

KEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

POLICY REGISTER

ITEM A11

POLICY: Equal Opportunities

First approved:	March 1994
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This policy is reviewed annually
at the January meeting of Management Committee

KEY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

KEY is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination, direct and indirect, in its employment practices, in its housing management, service provision and contracting functions, and in its membership policy.

The main purpose in producing this policy is to seek to ensure that no employee or job applicant, tenant or housing applicant, service user or member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex (including gender re-assignment), marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, colour, race, nationality, or ethnic or national origins (hereafter referred to as the relevant areas). KEY seeks to ensure that the policies and procedures adopted in relation to employment, service provision (housing and support), contracting and membership allow people to be afforded equal opportunity in the way they are treated by KEY.

IN EMPLOYMENT

KEY seeks to ensure that all applicants for employment are selected, and all employees are promoted, solely on the basis of their ability to perform the jobs in question and that, so far as the needs of KEY permit, all employees are given equal opportunities in training and advancement.

KEY will seek to develop an effective positive programme of action to ensure that all members of staff (full- or part-time) and all applicants for employment, will be given equal opportunity in all aspects of employment and training.

Monitoring

The object of monitoring is to check that at every point where decisions are made about individuals, their appointment, promotion, training, treatment, remuneration, hours and other conditions, there is no incidence of:

- prejudice concerning the relevant areas which is influencing decisions.
- indirect discrimination e.g. in the form of non-essential age limits, qualifications criteria or other practices which effectively discriminate in the relevant areas.

KEY will implement the following guidelines, and undertake monitoring in the following areas:

1. Advertising

- 1.1 Advertisements will be aimed at as wide a group of suitably qualified and experienced people as possible.
- 1.2 Applicants shall be given clear, concise and accurate information about posts to enable them to assess their own suitability.

- 1.3 Advertisements will state that KEY operates an Equal Opportunities Policy and will forward a copy of the policy statement to applicants.

2. Selection

- 2.1 The interview panel will be clearly informed and agreed on the selection criteria or personnel specification before any interview is conducted, and will apply these criteria consistently.
- 2.2 To reduce the effects of interviewer bias and to improve the general standard of interviewing, KEY will endeavour to provide training where necessary in interviewing for all those who have to conduct selection interviews. This training would cover interviewing techniques, practice interviews, legal aspects with particular reference to discrimination law, and known areas of recruiter bias other than those covered by law.
- 2.3 The interview panel shall be given guidance and training on the effect that generalised assumptions and prejudices can have on selection decisions.
- 2.4 The application form will only include relevant questions relating to the necessary requirements for the job.

A separate form will include questions concerning, sex, ethnic origin, etc. for monitoring purposes only, and an explanation will be included as to why this information would be helpful.

- 2.5 Interviews shall be thorough, conducted on an objective basis and deal only with the applicants' suitability for the job and ability to fulfil the job requirements. During the interview, care shall be taken to avoid questions which could be construed as discriminatory. Where it is necessary to assess whether personal circumstances will affect performance of job, (e.g. where it includes unsocial hours or extensive travel) this should be discussed objectively avoiding assumptions about marital status, children and domestic obligations.

3. Recruitment

- 3.1 There will be clear, concisely written and up to date job descriptions. Job titles will not be sex biased and will accurately reflect the duties of the position.
- 3.2 The level of qualifications demanded shall not exceed the real needs of the job, and unnecessary job criteria in the personnel specification shall be avoided.
- 3.3 Job requirements shall be necessary for the proper carrying out of the duties and not a reflection of traditional practices which may be operating in a discriminatory way in the relevant areas.
- 3.4 For each vacant post in addition to an accurate Job Description, a Personnel Specification will be drawn up to indicate the essential and desirable characteristics of the ideal candidate.

4. Staff Training

- 4.1 It is KEY's policy that it will not discriminate in the provision of training courses. Appropriate training within resource constraints shall be provided to enable staff to perform their jobs effectively. Procedures relating to staff training shall be made available equally to all staff.
- 4.2 There shall be no discrimination against part-time workers. Conditions of service will apply equally on a pro-rata basis.

5. Victimisation and Harassment

KEY will deal with complaints of victimisation or harassment sensitively under the organisation's internal grievance procedure. Alternatively an employee may wish to approach KEY's Head of HR in the first instance.

6. Redundancy, Discipline, Dismissal

- 6.1 KEY will not discriminate in the relevant areas in the application of disciplinary action or in the selection of employees for redundancy and dismissal.
- 6.2 KEY will monitor the number and category of people terminating their employment to establish why they are leaving.

An abbreviated version of KEY's Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy Statement, containing guidance notes, will be made available for use by external members of the interview panel.

AS SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDER

KEY strives to provide individualised support arrangements for adult people with disabilities, and to provide appropriate support to individuals regardless of their status in the relevant areas

All aspects of KEY's support seek to promote and value the individual. Inherent within this approach is a value base which at all times strives to recognise and value positive relationships and images for all individuals. This is promoted in the following ways:

In the *development of individualised support arrangements* which are tailored to individual wishes and needs. This will seek to ensure arrangements fall within an anti-discriminatory framework. In addition, at all times, the provision and delivery of support will seek to actively promote positive relationships and images to all individuals regardless of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, age or sexual orientation.

The *recruitment and selection of supporters* will be carried out through a recruitment process within the framework of KEY's equal opportunities in recruitment policies.

KEY seeks to ensure that a full *induction of new supporters* is carried out. A central aspect of this induction is training in values and attitudes which incorporates training in anti-discrimination awareness.

These aspects are further developed and encouraged through both an *ongoing training and staff development programme* and through the provision of *regular developmental supervision* of support staff. Training, as provided by KEY, includes specific courses on such core values/attitudes and the practical implementation of an equal opportunities framework in recruitment and the provision of support.

An anti-discriminatory ethos of working is also promoted through *guidance, procedural and practice material* made available to employees which at all times is based on an individualised and anti-discriminatory value base.

All arrangements are *actively reviewed* on a regular basis. An inherent component of these reviews is the ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of KEY's anti-discriminatory stance in the provision of support.

AS LANDLORD

KEY is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities in relation to access to its accommodation, and that no nominee or applicant for accommodation receives less favourable treatment due their status in the relevant areas.

For accommodation let to people who are receiving support funded wholly or partly by the local authority, and where referrals are made by the local authority, KEY strives to ensure that its officers who are involved in the allocation process receive appropriate training in Equal Opportunities, and that nominating local authorities operate appropriate equal opportunity policies.

For unsupported tenancy allocations, KEY receives referrals from local authorities, and does not keep a waiting list (due to the small scale and dispersed nature of the housing stock). KEY seeks to ensure that nominating local authorities operate appropriate equal opportunity policies. KEY will also require that agencies with which there is a leasing or management agreement operate appropriate equal opportunity policies.

KEY will monitor applications, nominations and allocations on a gender and ethnic origin basis, with the Board receiving an annual report.

KEY seeks to develop good practice in promoting equal opportunities in its estate management, and in its managing of tenancies. KEY has a policy on harassment (including racial harassment), and has included in its tenancy agreements the requirement of tenants not to harass neighbours and staff on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, etc.

IN CONTRACTING

KEY requires those acting on its behalf, such as contractors and consultants, to ensure that they comply with the law, and do not act in a discriminatory way.

KEY's equal opportunities policy shall be clearly communicated to contractors and consultants.

KEY will seek to ensure that contractors and consultants invited to tender for work operate an appropriate equal opportunities policy covering service provision and employment matters, or are prepared to adopt and comply with KEY's own equal opportunities policy and procedures.

The following action will be taken to comply with these requirements.

1. Maintenance Contractors

All contractors will be expected to confirm in writing that either they operate an appropriate equal opportunities policy or that they will conform with KEY's own equal opportunities policy, details of which will be supplied to them.

2. Building Contractors

Building contractors will be informed, through the preliminaries section of the Bills of Quantities, of KEY's expectation that either they operate an appropriate equal opportunities policy or that they will conform with KEY's own equal opportunities policy, details of which will be supplied to them on request.

Prior to acceptance of a tender the Contractor will be expected to confirm compliance in writing.

3. Consultants

Consultants will be informed at the time of their appointment, in writing, as for building contractors.

Ratification of the appointment will be conditional on receipt of written confirmation of their compliance.

MEMBERSHIP

KEY has a membership policy that seeks to encourage a wide representation in KEY's membership of those that KEY serves. The policy and practice is particularly aimed at reducing barriers to people with disabilities to become members and participate in KEY through this.

KEY should have no barriers to access to membership, and shall seek to ensure that no applicant for membership receives less favourable treatment due to their status in the relevant areas provided the applicant has an interest in the work of KEY, including, and in particular, people who receive a support and / or housing service from KEY, directly or indirectly (through Community Lifestyles).

