

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Version 1.0

Updated September 2015

Owner Julie Williamson

POLICY STATEMENT

The trust is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer and to ensuring that all employees, job applicants, volunteers, residents, Trustees and any other third party with whom it deals are treated fairly and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination.

Our policy is designed to ensure that everyone receives the same treatment and opportunities regardless of gender, marital or family status, age, ethnic origin, disability, race, colour, national origin, nationality, creed, sexual orientation, political affiliation, trade union membership or by any other condition or requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

We seek to ensure that no one suffers, either directly or indirectly, as a result of discrimination.

Our Equal Opportunities Policy underpins all procedures relating to access and provision of services.

Equal Opportunities in employment is an essential element in working to national standards and the Investors in People Standard. This principle will apply to:

- 1 employment practice
- 2 recruitment and selection
- 3 training and development
- 4 promotion
- 5 re-deployment
- 6 all other terms and conditions of employment

The Trust will endeavour to ensure that Managers and staff understand their own personal responsibility in relation to Equal Opportunities by ensuring services are delivered in a non-discriminatory way, with performance monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, and by complying fully with Whiteley Homes Trust Policies & Procedures.

Everyone who works for the Trust is expected to treat others with respect and our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in any form that may affect the dignity of the individual.

The Trust recognises the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds as this creates a workforce where creativity and valuing difference in others thrives. We value the wealth of experience within the community in which we operate and aspire to have a workforce that reflects this.

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Responsibility for this policy

The overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy rests with the senior management of The Trust.

All staff, irrespective of their job or seniority, will be given guidance and instruction, through our induction and other training, as to their responsibility and role in promoting equality of opportunity and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues or job applicants, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken against any employee found guilty of unfair discrimination or harassment.

Managers are to take remedial action wherever discrimination or disadvantage is found, to re-establish equality of access to employment and services for all. They will also ensure that all employees are:

- 7 aware of and understand this policy and that their working practice reflects an anti-discriminatory manner;
- 8 trained and know that they will be expected to deliver effective and appropriate services within an equal opportunities framework.

Gender Re-assignment

Gender reassignment is a personal, social, and sometimes medical process by which a person's gender appears to others to have changed. Anyone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender is protected from discrimination under the Equality Act. A person does not need to be undergoing medical supervision to be protected. So, for example, a woman who decides to live as a man without undergoing any medical procedures would be covered.

WHT will support employees through good communication, supporting them to talk with colleagues making it clear to staff, clients and customers that discrimination, harassment and victimisation because of gender reassignment is unlawful. At a time agreed with the person, all personal records will be changed to the new name and gender. Access to personal records which state a person's previous gender should be retained only if necessary, and otherwise deleted or destroyed.

Employees should make sure that they consider the following.

- **Telling people about the situation.** Make a list of the people who need to know. Speak to them personally, or ask HR or a line manager to communicate with them.

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- **Medical appointments and absences.** Make sure the WHT knows about what time off work will be needed. Remember that it is discrimination for an employer to treat a person worse if they are absent from work for a reason related to gender reassignment than you would be treated if you were absent because you are ill or injured, or if you were absent for some other reason.
- **Changing e mail, work passes etc.** Changing name on email addresses, company directories, records and ID badges will need to be done. Speak to the HR department at an early stage about how this should be done.

Recruitment and selection

- 9 We aim, through written procedures, appropriate training and supervision, to ensure that all staff who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this policy.
- 10 Selection will be conducted on an objective basis and will focus only on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Our interest is in the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and the potential of individuals to do their jobs.
- 11 Person specifications will be reviewed to ensure that criteria are not applied which are discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.
- 12 Questions asked of candidates will relate to information that will help assess their ability to do the job. Questions which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination should not be asked. Selection tests will be specifically related to the job and measure an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.
- 13 Job adverts should encourage applications from all types of candidates and should not be stereotyped. All adverts will state: "WHT is an equal opportunity employer and values diversity".

Further information on recruitment can be found in the Recruitment Procedures (Section 1).

Training and development

The Trust recognises that equal opportunity responsibilities do not end at selection, and is committed to ensuring that wherever possible all staff receive the widest possible range of development opportunities for advancement.

All employees will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their manager. Opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to all staff on a fair and equal basis.

The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that provisions are made where necessary to enable all staff to benefit from training.

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Terms and conditions of employment

We will ensure that all of our policies including remuneration, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with terms and conditions of employment, are formulated and applied without regard to race, religion or belief, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, disability or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. These will be reviewed regularly to ensure there is no discrimination.

Length of service as a qualifying criterion for benefits will not exceed five years unless clearly justifiable.

Grievances, disputes and disciplinary procedure

Staff who believe they have been discriminated against and have not been able to resolve this informally are advised to use the internal grievance procedure. An employee who brings a complaint of discrimination must not be less favourably treated.

Harassment or bullying will not be tolerated and any individual employee who feels that he/she has been subjected to harassment or bullying should refer to the Bullying and Harassment Policy (6.2).

When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that members of one group (whether this be sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability or marital status) are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other groups.

Communication of this policy

All job applicants, employees and workers will be made aware of this policy and a copy will be included in the Staff Handbook, given to all employees on joining us. Third parties will also be made aware of this policy. In addition, staff will be reminded of the policy through such means as advertisements, job descriptions (which will refer to this), application forms, posters, training courses and memos.