

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Statement of intent

The below statement of intent details Loddon Homes Limited's (LHL) approach to equality and diversity. It is expected that this statement can be utilised in all working situations in the workplace, with service users and with partners working on our behalf. This statement should be treated as a working document that is being deployed throughout the organisation as well as aspirations as LHL continues to grow.

- 1.1 LHL is committed to equality of opportunity for the whole community and believes that the diversity of the community is a major strength which contributes to the social and economic prosperity of the area. LHL commits to working within the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that no stakeholder, job applicant, employee or other person associated with the organisation is treated inequitably or in an unlawful or unjustifiably discriminatory manner.
- 1.2 LHL recognises that people from specific key groups may experience discrimination and less favourable treatment on the grounds of their: age, disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, financial or economic status, unrelated criminal convictions, gender, gender identity (transgender), marriage/civil partnership, HIV status, homelessness or lack of a fixed address, political view or trade union activity, pregnancy & maternity, religion/belief or sexual orientation.
- 1.3 LHL will endeavour to take positive steps to stop any unfair/unlawful discrimination, and carry out positive action where lawful. LHL will also take proactive steps to pay 'due regard' to the need to enhance equality, tackle discrimination and help foster good community relations when exercising its functions.
- 1.4 The leadership and day to day operation of this policy rests with the management team / Board members, and they must ensure that all employees within their area of responsibility, partners and contractors, are aware of the policy and understand their role in its implementation.
- 1.5 LHL will develop, implement and review its policies in consultation with all appropriate representatives of employees, residents, visitors, service users, partner agencies and voluntary and community organisations.

2. Employment

- 2.1 LHL is firmly committed to equality of opportunity, and we intend to be a champion of equal opportunity principles and practice as an employer. We are committed to reviewing all policies, practices and procedures in order to remove potential barriers to equality of opportunity.
- 2.2 We will ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

3. Employment commitments

- 3.1 Selection criteria and procedures will ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. We will work to ensure that each interview panel has at least one member is trained in fair selection procedures.
- 3.2 LHL is committed to having a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the local community. LHL will strive to encourage people from under-represented groups to apply for employment within the business, and will enable them to obtain employment on merit.
- 3.3 Equality monitoring in employment is an essential part of the LHL Equalities commitment. LHL will monitor all stages of the recruitment and selection process. It will monitor representation within the workforce by department, pay, training, promotion, redeployment, redundancy, complaints, investigations, grievances and disciplinary proceedings.
- 3.4 LHL will strive to ensure that its employment policy, practices and arrangements are flexible and will support, as far as is lawful, reasonable and practicable, specific needs and requirements of individuals and groups. LHL will also encourage other local partners to adopt such policies.
- 3.5 LHL will work towards retaining employees who become disabled or those with progressive disability. We recognise that some disabled people may need assistance to attain or retain employment, and is committed to providing 'reasonable adjustment' in employment.
- 3.6 LHL is committed to consulting its staff on all employment matters and understands that the successful promotion of equality of opportunity involves the support and participation of staff.
- 3.7 LHL will not discriminate against any employee on the grounds of his or her personal views or activities except where those views are opposed and/or detrimental to the principles and values of the organisation.
- 3.8 LHL is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all staff, and to taking action against all forms of discrimination and harassment. We will not tolerate any harassment, whether physical or verbal, of employees by members of the public or colleagues. We will take prompt action on any employee grievance concerning discrimination, victimisation or harassment. We will provide an effective response to deal with perpetrators, and provide support for complainants.
- 3.9 As LHL grows it will develop a programme of equalities training which can be made available to all employees, and individual participation will be considered at each annual performance review.
- 3.10 LHL will ensure that all training courses provided for its staff will comply with equality of opportunity in their selection, content, methods, materials and assessment.

4. Service delivery

- 4.1 LHL is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible, and seeks to ensure that current and potential service users do not experience barriers in accessing our services. We will ensure that the

range and quality of services provided are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of our service users.

- 4.2 LHL will ensure that no service user is subjected to unjustifiable discrimination in the delivery of any of our services. In addition it will promote equality, diversity and social inclusion amongst our partners in the services they provide.
- 4.3 In order to achieve this, we will ensure that equality issues are considered at the outset of all policy development and planning and become an integral part of the way that all services are delivered. Policies and practices will be monitored to ensure that services being delivered do not have an unjustifiable adverse impact. It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that actions to meet the needs of the specific key groups are included in their annual service planning.

5. Service Delivery Commitments

- 5.1 All service areas of the business will ensure that services are responsive to the changing and diverse needs existing within the community and that service users receive equitable treatment when accessing services.
- 5.2 LHL will ensure that service users are aware of their rights and entitlements when receiving services.
- 5.3 Services, facilities and information systems will be accessible with specific provision meeting individual needs where appropriate.
- 5.4 Reasonable adjustment will be made in the provision of services for disabled people and in relation to the physical features of our facilities to reduce physical barriers to services.
- 5.5 Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out across service areas where deemed necessary, and action plans will be monitored to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- 5.6 Complaints about services will be dealt with promptly and will be monitored against all equality areas covered by legislation.
- 5.7 We will endeavour to ensure that all sections of the community are involved in our consultation processes.
- 5.8 We embrace the wide variety of lifestyles and cultures throughout the business, and we will encourage and support the opportunity for all to actively participate in community life.

6. Partnerships

- 6.1 LHL will ensure that all work undertaken in partnership is in line with our Equality Policy Commitment, and that all services provided in partnership are appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the people who use our services. All Partners will receive a copy of the LHL Equality

Statement of Intent. Through appropriate monitoring we shall ensure that any agency working in partnership with LHL does not practice unlawful acts of discrimination.

- 6.2 LHL will ensure that all terms of reference and other relevant partnership documentation complies with our equality guidelines and all relevant legislation. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that actions to meet the needs of the specific key groups are included in partnership plans and strategies, and that appropriate monitoring mechanisms are in place.
- 6.3. LHL will ensure that all commissioned partners adhere to our Equality Policy Commitment by the inclusion of equality as a criterion by which contracts are awarded and the inclusion of equality objectives in contract specifications.
- 6.4 Equality Impact Assessments for services will extend to services delivered in partnership where appropriate, and action plans monitored to ensure there are no significant differences in satisfaction for all groups.
- 6.5 We will encourage organisations which represent a range of community interests to become involved in partnership working, and will seek, wherever justifiable, to ensure that the interests of the specific key groups are explicitly represented on each partnership.
- 6.6 LHL will encourage partners to undertake equality awareness training.

7. Other parties

- 7.1 It is recognised that there are other third parties who have a relationship with our organisation, either working on behalf of or with the business, who are not partners or contractors.
- 7.2 LHL will expect these third parties to adhere to our commitment to the LHL statement of intent for equality and will challenge any relationship that works to its detriment. It is expected that these third parties work with LHL in the spirit of this document and that the business would challenge and disengage from any relationship that was deemed to be working outside of this ethic.

8. Procurement

- 8.1 LHL will ensure that all contracts comply with the businesses equality guidelines, procurement equality strategy (developed sub/regionally) and all relevant legislation; we positively promote equality through the contracting process. Through appropriate monitoring we shall ensure that individuals, voluntary organisations, firms or institutions acting on behalf or as agents of the business do not practice unlawful acts of discrimination.
- 8.2 LHL will encourage the local community to take up opportunities to contract and will seek, wherever appropriate, to offer contracts within the local community's ability to deliver, ensuring that they comply with Best Value and EU legislation on procurement and geographic location.

- 8.3 Contracts will be awarded on the basis of a fair and open evaluation process taking into account price, best value and ability to deliver the contract. Reasonable opportunity for feedback to unsuccessful bidders will be offered.
- 8.4 All contracts will be monitored by the business to ensure that the goods, services or facilities being purchased are being delivered as agreed, and to ensure that the continued delivery of such remain advantageous to the organisation and the community it serves.

9. Responsibility for policy implementation and monitoring

- 9.1 Board Members, the Managing Director and all staff will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy.
- 9.2 All employees with supervisory responsibility are responsible, within their area of responsibility, for implementing, monitoring and promoting this policy.
- 9.3 LHL employees and those who are involved in serving our community in the name of LHL are responsible for implementing the policy. They must adhere to it as part of their conditions of service, and will be supported in doing so by their managers. Any failure to do so will be considered in accordance with LHL Disciplinary Procedures.
- 9.4 Employees and those serving our community in the name of LHL must not:
- Ignore incidents of discrimination,
 - Unlawfully discriminate against anyone,
 - Persuade, incite or encourage another person to discriminate,
 - Harass, victimise or abuse other employees or members of the public for any reason
- 9.5 Staff will not be expected to tolerate discrimination from service users, other employees, providers or any third party.
- 9.6 LHL will inform all job applicants, employees and service users of this policy and ensure everyone understands their collective and individual responsibilities.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Issue date	Approval date	Planned review date	Actual review date
	March 2016		

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APPROVED