

SHAP EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy sets out SHAP'S commitment to equality and diversity as well as our statutory and moral obligations. This policy sets out how we will promote **equality** and embrace **diversity** across everything that we do, as an organisation which works to create high quality housing for all.

We are committed to tackling discrimination and disadvantage through positive action, fairer policies and programmes, services, training and changing how we use resources.

SCOPE

This policy is aimed at the SHAP Board, Secretariat, recipients of SHAP contracts, SHAP Associates and SHAP volunteers. It is intended to ensure that SHAP provides equality, fairness and respect for everyone engaging with SHAP's work.

POLICY STATEMENT

All providers of SHAP services including the Board, Secretariat, Associates and volunteers, will ensure that they:

- Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination;
- Develop and adopt best practice;
- Keep up to date with legislation and regulatory requirements;
- Review policies and practices regularly and when new legislation or regulatory guidance emerges to ensure that they comply with the law.

DEFINITIONS

Equality is fundamental to us in the provision of homes, housing-related services and the creation of communities. We recognise that SHAP has a key role to play in helping to create an equal society which protects and promotes equal, genuine freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

We understand that a person's home directly influences their access to education and employment; it affects their health and wellbeing and access to social and economic opportunities within their communities.

Diversity brings together people from different backgrounds and with different experiences who bring fresh ideas and solutions, which can improve what we do and make us more efficient. We recognise that the diversity of our Board, Associates, volunteers and contractors enables us to:

- Develop and improve our services and explore new ideas and business opportunities;
- Respond to the changing needs of the housing sector;
- Attract, keep and motivate the best people to engage with us;
- Deliver excellent services to all our members, partners, sponsors and stakeholders.

PRINCIPLES

We believe in a society that gives everyone an equal chance to live, learn and work free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice; a society that respects and celebrates our differences making for a stronger more vibrant community.

We are committed to tackling social exclusion in its widest sense.

THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

We are committed to meeting the duties of the Equality Act 2010 which effectively replaced or consolidated previous equality legislation.

The Equality Act protects people sharing 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy/on maternity leave, those who are married or in a civil partnership from discrimination.

We wish to be an organisation which not only meets, but exceeds the standards set by other bodies in this area. We will ensure that no one is discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their protected characteristic or their state of health, appearance, family circumstances (responsibility for dependents), criminal convictions, HIV status or any other ground which cannot be shown to be justified.

Under the legislation all organisations providing a public service are required to observe the public sector equality duty which requires organisations to demonstrate how they will:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited within the Act;

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by removing and minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where they are different from the needs of other people.
- Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in activities where their participation is disproportionately low;
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

WORKING WITH OTHERS

When working with other people and organisations, we aim to:

- Promote, share information, experiences and examples of good practice of equality and diversity through links with other organisations;
- Encourage and support people to be active in community life by celebrating contributions and respecting the variety of lifestyles and cultures;
- Ensuring that equality and diversity is embedded throughout our procurement activity.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

We will only share information according to the rules set out in our Data Protection Policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legal or regulatory changes take place.

SHAP Chairman

Date

POLICY CONTROL

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