receive suitable training in equality and diversity issues.
- The nine 'protected characteristics' identified by the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) are used for monitoring performance which is reported at least annually to our Boards, customers and residents.
- Equality information relating to our customers is updated regularly and monitored effectively.
- Lettings to minority households are recorded monthly on 'CORE'.
- The effect on equality and diversity issues is included in impact assessment of any business activity and is integral to the planning and development of new services and facilities.
- Vacancies for members of our boards will be publicly advertised.

4 Related Policies and Procedures

4.1 Associated policies and procedures

[Lettings Policy](#); [Tenancy Policy](#); [Bullying & harassment policy](#); [Aster group Learning & Development Policy](#); [Aster Group Recruitment & Selection Policy](#); [Family Friendly Policy](#).