



HARBOUR

EQUALITY, Diversity AND
inclusion
POLICY

Policy Owner	Director of Group Finance and Business Support
Document author(s)	Group Business Support Manager
Approved by	Harbour Homes Board
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Review cycle	Every five years or as required by legislative changes
Communications & training methods	• Induction • Training • DocTract mandatory read • Team meetings
Is a mandatory read required?	Yes
Does this policy require to go on the website?	Yes
Who does this policy apply to e.g. GROUP or ENTITY NAME(S) NB if not all, check there is a separate policy in place	Harbour
The policy has a direct link to the following Harbour policies and procedures	• ASB Policy • Code of Conduct for Governing Board Members and Involved Customers • Data Protection Policy • Difficult Customer Policy • Disciplinary Policy and Procedures • Equalities Action Plan • Equalities Strategy • Harbour Lettings Allocations Policy • Hybrid Framework • Membership Policy • Neurodiversity and Inclusion Policy • Recruitment and Selection Policy • Respect at Work Policy • Social Housing Allocations Policy
This policy complies with the requirements of these legal and/or regulatory documents	• Data Protection Act 2018 • Equality Act 2010 • Housing Scotland Act (2010) • Human Rights Act 1988 • Scottish Social Housing Charter • SHR Regulatory Framework (February 2019)
Equality & Diversity Impact (EI) Assessment Status	This document was EDI Assessed by the Group Business Support Manager and the HR &OD Manager using Harbour's set procedure in February 2024 and is considered to be free of anything which may lead to any unfair discrimination in its application.
Data Protection Considerations	Our policies and procedures foster an approach of 'data protection by design and by default'

	In practice it means that our policies and procedures consider data protection issues, ie how to protect the data subject served by the policy or procedure; New systems, services, products and business practices involving personal data are designed and implemented to ensure personal data is protected by default; Data protection principles and safeguarding of individuals' rights are clear in the policy or procedure; And that if the policy or procedure aims to provide service to vulnerable groups (e.g. children) that the personal data is treated with extra protection.
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EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Harbour is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work. We promote an environment of respect and understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all and achieving equality of outcomes.
- 1.2 The aim is for Harbour to be truly representative of all sections of society and our customers, and for each colleague to feel respected and able to give their best.
- 1.3 Harbour will adopt a human rights-based approach in our service delivery, decision making and design and review of our policies, ensuring that people's rights are at the centre of what we do.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to encourage diversity and eliminate discrimination, demonstrating Harbour's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. The policy also sets out how Harbour will adopt a human rights approach in our work.
- 2.2 The policy applies across our Group, to ensure we treat our people, colleagues, board members, tenants and customers fairly. The policy applies to all colleagues whether permanent or temporary, agency workers, contractors and consultants.

3. Legal and regulatory framework

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act specifies

how individuals and groups are to be protected from direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

3.2 The Act defines nine protected characteristics that are protected by law from discrimination. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

3.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should achieve when performing their housing activities.

The right to adequate housing is a human right in international law. All the outcomes and standards in the Charter support this right by setting the standards and outcomes that social landlords should achieve for their tenants and other customers by delivering good quality homes and services.

Outcome 1 identifies equalities obligations to be met. Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- They support the right to adequate housing.
- Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs and rights recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

3.4 In its Regulatory Framework (2019), the Scottish Housing Regulator requires all social landlords to:

- Have assurance and evidence that it considers equality and human rights properly when making all of its decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in its day-to-day service delivery.
- To comply with these duties, landlords must collect data relating to each of the protected characteristics for their existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff.

Standard 5 of the framework requires Harbour to conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity. Section 5.3 states the RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.

3.5 Human Rights Approach

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. The Act requires public bodies to comply with the legislation. Although not classed as a public body, Harbour, as a social housing provider and provider of services which could be considered as a public function, respects the human rights of our tenants and customers and adopts a human rights approach to our work.

4. Our commitments

Harbour commits to:

- 4.1 Provide mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training at induction and at regular intervals to managers, all other colleagues and board members. Colleagues are required to help Harbour provide equal

opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

All colleagues should understand they, as well as Harbour as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

- 4.2 Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be considered in line with Harbour's Respect at Work, Grievance and/or Disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

- 4.3 Collect equalities data relating to each of the protected characteristics for the following people:

- Existing tenants of Harbour Homes
- New tenants
- People on EdIndex
- Governing Body Members - Harbour Homes and subsidiary boards
- Colleagues

Data collected will be collected, monitored and stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

4.4 Using Equalities data to help us understand our colleagues, board members and customers and allow us to provide better services designed to meet the needs of our customers and colleagues.

