

CS017 - Equality and Diversity Policy and Action Plan

MONITORING FORM	
Department	Housing
Department Director	Operations
This policy is applicable to	Housing
Author	Housing Manager
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Date of review	
Period of Review	2yrs
Date of next review	April 2018
Internal /external consultees (if required).	

1 INTRODUCTION

Weslo believes that equality and diversity is about recognising differences, respecting each other as individuals and tailoring the services we offer to meet differing needs. We aim to promote an atmosphere where people are valued and respected and we are committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work. We will not tolerate any form of discrimination (either direct or indirect) and will challenge all acts of discrimination, prejudice, harassment and victimisation which occur within the workforce or within the communities in which we work.

We are committed to the promotion of equality and embrace diversity because we believe that this makes us stronger as an organisation.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on all social landlords to encourage equality of opportunity and to observe the equal opportunities requirements set out in Part II of Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998.

Equality and diversity is core to our business and we will ensure that this is reflected in all our policies practices and services.

2 SCOPE

A commitment to this policy is required from all staff, Board members and others with whom we may work (for example contractors, consultants, suppliers). We also expect the same commitment from all those who receive a service from us and will promote this policy in all our dealings with them.

3 PRINCIPLES

Weslo's Equality and Diversity Policy aims to:

- Be clear and understood by all employees
- Be fair and equitable and non-discriminatory
- Reflect the needs of our organisation
- Reflect statutory requirements and best practice
- Be flexible and adaptable to changing needs.

Weslo's commitment to ensuring equal treatment goes beyond compliance with legislation. We are committed to achieving equality for everyone by removing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, marital status, being a lesbian or a gay man, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds, which cannot be shown to be objectively justified in the circumstances.

4 OBJECTIVES

4.1 Our commitment as an employer

- Provide an environment in which everyone feels valued, respected and has their dignity maintained.
- Foster working environments where people are able to give their best and are free from discrimination, intimidation, harassment or bullying.
- Ensure that staff understand how valuing diversity can improve our ability to deliver better quality services and so reduce inequality.
- Provide fair access to learning and development opportunities, encouraging and supporting staff in fulfilling their potential.
- Have an effective communication strategy that involves and communicates actively with all members of staff.
- Provide all staff with the training and development they need to enable them to achieve the organisation's goals in line with equality and diversity.
- Provide support to any member of staff who may experience any form of discrimination whilst at work and take appropriate action against the perpetrators of harassment, victimisation or discrimination.
- Ensure that our employment practices are non-discriminatory and support staff with specific religious or cultural beliefs, or who need specific assistance to overcome disabilities to fulfil their requirements as far as reasonably possible.
- Review our policies regularly to ensure they are fair and reflect best practice.

4.2 Our commitment as a landlord

- Deliver services, facilities and resources that are accessible, relevant and of use to every individual in the communities in which we work.
- Understand better who our customers are so that we are able to provide appropriate services that are accessible to all people within the communities we serve.
- Be mindful that people are different and take account of these differences in the way in which we help and advise our customers.
- Provide clear, meaningful information about Weslo services in ways that are accessible and meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- Promote our housing and services to a range of different communities.
- Work with partners in consulting with all sections of the community on service needs and provisions.

5 ABOUT OUR TENANTS

During 2008, we undertook a Tenant Census to collect detailed personal information from our tenants to allow us to tailor our services to meet individual tenant needs. To date, we have collected 81.5% of our tenants' data (1884 forms have been completed) and our plan is to collect 100% by the end of 2009.

The returned data from the Tenant Census told us:

- 71% are Scottish
- 15% are White British
- 14% not specified or other
- 19% have mobility issue
- 14% have medical condition

6 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EMBEDDING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

If we are to be successful in embedding an inclusive and supportive approach in all of our activities, all members of staff must take responsibility for making a positive contribution towards this aim.

The table below outlines overall key areas of responsibility:

Postholder Category	Responsibilities
Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that policy is applied across Weslo • To ensure compliance with equality legislation • To refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and Weslo's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity.
Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be led by the Operations Director on equality and diversity issues • To take corporate responsibility • To communicate the importance of equality and diversity • To support Managers in equality activities • To refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and Weslo's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity • To ensure that tenants, contractors and partner organisations are made aware of Weslo's Equality and Diversity Policy and our expectations of them in supporting our approach. • To ensure that policy is applied across Weslo • To ensure compliance with equality legislation
Equalities Action Plan Focus Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote and lead on equality and diversity objectives • To provide equality and diversity information to assist in the delivery of Weslo's Equalities Action Plan • To refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and Weslo's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity.
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce all new employees and Board members to Weslo's Equality and Diversity Policy via their induction • To ensure agreed programmes of equality and diversity training are properly implemented • To ensure that the policy is available on Weslo's intranet and web pages • To ensure any new legislation or updates/amendments to existing legislation are implemented and communicated as they come into force.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate the importance of adherence to the Equality and Diversity Policy • To promote equality of opportunity for staff members • To ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to reach their full potential • To use appropriate measures to address inequality • To consult actively with different individuals and

	<p>communities to ensure that the service which are provided are responsive and reflect the diversity of need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor and review services in line with equality standards • To implement, monitor and review equality and diversity action plans • To ensure that staff are fully trained to perform their roles and that staff are released to attend mandatory programmes of training on equality and diversity • To refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and Weslo's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure equality and diversity within Weslo and ensure that their actions do not contribute to unfair or discriminatory treatment of others • To support colleagues who may be experiencing unfair or discriminatory treatment through bringing this to the attention of their line manager and/or by encouraging the recipient to take appropriate action • To challenge unacceptable behaviour and/or work practice where these are identified. • To refresh their knowledge of their responsibilities in relation to equality legislation and Weslo's approach to ensuring equality of opportunity • All members of staff must take responsibility for making a positive contribution towards achieving the aims and objectives of this policy.

7 POLICY AVAILABILITY

The policy is available on Weslo's website and intranet. A summary of this policy can be made available in a number of other languages and other forms if required.

8 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

We will monitor and review the policy as part of a programme of continuous improvement.

	OBJECTIVES	COMPLETED BY	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOME / MEASURE OF SUCCESS	TASKS NEEDED (ACTION BY)
1.	Compile a database of equalities information about existing customers – race, sex, age and disabilities	March 2010	Mike Crozier/ Dave McLaren	Completion of analysis. Provision of report recommending strategy	Include equalities issues in next Census and Tenants' Survey. Analyse results. Publicise results through Weslo.
2.	Promote Equalities Plan through Tenants' newsletter.	Ongoing	June Harper	Include 2 articles per year	Write articles in newsletter.
3.	Investigate potential to use a "flagging" system to identify special needs of tenants e.g. large print, translated documents, induction loop requirements.	March 2010	Mike Crozier	Set up system and publicise to customers	Research IT system requirements. Set up system. Train staff. Advertise the service. Contact tenants to establish if they wish assistance. Ensure any issues are picked up with new tenants.
4.	Achieve 100% of all aids and adaptations requests.	Ongoing annually	Mike Crozier/ Dave McLaren	No waiting list for aids & adaptations	Advertise availability of service. Bid to Communities Scotland for funding. Monitor & evaluate outcomes – customer satisfaction. Publicise results.
5.	Set up and maintain contact with special needs representative groups in West Lothian and Bo'ness.	Ongoing	Dave McLaren	Annual meeting with representative group to discuss current and ongoing issues.	Contact to be made with ABE and Advice shop. Publicise outcomes.

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6.	Improve quality of information to customers on website, letters, leaflets etc.	March 2010	Mike Crozier/ Alison Dunsmore	Improvement in customer satisfaction	Circulate information to advisory group. Circulate information to Tenant Participation Committee. Monitor and evaluate responses. Publicise results