

Equal Opportunities

Monmouthshire Housing Association – Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Introduction

Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA) recognises and values diversity and is committed to strengthening community cohesion. In the provision of housing and employment services MHA will seek to offer services fairly to all people ensuring that anyone in contact with us is given equality of opportunity and treated with respect.

MHA does not discriminate against any person or organisation on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, disability, nationality, gender, sexuality, age, class, appearance, religion, responsibility for dependents, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice. We are keen to promote good relations in the community by providing a non-discriminatory service.

2. Purpose & Scope

2.1 The aim of the policy is to:

- (i) Ensure that no applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment
- (ii) Achieve a workforce, tenant and contractor mix, which is in line with the population make up in Monmouthshire
- (iii) Ensure that MHA has access to the widest labour market and secures the best employees for its needs

2.2 This policy is subject to relevant European/UK legislation and MHA will also implement provisions of the codes of practice published by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) as/ when applicable.

3. Principles

3.1 This policy covers all aspects of employment and the provision of housing services

3.2 The policy will be kept under review in consultation with the appropriate trade unions and relevant outside organisations, such as the CEHR.

3.3 The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it reflects the requirements of forthcoming legislation and national codes of practice for equality.

3.4 MHA will seek to ensure that this policy is brought to the attention of all employees, potential employees, trade unions, other

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employers, contractors or anyone carrying out a function on MHA's behalf, and the general public in Monmouthshire.

- 3.5 A copy of the Policy is provided to all job applicants, as part of the application form pack. Copies are available at all MHA service points and the policy is available also on MHA's intranet and website.

4. Housing Service Delivery

4.1 Communication

- 4.1.1 MHA will strive to overcome language barriers by providing translated literature or an interpreter

- 4.2.1 MHA recognises that certain groups may not be able to engage effectively (because English is not their first language) in open forums. MHA will seek to make special provision so that these groups have an opportunity to air their views.

4.2 Allocations and Housing Choice

- 4.2.1 MHA ensures that its allocations policy is non-discriminatory by:

- (i) The provision of clear and comprehensive information, using accessible formats in plain, everyday language.
- (ii) The provision of a clear application form that prompts people to provide all the relevant information.
- (iii) Access to interpreting services if necessary.
- (iv) An explanation about the process.
- (v) Advice about options and widening their areas of choice whilst ensuring that applicants are not simply steered towards areas of low demand, as well as advice about low cost home ownership and other options.

- 4.2.2 MHA recognises that many people from diverse communities refuse offers in areas with which they are not familiar, due to fear of isolation or harassment, and is committed to promoting inclusive communities by:

- (i) Taking effective action to tackle racial harassment, informing residents of the problem and the action that is being taken to eliminate it.

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- (ii) Demonstrating an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals and valuing diversity in communities.
- (iii) Ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds are supported in their new homes, providing appropriate advice and support.

5. Employment

5.1 This policy relates to employment matters affecting individuals and groups whether they are actual or potential employees of MHA.

5.2 Responsibilities

5.2.1 All employees and board members OF MHA share the responsibility to ensure that MHA's equal opportunities policy operates fairly and effectively.

5.2.2 Board Members are responsible for ensuring that MHA as an employer operates on a basis consistent with equal opportunity and diversity policies and best practice.

5.2.3 Managers are responsible for the operation and implementation of the policy in their teams.

5.2.4 The Chief Executive is responsible for securing consistent application of the policy between teams.

5.2.5 The HR Manager is responsible for regular monitoring of the operation of the policies.

5.3 Implementation – MHA will actively promote and implement HR practices, which help to eradicate the assumptions and stereotypes which are often at the root of unfair discrimination. The action taken will include the following areas:

(i) Recruitment and Selection

There will be continuous reviews of all procedures covering sources of recruitment, advertising material, job descriptions, application forms and selection methods to eliminate unfair discrimination (direct or indirect) and ensure that decisions are based on job related criteria.

(ii) Training

Appropriate training in equal opportunities is provided for all groups of employees. We are committed to ensuring that all employees have equal access to such training and will be monitoring this access.

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(iii) Conditions of Employment

There will be continuous reviews of all relevant policies on terms and conditions of employment to ensure fair application to all employees.

(iv) Monitoring

MHA will monitor by race, disability and gender, staff in post, applicants for employment, training and promotion. MHA will also monitor grievances, disciplinary action, staff who receive training and staff who leave MHA.

(v) Positive action

Where it is identified that certain groups are under-represented in MHA's workforce, MHA will consider a programme of positive action to address this.

Use will also be made as appropriate, of positive action statements on job advertisements to encourage under-represented groups to apply. All appointments will be made on merit.

(vi) Equal Pay

MHA is committed to the principles of equal pay, under the Equal Pay Act 1970.

6. Handling of complaints

- 6.1 MHA will not tolerate contraventions of its equal opportunities policy by any of its employees, board members, contractors or other agent working or delivering services on its behalf.
- 6.2 MHA also seeks to protect its employees from others (including service users and contractors) who are causing harassment. A Harassment Policy is in place to protect MHA's employees.
- 6.3 Employees who have a complaint about any aspect of their employment should use the grievance procedure applicable to them. Action against employees who contravene the policy will be taken in accordance with the appropriate disciplinary procedure.
- 6.4 Individuals who are not MHA employees and who have a complaint relating to employment matters within MHA's service should write to the HR Manager.
- 6.5 Complaints against Board Members will be investigated by the Chief Executive.