EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

Title	**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**
Date Created	**March 2022**
Next Review Date	**March 2027**
Author	**Christina Friedenthal**
Approver	**Board of Management**
Applies to	**Everyone who receives a service from us, forms part of our governance or is employed by us**

Introduction

At CDS, it is core to our values that we are respectful of others and listen. We aim to be an organisation where people feel a sense of belonging and are welcome as employees, customers, clients, partners or community members.

Our organisational values include Unity, Collaboration, and Kindness. We believe these values underpin the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our EDI policy is in place not only to ensure we meet our moral, social and legal obligations, but also because we see inclusion as a fundamental part of everything we do as an enabling organisation.

At CDS, we aim to:

- Prevent discrimination, eliminate prejudice, promote inclusion and value diversity.
- Treat everyone fairly, including board members, staff, residents, clients, suppliers and stakeholders.
- Listen and learn, challenging behaviours and thoughts where they undermine or harm others, as well as challenging discrimination or prejudice when encountered.

The purpose of this policy is to provide CDS staff, customers and stakeholders with a clear understanding of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in our role as an employer and as a provider, enabler and promoter of social and community-led housing.

This policy will support our aim of becoming an actively anti-racist organisation as well as helping to ensure that we comply with all our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to everyone with whom we interact, including those who receives a service from us, form part of our governance and who are employed by us directly or as a supplier or partner.

Our approach

CDS aims to treat everyone with whom we interact (i.e. employees, job applicants, residents, clients, prospective residents, stakeholders, partners, members of the community, etc), fairly, with dignity and respect.

We aim to provide services that are fair, accountable and accessible and which meet customer needs. In doing so, we welcome, value and respect the diversity of the communities we serve.

In order to be truly inclusive, we will make meaningful efforts to listen to others, to try to understand what matters to them and to take this into account when making decisions.

Key terms and definitions

Definitions of the nine protected characteristics from the Equality Act (2010) are in Appendix 1.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with all employees and members of the organisation. Individual members of staff are required to uphold the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. Additional expectations are placed on managers and those responsible for recruitment and training to ensure the delivery of these objectives.

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy sits with the Board and Senior Management Team who are responsible for developing an organisational culture in which the policy can be implemented and effectively operated.

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives underpin all business activities and that plans to deliver them are met.

Policy

In service provision and employment opportunities, some groups (like those listed in Fig. 1) commonly experience disadvantage and discrimination. We believe we play a meaningful role in tackling this.

We have a statutory duty to ensure nobody is unfairly disadvantaged by our services or in terms of employment by virtue of having, being perceived to have or being associated with someone who has one (or more) of the following protected characteristics:

Fig. 1 THE NINE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EQUALITY ACT (2010)

- Age
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage / Civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion / belief (or lack thereof)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In delivering services, through employment activities and in all work activities, we will promote practices and processes which are open and inclusive and which aim to prevent identity-based discrimination in any form.

We believe that every person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. In line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, we will oppose all forms of discrimination and unfair treatment related to these nine protected characteristics, as well as tackling our own unconscious bias.

Employment

It is our intention to employ a workforce that broadly reflects the local communities and areas in which we operate.

We aim to develop appropriate and effective policies and procedures that eliminate direct and indirect discrimination, as well as conscious and unconscious bias.

We are committed to creating a work environment where discrimination and prejudice is known to be unacceptable.

Provision of Services

We seek to recognise, understand and respect the diversity of the communities in which we operate. We believe people from all sections of these communities should have fair and equal access to influence and decision-making about our services. We believe that all community members should be equally satisfied with the quality of service they receive from us.

We recognise we have a key role in preventing and ending discrimination and harassment experienced by our staff, residents and stakeholders. To this end, we are committed to addressing discrimination and harassment when we see or hear about it and to making it easy for such behaviour to be reported.

Likewise, we will be open to feedback about how people experience our behaviour, policies and practices so that we can counter unconscious bias or systemic bias.

We will work toward our objectives of fair and equal access for all and preventing discrimination in all our activities, including:

- Allocations and lettings
- Complaint and query responses
- Decisions about repairs and improvements to homes
- Governance advice and support provision
- Procurement and the use of suppliers and consultants
- Provision of housing services
- Provision of managing agent services
- Resident involvement and engagement opportunities

Governance Arrangements

As the promotion of equality and diversity is a key priority for CDS, those involved in governance arrangements, including members of CDS's Board of Management, committees and those involved in leadership and management roles, will receive appropriate advice, information and training to enable to them to monitor and help deliver the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and objectives.

We aspire to have a Board of Management that broadly reflects the profile of the communities in which we operate. To this end, we will ensure that recruitment and selection of Board members is fair and non-discriminatory and that strategies will be put in place to address imbalances.

Positive Action

In line with the Equality Act (2010), we will actively look for opportunities to adopt positive action measures, where appropriate, to prevent or compensate for disadvantage. Where we do this, we will root our actions in evidence of disadvantage or inequity wherever possible.

Staff Training

Appropriate training on equality and diversity will be periodically provided to all staff and Board members and will form part of new staff induction.

Complaints

Employees who believe they have received treatment that is contrary to the principles of this policy can have their grievance dealt with through our Grievance Policy.

Any non-employee, including residents, clients and suppliers who believe they have received treatment that is contrary to the principles of this policy can have their complaint dealt with through our Complaints Policy.

Equality and diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently and will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group in line with equality laws and principles.

We will work with a range of qualified and appropriate organisations, agencies and consultants to help us drive best practice and achieve our equality objectives.

Monitoring and continuous improvement

To keep equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our Board's decision-making, all reports provided to CDS Board members include an assessment of the impact of the content of the report on our equality and diversity objectives.

The Board of Management receives an update on actions arising from the Corporate Plan at each meeting, including those related to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Corporate Services Committee may periodically receive specific reports dedicated to the topic that provide additional detail.

This policy will be reviewed every five years, unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise, ensuring that it continues to meet its objectives and takes account of good practice developments.

Confidentiality

We collect and process data in line with our Data Protection Policy.

Legislation and regulation

This policy complies with the regulatory standards for registered providers of social housing in England.

This policy complies with all aspects of the Equality Act (2010).

Associated policies and procedures

The following procedures are associated with this policy:

- Allocations procedure
- ASB (anti social behaviour) Beacon
- Complaints – BEACON
- Grievance process
- Unreasonable behaviour procedure
- Recruitment procedure

This policy is supported by:

- Allocations policy
- Antisocial behaviour policy
- CDS Anti-racism statement
- Complaints policy
- Data protection policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy
- Recruitment policy
- Unreasonable Behaviour Policy
- Grievance Policy

Appendix 1: Protected Characteristics – Equality Act 2010

Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another
Marriage and civil partnership.	In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).
Pregnancy and maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding
Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion and Belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
Sex	A man or a woman
Sexual orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes