

MOLENDINAR PARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Date of Review: 18th October 2011
Date of Next Review: October 2016

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Molendinar Park Housing Association is committed to the promotion of equal opportunity and to combating discrimination, direct or indirect, through our policies and procedures covering admission to the housing list, allocation of housing, provision of services, membership recruitment, Committee membership and structure, and employment practices.
- 1.2 We will seek to ensure that all members of staff (full time, part time or temporary) and all applicants for employment are given equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and training irrespective of gender, marital status, age, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, religion, sexual orientation, disability or health problem (including HIV infection or AIDS).
- 1.3 We will seek to comply with all current legislation and statutory regulations covering the areas of equal opportunities we are involved in.
- 1.4 We endorse the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Code of Conduct on Equal Opportunities.
- 1.5 This policy complies with Communities Scotland Performance Standard GS2.1 and Chapter 9 in the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's publication Raising Standards entitled 'Equal Opportunities'.

"We embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work"

- 1.6 With regard to statutory requirements the Association has taken into account the following legislation:
 - Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended by the Race relations (amendment) Act 2000)
 - Disability Discrimination Act 2005
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

2 HOUSING ALLOCATION AND SERVICE PROVISION

- 2.1 We will seek to ensure equality of access in our allocation of housing and provision of services and we will aim not to discriminate against any groups or individuals on any of the grounds detailed in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 2.2 We will seek to ensure that all our developments are built barrier-free, where practicable, and to the agreed minimum standards. We will be sensitive to the cultural, religious and health needs of our tenants.
- 2.3 We will seek to identify and respond to the needs of ethnic minority or of disadvantaged groups in our areas of operation by establishing close links with the representatives of such groups.

The Association will maintain existing and develop new policies and procedures which deal with specific issues that is key to the delivery of this policy, such as Racial Harassment Policy and Neighbour Dispute and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

The Association will provide equal access to housing and the associated housing management and maintenance services. This will include working with partners to achieve this objective. For example, we will accept referrals from the council's Homeless Casework Team and specialist agencies such as Key Housing Association and the Simon Community.

- 2.4. In establishing referral arrangements with other agencies we will seek to ensure that each agency's equal opportunities policy is consistent with our own. If an agency does not have an equal opportunities policy or fails to meet our required standards we will encourage the agency to comply with our policy.
- 2.5 We will make full, clear and accurate information on all relevant aspects of our activities accessible to applicants, tenants, factored owners and any others applying for or in receipt of our services, all in compliance with current law and good practice guidelines. Where required information will be made in suitable alternative forms including other languages, audio tape, braille or through the use of interpreters.

3 MEMBERSHIP AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 3.1 We will seek to ensure that membership of Molendinar Park HA and participation in our affairs is open to all irrespective of any of the categories detailed in paragraph 1.2.
- 3.2 Further details are given in our policies and procedures covering membership of the Association and elections to our Committee of Management.

4 EMPLOYMENT

- 4.1 We will develop, implement and monitor good employment practices covering recruitment, election, training and staff development for all staff regardless of their race, disability, gender, sexuality or any other category as detailed in paragraph 1.2
- 4.2 We will not discriminate against part-time members of staff and will ensure that our conditions of service apply equally to part-time staff on a pro-rata basis as appropriate.
- 4.3 We will provide all staff with a copy of our Equal Opportunities Policy in the Staff Handbook.

5 RECRUITMENT

- 5.1 We will advertise internally and externally simultaneously except where internal promotion is wholly appropriate (see paragraph 7.2 - Promotion). Applicants will be given clear and accurate information about vacant posts through advertisements, recruitment information and interviewing.

- 5.2 Recruitment literature will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a 'genuine occupational qualification' which limits a post to a particular type of person, in which case this will be clearly stated in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- 5.3 Advertisements and other recruitment literature will state that we operate an Equal Opportunities Policy, and our public statement on the policy will be provided to all applicants (see Appendix 2).
- 5.4 The receipt and recording of applications, short-listing and interviews will be handled as specified in the policy and procedures on Recruitment and Selection to ensure that equal opportunities principles are followed at every stage in the process.
- 5.5 An equal opportunities monitoring report, as detailed in the recruitment procedures, will be submitted Committee of Management following each appointment.

6 STAFF & COMMITTEE MEMBER TRAINING

- 6.1 We will seek to ensure that we do not discriminate in the provision of all general staff training or development. We will aim to provide appropriate training for all staff to enable them to perform their duties effectively, in accordance with our overall strategy and objectives and subject to budget provision.
- 6.2 We will aim to ensure that all Committee Members and members of staff receive appropriate information and advice in all relevant aspects of equal opportunities legislation and current good practice.

7 ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION

7.1 Advancement

Initial placing of a new member of staff on the appropriate incremental scale, and subsequent advancement up that scale, will be according to the Terms and Conditions of Employment currently in force.

7.2 Promotion

We recognise the benefit of using existing staff talents to the full, as this is in the interests of both staff morale and the effective provision of our services, and we will therefore consider internal career advancement through internal promotion as appropriate.

8 HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 We will take particular care to deal effectively and sensitively when dealing with any complaint from a member of staff regarding harassment, particularly sexual

harassment, or discrimination. We will always seek to protect any member of staff raising such a grievance from victimisation.

8.2 We will encourage any member of staff who considers that they are suffering from unequal treatment on any of the grounds listed in para. 1.2 to report this and if the initial complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, to raise a grievance which will be dealt with in accordance with our Grievance policy and procedures.

8.3 We will respect the right to absolute confidentiality of any member of staff who develops HIV infection or AIDS.

9 SUPPORT

9.1 Any member of staff who develops a serious or chronic illness, HIV or AIDS, or who experiences an accident resulting in a disability will be given every form of appropriate support to enable them to remain at work, and reasonable arrangements will be made with other colleagues to facilitate this objective.

9.2 Unless it is a clear practical necessity to do so, or the member of staff concerned requests it, they will not be required to adopt different work practices or otherwise have their job description amended as a result of a disability, HIV, AIDS or any other serious or chronic illness.

10 DISCIPLINE, REDUNDANCY AND DISMISSAL

10.1 We will not discriminate unfairly or unlawfully in the application of disciplinary action, redundancy or dismissal.

10.2 We will ensure that our policies and procedures on redundancy do not have a disproportionate effect on any one group of staff. For example, we will not assume that part-time staff or staff 'last in' should be the first to be made redundant.

10.3 We will ensure that all Committee Members and managers responsible for disciplinary action, redundancy or dismissal receive appropriate training and are conversant with the principles and objectives of this Equal Opportunities Policy as well as with their legal obligations.

11 STAFF AND COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

11.1 We recognise that the existence of an equal opportunities policy in itself does not guarantee equality in access, opportunity or outcome, and that the success of the policy depends on the degree of commitment in practice by all members of our staff and of the Committee of Management.

11.2 The Chairman of the Committee of Management has the overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented in every area of our activities.

11.3 The Director is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

- 11.4 We expect all members of the Committee of Management and members of staff to:
- apply the policy in their activities and work for Molendinar Park HA;
 - challenge any discriminatory behaviour within the organisation that they become aware of;
 - report to a Director any actual instances of discrimination.

12 POLICY REVIEW

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Management Committee at least every 5 years.