4.5 Developing an Equality Strategy and Action Plan to support this policy. The Action Plan will identify key priorities in areas of employment, governance and service delivery to our tenants and customers.

4.6 The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed annually.

5. Human Resources and People

5.1 Harbour recognises that promoting a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion helps to attract, motivate and retain colleagues. As an employer we will:

- 5.1.1 Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- 5.1.2 Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.
- 5.1.3 Promote dignity and respect for all where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
- 5.1.4 Review and update employment policies, practices and procedures to ensure fairness, and to take account of legislative changes.
- 5.1.5 Ensure our recruitment and selection practices are inclusive and ensure selection is based on aptitude, skills and ability to carry out the requirements of the post.
- 5.1.6 Make decisions concerning our colleagues based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act)
- 5.1.7 Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all colleagues.

6. Governance

Board of Management Responsibilities

- 6.1 Harbour Homes Board of Management has ultimate responsibility for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within Harbour, ensuring legislative and regulatory requirements are met. The Board is required to confirm within the Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator, that Harbour Homes complies with the statutory duties for landlords.

Recruitment to Boards

- 6.2 Recruitment and selection practices for Harbour Homes Board of Management and Harbour's subsidiary boards, including adverts for board vacancies and assessments are inclusive, removing barriers to ensure selection is based on aptitude, skills and ability to carry out the requirements of the role.

Membership

- 6.3 Harbour Homes has a Membership Policy which is open to all sections of the community. Members are required to support our policy in promoting equality, inclusion and diversity and opposing any form of discrimination.

Equality Impact Assessments

- 6.4 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) will be carried out on new or existing policies and services which have a direct effect on a substantial number of our tenants, customers, colleagues or the wider community.
- 6.5 The EIA process is a systematic review of Harbour's policies and services which embeds equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

7. Our Services

Harbour provides housing and services to a wide range of customers. We aim to understand the diverse needs and preferences of those living in our communities and develop and deliver services to meet these needs.

Allocation of our houses

- 7.1 The Harbour Homes Allocation Policy sets out our commitment to being fair, efficient and consistent in allocating our homes. The application of the policy ensures equal opportunities in access to and allocation of our homes.
- 7.2 Harbour Homes is a member of EdIndex the City of Edinburgh Council common housing register. All members of EdIndex subscribe to the principles of this policy.

- 7.3 Harbour Lettings homes are allocated in line with the Allocations Policy which is underpinned by openness and fairness. The policy states Harbour Lettings will ensure there is equal access for applicants and will not discriminate against any groups or individuals on any of the grounds listed in 3.2 above.

Housing management and maintenance

- 7.4 We are committed to ensuring all customers can access all aspects of our housing management and maintenance services and will not discriminate against any groups or individuals on any of the grounds listed in 3.2 above.
- 7.5 We treat very seriously complaints of sexual harassment or harassment based on race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, transphobia or other hate behaviours and will deal with these through our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

Estates Service

- 7.6 We are committed to ensuring all customers can access all aspects of estates service and will not discriminate against any groups or individuals on any of the grounds listed in 3.2 above.

Consultation and participation

- 7.7 Harbour Homes Tenant Participation Strategy, “Involving You” sets out how we will involve our customers in shaping the services we deliver to ensure our customers have a real say in the decisions that affect their homes and communities.
- 7.8 We will consult our customer on any proposed changes to services, policies and procedures which affect them using a wide range of different methods.
- 7.9 We will seek regular feedback through transactional surveys and every three years will conduct a full-scale satisfaction survey.
- 7.10 We will collect customer equalities information whilst carrying out the full-scale survey. This information will be used to help tailor our services to reflect the needs of our customers and communities.

Information to our customers



7.11 We will provide all our customers with full, clear and accurate information about the services we provide to them.

7.12 Where required we will provide information in a variety of formats on request. We are members of Happy to Translate.

Procurement and working with contractors

- 7.13 Our Procurement process requires a commitment to equality and diversity as part of the tender exercise.
- 7.14 We will ensure there is no discrimination when allocating work to contractors and consultants or when purchasing from suppliers.
- 7.15 External contractors and consultants providing services on behalf of Harbour are required to adhere to and work in accordance with this policy.

