

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

EEH Equality and Diversity Policy applies to employees of EEH, our board members, contractors and partner agencies and covers all aspects of our work:

- recruitment - section 1;
- working for EEH - section 2;
- partnerships and procurement - section 3;
- governance and participation - section 4;
- access to services - section 5.

Our Service Commitments

EEH is committed to providing high quality and accessible services to all of our residents and will work hard to ensure that the different needs and expectations of the borough's diverse communities are met. To help achieve this EEH will:-

- give active support to our communities to enable their involvement in service development and decision making, designing our services to meet the needs of all;
- monitor and evaluate our performance, systems and procedures to ensure equality of access and that they meet the diverse needs of all our customers;
- work with our residents, LBTH and other organisations to contribute the delivery of equality and diversity objectives, such as community cohesion.

Our Employment Commitments

EEH will be an organisation that attracts the best people for its jobs, where all employees feel valued and have a say in the services they deliver; an organisation which keeps its people, values their diversity and supports their progress. To help achieve this, EEH understands the benefits of having a workforce that reflects the community it serves and will:

- take positive steps to achieve this at all levels of the organisation;
- consider everyone on their abilities and appoint the most suitable person for the job;
- take positive steps to oppose *all* forms of discrimination (individual and institutional, direct and indirect) and harassment but particularly on the grounds of someone's age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender or sexuality.

To help achieve our aims, EEH will:-

- value all our employees, provide them with the skills and training to do their job well and provide them with the opportunities to progress and develop within the organisation;
- provide training and guidance to all employees to ensure our commitment to equality and diversity is known, understood and adhered to;

- promote our equality and diversity policies and ensure that they are integrated throughout the organisation.

EEH welcomes the Race Relations Act, 1976, Equal Pay Act, 1974, Sex Discrimination Act, 1975 (as amended by the Sex Discrimination Act, 1986 and the Employment Act 1989), Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, workforce regulations addressing sexual orientation and forthcoming legislation in the area of age discrimination.

1 Recruitment

- 1) To always recruit the best person for the job EEH will:
 - a) advertise vacancies in ways that encourage underrepresented groups to apply;
 - b) request specific qualifications or experience only if essential to the job;
 - c) train everyone with responsibility for recruitment to ensure they understand and apply this policy;
 - d) invite all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum requirements for interview;
- 2) To ensure its employment practices are best practice, EEH will:-
 - a) regularly review employment, training and staff development practices, including any job evaluation scheme adopted;
 - b) maintain a "recruitment profile" of all job applicants, those short listed, interviewed and appointed by age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality and use this to inform recruitment targets and changes to practices;
 - c) take positive steps, including use of statutory provisions, to achieve a workforce that reflects the communities we serve;
 - d) seek accreditation from the Dept. of Work & Pensions "positive about disabled people".

2 Working for EEH

- 1) To ensure EEH is a place people want to work we will:
 - a) support positive action training initiatives for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups to enable them to acquire the appropriate skills to compete effectively;
 - b) explain our equality and diversity policy during the induction process for new staff;
 - c) not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of employees by other employees, customers or contractors and take appropriate action, swiftly, against perpetrators - where this takes place in the workplace it will be considered a breach of our conditions of employment and subject to disciplinary action;

- d) develop staff and managers to enable them to identify and deal appropriately with all forms of harassment or victimisation and enable employees who consider they are suffering harassment to make a formal grievance under EEH employment procedures;
 - e) maintain a “workforce profile” to monitor by age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, all training opportunities and promotions, grievances, sickness, disciplinary, dismissals and industrial tribunals. This profile will be published annually, considered by the Board and used to inform reviews of procedures and practices.
 - f) make sure all employees:
 - i) have at least 3 supervisory meetings a year to discuss what support and training can be given to make sure they can develop and use their abilities to their full;
 - ii) receive appropriate briefings or training to ensure they understand and implement our equality and diversity policy; their professional and statutory responsibilities and awareness of diversity issues to meet our commitments.
- 2) EEH is committed to providing high quality services at all times, however, working arrangements will take into account:
- a) employee responsibilities for dependents and/or individual personal circumstances;
 - b) religious festivals and observances.
- 3) To ensure our work places meet the needs of employees, EEH will:
- a) provide appropriate facilities as required.
 - b) ensure they are accessible for all employees and will maintain an adaptations and equipment budget, making full use of the Access to Work scheme to encourage disabled people into work.
 - c) provide any adapted equipment and make all reasonable adjustments to ensure that employees who become disabled are able to continue in employment.
 - d) work to ensure a supportive working environment for all employees and will provide a discrimination/harassment/bullying procedure to resolve grievances that arise.

3 Partnerships & Procurement

- 1) Partnerships, with LBTH, contractors and other organisations, will be informed by the need to deliver equality and diversity objectives and to achieve this EEH will:-
 - a) contribute to researching housing needs, particularly those of older people, disabled people and the Bengali and Somali communities;
 - b) develop housing, regeneration and community development programmes that meet needs identified through consultation with residents and LBTH’s strategic objectives;

- c) ensure procurement practices meet equality and diversity objectives;
- d) require any contractors or other agencies receiving funds to adhere to its equality and diversity policy and provide, as requested, monitoring returns of workforce and service take up by age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality;
- e) consider incorporating additional design and security features where the location and design of homes may adversely affect a particular community;
- f) consider developing homes to a lifetime standard and an identified adaptations budget.

4 Governance & Participation

- 1) EEH is committed to promoting equality and diversity at the highest level and to help achieve this EEH will ensure:
 - a) recruitment to all EEH Boards is fair and transparent, setting out any positive steps taken to address under-representation;
 - b) the Board and any committees and advisory and working groups reflects a cross section of the community;
 - c) induction training for all Board members (and others involved in EEH governance) in equality and diversity issues;
 - d) that the Board receives regular profile reports on workforce, recruitment, service satisfaction and take-up.
- 2) EEH is committed to involving residents in designing the services they receive and in decisions that affect them and will ensure that tenant participation activities promote the full and active inclusion of all communities.

5 Access to Services

- 1) EEH endorses the CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing and the national Equality Standard and will ensure employees are aware of their responsibilities. To ensure *all* residents access appropriate services EEH will:-
 - a) work with residents to develop services which are accessible, sensitive to their needs and culturally appropriate;
 - b) keep under review policies procedures and working practices to ensure they do not adversely impact on any of our communities;
 - c) have effective procedures for tackling harassment and nuisance which ensure prompt action is taken and which complies with the Protection from Harassment Act, 1997;
 - d) work with LBTH to ensure fair and equitable nomination arrangements and set lettings targets together to meet the identified needs of vulnerable communities and strategic objectives;

- e) ensure sign-up interviews of new tenants are joint with any support worker or advocate;
 - f) develop profiles of services, such as service take-up and customer satisfaction levels, by age, belief, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.
- 2) EEH will publish information in a range of formats about its service provision and performance standards so residents are aware of the range of services available and the standards they can expect when receiving them. To help ensure everyone can access services EEH will:-
- a) seek a workforce which reflects the community as the best way to help people develop trust in/identify with services;
 - b) use easy to understand language in all information to residents;
 - c) develop a “Communications Preference” process to identify resident’s language or hearing and sight impaired needs;
 - d) provide routine translation of information appropriate community languages, such as Bengali and Somali, large print and audio tape;
 - e) ensure language needs are taken into account by providing face to face interpretation, hearing induction loops and training for staff in using “talktype”;
 - f) establish a “Home Visits” Register for residents who are housebound.