

Standing against Racism at CDS

At CDS, we stand against racism, discrimination, and prejudice in all its forms. We recognise that we have work to do as an organisation and as individuals, to move toward being actively anti-racist – work to remove barriers, amplify voices, be better allies and to continue to learn, reflect and act. We want to support everyone who works for or with us to be effective agents for change in making a more diverse, equal, and inclusive world.

The high-profile police murders of Black Americans including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, and the global protests at anti-Black racism which followed, have reaffirmed that racism continues to exist in many areas of public and private life. Throughout society, from criminal justice to policing, housing and employment, systemic, institutional, and interpersonal racism and white supremacy continue to create inequalities in the way people are treated and the opportunities they are afforded.

In our own organisation, colleagues have shared their personal experiences of racism and abuse - behaviour that they had felt they must tolerate, and which had not been heard or responded to by us. We know that these experiences must be echoed amongst our customers, clients, and partners too and we are determined to do more to ensure that this changes.

We all have a role to play in doing more to fight racism and discrimination as we strive for a more equal, fair, and kind society for everyone. The impact of white supremacy and our colonial legacy is so deeply rooted that it affects every aspect of life for Black people and people of Colour in the UK. We need to listen more and learn more in order to confront this and be ready to challenge and change our own habits and behaviours where they undermine or harm others. We need to take up Mahatma Gandhi's challenge to "be the change you want to see in the world".

Over the past 6 months we have been working with colleagues and advisers to think about how we can improve our own contribution, taking action to support change that makes a real difference for our employees, residents, and clients - and in the sector we are part of.

Our greatest strength in this work is our diverse and talented team. We want to use our collective and individual strength to tackle discrimination in all its many forms, and to protect our staff, our tenants, our clients and our wider stakeholders from inequitable treatment and abuse.

We are committed to listening and learning, to projecting and amplifying the voices that need to be heard in this conversation, and to supporting each other in actively fighting racism and discrimination wherever we encounter it. We want to make sure that whether you work at CDS, live in one of our homes, or employ us as a service agent, you are always treated with respect and never face prejudice due to your race, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender reassignment, religion, or belief. We also want to build confidence, through our actions, that as an organisation we will not tolerate these behaviours where they occur.

We have developed an initial action plan to support change in 2021 which is available [here](#).

Anti-Racism and Inclusivity Action Plan: 2021/22

Our values are intrinsic to all our work and decision making and our commitment to taking tangible steps toward becoming anti-racist, as part of our wider Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion work, is essential if we are to live these values in our business.

Unity	-	Working as one team
Trust	-	Building trust by being reliable, fair, and acting with integrity
Intention and Impact	-	Acting with purpose and caring about the impact we have on people
Communication and Collaboration	-	Listening for understanding, working with others for win/win outcomes
Kindness	-	Always showing and expecting brave kindness

Our Actions in 2021/22

- We will make a public commitment about our work to become an anti-racist and more inclusive organisation
- We will encourage greater customer and client awareness of racism and discrimination and of our commitment to challenge it and support those affected by it
- We will give weight to the voices of those with lived experience of discrimination as employees, residents, or clients to
 - identify ways in which we can make it easier to report racism or other discrimination
 - develop and implement processes to be followed when racism, other discrimination or abuse is reported and
 - develop methods of recording, monitoring, and reporting on incidents and outcomes
- We will create safe spaces and open conversations about race, racism, discrimination, and abuse so that all employees' voices can be heard
- We will invest in a programme of learning and resources so that we can confidently challenge racism and discrimination wherever we encounter it
- We will work to ensure that the diversity of our leadership and our Board reflects the communities that we serve
- We will find ways to better identify, understand and resolve differences in customers' experience of our repairs, lettings or complaints service which align with protected characteristics
- We will review and update our recruitment and management practices to ensure that employees are able to progress with the same opportunities and do not face any additional barriers due to their ethnicity, race, sexuality, gender identity, disability, or religion.
- We will call out racist or discriminatory behaviours and support each other to improve our understanding and awareness