8. Managing allegations and complaints

- 8.1 Harbour has a zero-tolerance approach to discriminatory practices and breaches of this policy.
- 8.2 Any allegation against a Harbour colleague will be investigated thoroughly and action may be taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- 8.3 Any allegation against Board members will be investigated thoroughly in line with the Code of Conduct for Governing Board Members and Involved Customers.
- 8.4 A breach of this Policy will be treated as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action and potentially dismissal.
- 8.5 In the event that customers display unacceptable behaviour toward Harbour colleagues, Board members, or consultants we will investigate thoroughly in line with the Difficult Customer Policy. Action may be taken under the terms of the tenancy agreement; reporting the matter to Police Scotland; or reviewing communication arrangements with Harbour.
- 8.6 Customers have the right to make use of our complaints procedure to appeal against decisions. Where they have exhausted our internal complaints process, customers will be advised of their right to take their complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman or the First Tier Property Tribunal as appropriate.

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9. Useful Links

ACAS

[Discrimination and the Equality Act 2010 - Discrimination at work - Acas](#)

[What they are - Equality, diversity and inclusion - Acas](#)

Equality and Human Rights Commission

[The Human Rights Act | Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)
[\(equalityhumanrights.com\)](#)

Scottish Human Rights Commission

[Home | Scottish Human Rights Commission](#)

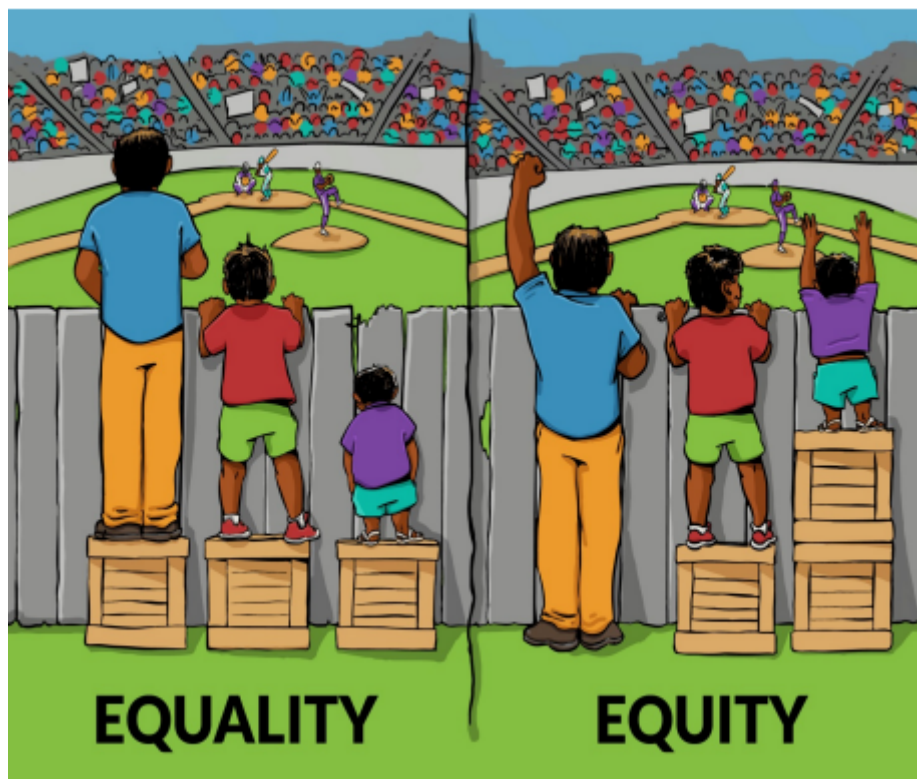
Scottish Government

[www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-november-2022/](#)

Useful Definitions

(Di Airey , Diversity Dynamics, presentation to Harbour Homes Oct 2023)

Diversity	we are all different
Equality	providing equality of opportunity
Equity	achieving equality of outcome
Inclusion	an output of equity
Belonging	the feeling that comes with inclusion



Types of Discrimination

From the Acas website: [Discrimination and the Equality Act 2010 - Discrimination at work - Acas](#)

Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else, because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

Less favourable treatment can be anything that puts someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared to someone who does not have that characteristic.

The Equality Act outlines types of discrimination.

Direct Discrimination

There are 3 types of direct discrimination. These are when it happens to a person who:

- has a protected characteristic – sometimes called 'ordinary' direct discrimination
- has a connection with someone with a protected characteristic – called 'discrimination by association'
- is thought to have a protected characteristic when they do not – called 'discrimination by perception'

Indirect discrimination

Applying a rule or policy that disadvantages people with a protected characteristic

Harassment

There are 3 types of harassment:

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- harassment related to certain 'protected characteristics'
- sexual harassment
- less favourable treatment as a result of harassment

Victimisation

Victimisation is when someone is treated less favourably as a result of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint.