

The Pioneer Group

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy		Version: 8	Ref: 1702
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1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The Pioneer Group is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination, welcoming diversity and promoting inclusion across the communities we serve. We have core values of empowerment, respect, community and we recognise that we are better together. We have a key role to play within our area of operation in Birmingham both as a local employer and social housing landlord. We aim to work in partnership with others to champion equality and achieve both appropriate and valued services for all sections of the community. Our commitment comprises:

- delivering the best service possible to all our customers
- providing the best opportunities and working environment for our staff
- removing the barriers that prevent communities from flourishing.

This means understanding individual circumstances, choices and needs, and tackling all forms of discrimination.

We place great importance on our commitment to equality at all levels within the organisation. This requires all staff, governing body members and partners to participate fully in achieving our aims, providing training, guidance and advice as appropriate.

2 Policy scope

This policy applies to and extends across The Pioneer Group as a service provider, employer, partner, procurer and stakeholder and recognises our wider role in striving to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage across all our activities in all the communities in which we work.

3 Policy Aims

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy aims to highlight The Pioneer Group's commitment to complying with anti-discrimination legislation and regulatory requirements, in particular, discharging our Public Sector Equality Duty proactively and effectively. This policy is part of a framework for adopting best practice, continuous learning and improvement across all business areas in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

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4. Policy Principles

The Pioneer Group will treat all people fairly, with respect, and is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and the elimination of all unlawful discrimination. The Pioneer Group is committed to providing services that are fair, accessible and accountable to meet customer requirements. In doing so it aims to meet future circumstances as well as current, and welcomes, values and respects the diversity of the communities it serves.

In its provision of services and employment opportunities The Pioneer Group recognises the detrimental impact of social disadvantage & discrimination and believes in the importance of promoting a positive culture of inclusion.

The aim of this policy is therefore to support these commitments through the provision of an 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' framework covering all aspects of The Pioneer Group's business activities as a social landlord, service provider and as an employer. The framework additionally acts as an enabler for improvement and a guide to staff, residents and stakeholders in respect of achieving its regulatory, statutory and corporate objectives.

In delivering services and employment activities (either directly or through partnership or contractor relationships), The Pioneer Group will promote inclusive practices and processes which prevent discrimination against anyone falling within any of the 9 protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 and listed below:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The service principles that will underpin this policy are as follows:

- **Understand our customers** – better understand who our customers are and their needs, so that we are able to provide appropriate tailored services which are accessible to all.
- **Promote accessibility** – services should be sensitive to differing needs and create a level playing field and access for all.
- **Value diversity** – recognise, and proactively promote, the benefits that people with diverse backgrounds can bring to the communities in which we work.
- **Promote engagement and involvement** – ensure all customers have the opportunity to get involved in developing and shaping the services we offer.

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- **Promote inclusive communities** – everyone should feel that they belong in the community and we will foster good community relations.
- **Provide clear and meaningful information** – ensure that we provide clear and meaningful information about our services in ways that are accessible and meet the needs of all the customers in the communities in which we work
- **Partnership working** – commit to supporting and promoting our equality and diversity aims with all our partners and maintain a clear expectation that all our contractors and suppliers should demonstrate this also.

5. Statutory and Regulatory Obligations

The Pioneer Group will comply with all current, proposed and future legislation relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

As a public body we have a legal obligation, under the Equality Act 2010, to comply with the General Equality Duty. The General Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who do share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

As a Registered Provider, The Pioneer Group is obliged to conform to the regulatory requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH).

6. Policy Framework

Our approach towards Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will cover three broad areas of the operation of the organisation;

- How we provide our services
- How we treat our employees
- Our governance

6.1 Provision of Services

In providing our services, The Pioneer Group will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and unfairness. We will ensure that our policies and practices take regard of the needs of all those who fall within the categories of protected characteristics, and we will ensure that we regularly review both our policies and practices to ensure that we are meeting the full range of needs.

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As part of our approach, we will make reasonable adjustments to our services to remove barriers for the accessing of services. In recognition that this is anticipatory, we will ensure that we regularly review our practices.

We will gather information on the profile of our customers and then use data analysis to support our drive to ensure that services meet the full range of needs.

We will ensure that policies and procedures are appropriately subject to Equality Impact Assessments as part of the development and review process.

We will promote inclusion and tolerance across our areas of business by actively celebrating diversity and encourage understanding & appreciation through this.

We will actively involve our customers in a full range of opportunities to shape and formulate our policies and procedures.

We will not tolerate any form of harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse and we will ensure that we have strong policies and procedures in place to tackle any such instances.

Our services will be provided in a way that safeguards vulnerable adults & children and we will regularly monitor & review all safeguarding referrals & reports.

6.2 Employer of Choice

As an employer we will ensure that we are compliant with all aspects of the Equality Act 2010. This will include ensuring that we make reasonable adjustments to ensure that we meet the needs of all employees and potential employees.

We will collect and appropriately analyse equality data about our employees and applicants to aid underpinning our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will ensure that we regularly review and respond to the health and wellbeing needs of our staff, and promote a positive culture of wellbeing throughout our organisation.

We will monitor our approach to equal pay and will undertake voluntary reporting on the gender pay gap.

We will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment and will ensure that we have strong policies and procedures in place to tackle any such instances.

We will promote inclusion and tolerance across our staff teams by celebrating diversity and encouraging understanding and appreciation through this.

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6.3 Governance and leadership

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across our governance structure and our approach to the recruitment, selection and appointment of board members will reflect this.

We will ensure that all board members receive training and support that includes a full appreciation of our commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion. We will actively support the development of under-represented groups within our governance structure.

We will actively participate in best practice forums aimed at understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We will ensure that our boards are understanding, welcoming and celebratory of diversity.

7 Implementation and Review

We will oversee the implementation and review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy through our Diversity Advisory Group. The Group will consist of at least two Board members and representatives of staff teams across the organisation. The Diversity Advisory Group will create an annual work plan aimed at continuing to monitor and strengthen the approach to promoting the aims of this policy across all areas of the Group.

Our Executive Leadership Team and Quality and Performance Team will play an active role in monitoring policies and procedures to ensure that they meet our objectives of promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This will include ensuring that policies and procedures are appropriately subject to Equality Impact Assessments and we will ensure the staff are suitably trained and supported to make good use of the EIA processes.