

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Category	Governance
Lead	Governance Officer
Committee / Approver	Board of Management
Action	Consider & Approve
Review Date	December 2025
Review Due	December 2029
Purpose	To set out how we meet our duties under Equalities legislation
Internal/External	Both

Introduction

This policy sets out Angus Housing Association's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion among our workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. Equality, diversity and inclusion affects all staff and the people that we work with as Equalities legislation concerns the rights of individuals. Under legislation, Angus Housing Association has duties to its employees and volunteers (including board members), and as a Registered Social Landlord, to its tenants and customers.

Aims of the Policy

The aims are to:

- State how Equalities legislation affects Angus Housing Association as an employer and Registered Social Landlord
- Outline what Angus Housing Association aims to do to meet duties under legislation

Equalities Legislation

As a Registered Social Landlord, section 39 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires Angus Housing Association to act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the requirements of the law. In addition, Registered Social Landlords are required to demonstrate that they meet the Standards of Governance and Financial Management and the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Meeting duties under the Equalities Act supports Angus Housing Association to meet the following specific Standards:

5.3 – “...pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and advance equality of opportunity and human rights, and fosters good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.”

Standard 1 – “All aspects of housing services (including customer services) must be performed so that: every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receive fair access to housing and housing services.”

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 combined several pieces of legislation into one Act and outlines what is unlawful discrimination against people with different characteristics. This is a complex and specialist area of expertise and the main body that produces Codes of Practice for applying equalities legislation is the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Generally, the Equality Act 2010:

- Protects people against discrimination at work
- Defines 'protected characteristics'
- Defines unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation

The Equality Act 2010 places duties on employers, which means that Angus Housing Association must:

- Make sure that they do not unfairly discriminate in any aspect of work
- Take steps to prevent discrimination
- Take reasonable action to protect people from discrimination by others
- Look after the wellbeing of their workers (i.e. Duty of Care)

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 outlines specific characteristics that people have which are covered by the Act. These are used as people that have one (or more) can experience hate or be treated less favourably. 'Less favourably' means to put someone at a disadvantage when compared to someone who does not have a protected characteristic (referred to as 'comparator'). There is no legal definition of 'putting someone at a disadvantage' but it generally it means to treat someone differently by excluding them, making things harder for them, or subjecting them to distress or financial loss. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

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

Unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation

The Equality Act 2010 outlines what constitutes unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation:

Direct Discrimination	Directly treating someone differently because they have a protected characteristic
Indirect discrimination	Treating everyone the same but doing so puts someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage
Discrimination by perception	Directly treating someone differently because they are thought to have a protected characteristic
Discrimination by association	Directly treating someone differently because they are linked to a person that has a protected characteristic
Harassment	A person receives unwanted or offensive behaviour due to their protected characteristic
Victimisation	Treating someone negatively as a result of being involved with a discrimination or harassment complaint

Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is part of the Equality Act 2010. This places a requirement on public authorities (and those who are not public authorities but exercise public functions) to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those that do, or do not, share a protected characteristic
- Foster good relations between those that do, or do not, share a protected characteristic


Whilst Registered Social Landlords are not designated as public authorities, what they do is likely to be viewed as a public function. This means that whilst there is not a statutory need to meet the PSED, Angus Housing Association will do so anyway as doing so is in line with good practice and aligns with the organisation's values.

Worker Protection (amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

The Worker Protection (amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 places a new mandatory duty on employers to proactively establish preventative and reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. There is more information about this Act in the Dignity at Work Policy.

How Angus Housing Association will meet duties under Equalities legislation

Angus Housing Association aims to:

- Monitor the make-up of the people we work with regarding protected characteristics so that equality, diversity and inclusion is encouraged and improved upon.
 - Assess the impact of our policies and procedures so that the people we work with (including staff, volunteers and board members) are not unlawfully discriminated against.
 - Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.
 - Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.
 - Make opportunities for training, development and progress available to all staff, volunteers and board members about their rights and responsibilities around equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - Review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and that they reflect changes in the law.
 - Monitor the make-up of staff, volunteers and board members regarding protected characteristics so that equality, diversity and inclusion is encouraged.
 - Identify short-, medium- and long-term goals around equality diversity and inclusion and create action plan(s) to address these.
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