

### Equal Opportunities Policy

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Wrekin Housing Group (the 'Group') is actively committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. We promote equality of opportunity in the services that we deliver to our customers and for all of our staff and applicants for employment.

1.2 The Group is an organisation which values differences where individuals can be their authentic selves. The aim is for our organisation to be representative of all sections of society and the communities that we serve and for each member of staff, our residents and other stakeholders to feel respected and valued.

1.3 The Group has responsibilities under legislation, regulation and codes of governance including, but not limited to:

- The Equality Act 2010;
- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- The National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020;
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC);
- The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Regulatory Framework.

#### 2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 The Wrekin Housing Group is a major employer in the housing and care sector. We want to be an organisation of choice that delivers on equality and diversity in all aspects of our work. We aspire to develop and maintain an inclusive workplace and deliver fair and efficient services within an equitable and supportive society. The Group opposes all forms of discrimination and promotes parity of opportunity for all.

2.2 The Group is a value driven organisation and our values underpin all aspects of our work around equality, diversity and inclusion. The Group's vision is '*making a difference to people's lives*' and the Group's values are: Everyone Matters;

- Communicate Clearly;
- Inspire Positive Change;
- Grow Together.

#### 3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all Wrekin Housing Group employees including Board members, agency staff, temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and sub-contractors.

## **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 4.1 The Wrekin Housing Group Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion underpins all aspects of our work. The Board is responsible for positively conducting itself and leading by example in all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 4.2 The Group Chief Executive and the Executive Directors are responsible for delivering and reviewing the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 4.3 The Director of Business Solutions is the executive sponsor of this policy and is responsible for ensuring the successful delivery of all matters that relate to it.
- 4.4 The Head of People Services is the operational lead for this policy and is responsible for delivering the people related elements.
- 4.5 Heads of Service are responsible for delivering and embedding all equality, diversity and inclusion matters in their service areas.
- 4.6 The People Services Team are responsible for empowering a diverse culture which ensures that all employees have the opportunity to grow, learn and reach their full potential. Our HR processes and practices will influence workforce diversity positively.
- 4.7 Managers are responsible for the delivery of our EDI priorities and for understanding and raising EDI issues within their area of responsibility. With support from the Risk and Policy Team, they will ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment is completed when developing new policies or making any changes which have an impact on people.
- 4.8 All Board Members and employees are responsible for ensuring that they understand the benefits of valuing diversity, that they are aware of the Group's vision and values, that they have read the Equal Opportunities Policy and that they implement this in their daily work.
- 4.9 We expect all employees, Board members and tenant representatives to promote the spirit of our Equal Opportunities Policy and to not discriminate against anyone whilst undertaking duties on behalf of the Group. All employees, Board members and tenant representatives are also expected to follow the Group's values while undertaking their duties.

## **5.0 Duties under the Equality Act 2010**

- 5.1 The Group is committed to meeting its obligations and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to promoting equal opportunities both in the provision of services and in our employment practices. The Equality Act 2010 protects people with protected characteristics from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (as

defined in the Equality Act 2010) and the Group will always promote inclusivity and fairness for all.

5.2 The protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion and Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation;

5.3 Appendix 1 provides a definition for each of the protected characteristics.

## **6.0 Staff and Board Members**

6.1 All Wrekin Housing Group staff, Board members and job applicants will be treated in an equal and fair manner. They will be free from any forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation with regard to the protected characteristics and we will ensure that no individual receives less favourable treatment as a result of a protected characteristic. These principles apply to recruitment and selection, learning and development, promotion, pay and benefits and to all terms and conditions of employment.

6.2 We will:

- Ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are equitable so that all employees and Board members are recruited on the basis of merit and ability;
- Ensure that any disabled candidate who meets the essential criteria for a job they have applied for is guaranteed an interview for that role;
- Aspire to employ a diverse workforce which is responsive and reflects the communities that we serve;
- Ensure that the promotion of employees is fair and on the basis of merit and ability;
- Provide a safe and accessible working environment which respects the culture and identity of all individuals;
- Ensure we promote a culture and working environment free from harassment and discrimination;
- Provide an open environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential;
- Make reasonable adjustments where necessary to overcome any disadvantages due to disabilities;
- Provide all staff with access to training and development opportunities, enabling them to reach their full potential and maximise their career advancement;

- Review our Pay, Terms and Conditions to make sure that they are competitive, fair and equitable in the local markets and sectors that we operate in.

## **7.0 Service Delivery**

7.1 We aim to ensure that our services are responsive and sensitive to the needs of our customers and tenants by:

- Promoting and fostering equality of opportunity in the delivery of all our services;
- Promoting good relations between people in our communities and neighbourhoods;
- Designing services that meet the needs of our customers, ensuring that the needs of our communities are identified and taken in to account in the planning and delivery of any service;
- Promoting positive action to further equality of opportunity amongst those applying for, and receiving, our services;
- Ensuring that we communicate and provide information in accessible formats and language that is easily understood;
- Providing a diverse workforce with the knowledge, skills and commitment to meet the needs of our customers;
- Ensuring that the membership of our Board and its Committees hear our diverse customer voices;
- Regularly monitoring our systems and procedures to review our progress in promoting equality and diversity.

## **8.0 Adherence to this policy and training**

8.1 We will not tolerate any acts that breach this policy and all cases of such behaviour or allegations will be taken seriously, fully investigated and if proven, may be subject to disciplinary action.

8.2 We require all employees to undergo relevant training before taking part in recruitment and selection activities. This training will also be provided to customers and Board members who are involved in recruitment and selection activities.

8.3 We will provide equality and diversity awareness training to all employees and Board members to ensure that our commitments in this policy are embedded across the organisation.

8.4 Any employee who thinks that they have been discriminated against should raise the matter under the Grievance procedure, Bullying and Harassment Policy or the Whistleblowing Policy, as appropriate.

<b>The Wrekin</b> <u>Housing Group</u>	<b>Policy Control Sheet</b> <b>Equal Opportunities Policy</b> <b>Policy reference number - 2022/</b>
<b>Policy Author</b>	Risk and Policy Manager
<b>Direct Lead</b>	Social Value and Inclusion Manager
<b>Version</b>	1. August 2022
<b>Target audience</b>	All Wrekin Housing Group staff, including agency staff, temporary staff, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers and Board members.
<b>Consultation</b>	Tenants Panel, Wrekin Allies Staff Group, People Services Team, Senior Managers
<b>Date of Equality Impact Assessment</b>	No individuals or groups of people are disadvantaged by the adoption of this policy
<b>Date of Data Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	A Data Privacy Impact Assessment is not required.
<b>Approving Body</b>	Executive Management Group and Group Board
<b>Date of final approval</b>	14 December 2022
<b>Implementation date</b>	14 December 2022
<b>Monitoring arrangements</b>	Quarterly Reverse Engineering Exercises The Wrekin Allies Staff Group
<b>Reporting</b>	Remuneration and Nominations Committee
<b>Review date</b>	February 2025
<b>Expiry date</b>	14 December 2025
<b>Review cycle</b>	Three Year Review Cycle
<b>Policy category</b>	Corporate and Governance
<b>Associated policies and procedures</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) Bullying and Harassment Policy Disciplinary Policy Recruitment and Selection Policy Whistleblowing Policy All customer facing policies – including Allocations and Lettings, Complaints and Repairs and Maintenance.
<b>Policy location</b>	Intranet The Wrekin Housing Group website and jobs portal

### Summary of changes table

Revision history			
Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised by & date
Emma Wells	Combined two existing Equal Opportunities policies	1. August 2022	Executive Management Group – 26 October 2022 Group Board - 14 December 2022