Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative

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EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Policy Statement

Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative recognises that groups and individuals have suffered, and continue to suffer from discrimination, that is direct [whether intentional or unintentional], indirect and institutionalised.

We recognise the need for equality of opportunity and the management of diversity in all aspects of our operations including the provision of housing and employment. It is our intention to ensure that nobody receives less favourable treatment from us or agents acting on our behalf on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

In working to eliminate discrimination, unfairness, inequality and disadvantage we will take practical action developing initiatives and interventions to promote and value diversity at all levels of the organisation. As an organisation we actively recognise and manage diversity in the workplace in a strategic way, looking at innovative ways of changing the organisational culture and empowering the workforce.

However, because of the nature of Phoenix's housing, mostly shared and includes some short-life properties, the Co-operative is unable to house those who have medical conditions or disabilities that require more than minimum adaptations or a higher than usual standard of space, heating and insulation. Also, because most of Phoenix's housing is shared and includes some short-life properties, we are usually unable to house applicants whom we consider will need additional care and support to manage independent accommodation. Applicants will be signposted to other organisations if Phoenix is unable to help them.

As all forms of discrimination and harassment are totally unacceptable to us in our role as housing provider and employer, we have adopted the following Equality and Diversity policy which must be read in tandem with other relevant policies. We seek to value diversity by going beyond just complying with the law and fighting discrimination, but also promoting Equality and Diversity.

We will ensure that all our staff and members of the Management Committee and its sub-committees are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the promotion of equal opportunities and valuing diversity, that they are properly equipped to take account of the different and special needs of particular groups and thus make provision for those groups working positively towards the overall goal of the organisation.

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Registered with the Housing Corporation as a housing association. Registration No. C3556. Member of the National Federation of Housing Associations.

Policy

Legislation and best practice

Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative believes that it is essential to eliminate discrimination and to promote good relations, equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in all areas of our operations. We accept and endorse our legal responsibilities as laid out in the Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to being an equal opportunities organisation which values diversity and to the following practices:

- In the employment of staff and provision of services we will seek to actively promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity.
- No person or groups of people applying for employment or housing with Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative, or serving on our Management Committee or its sub-committees, will be treated less favourably because of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative is committed to:

- Ensuring that issues of equal opportunities and valuing diversity are considered and included in all policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that any person who applies for housing or any person or organisation which uses our services or approaches us for assistance receives equal treatment.

Allocations & lettings

- Ensuring that all property is let strictly in accordance with the co-operative's allocations policy.

Training and Development

- Ensuring that all training for members and staff includes equal opportunities training, diversity training and valuing diversity training.
- Ensuring that equality and diversity issues are covered as part of the induction programme for all new members of staff.
- Ensuring that any staff and Management Committee members involved in recruitment have satisfactorily attended and completed training in equality and diversity issues in relation to recruitment and, recruitment policy and practice.
- Ensuring that all staff, Management Committee and sub-committee members are given training on equal opportunities issues, diversity, diversity awareness and diversity management.
- Ensuring good employment and staff management practices are adopted which promote the ownership and understanding of diversity throughout the organisation.

External Organisations

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- Ensuring that contractors, consultants and other bodies who work for us are committed to equal opportunities and valuing diversity.
- Ensuring that ethnic minority groups, people with disabilities and other groups who are under represented on our list of approved contractors are encouraged to become approved contractors.

Discrimination

- Ensuring that staff, Management Committee, sub-committees and all members are aware that the use of sexist, racist, homophobic, ableist or ageist language, as well as general derogatory comments about a person's physical appearance, is unacceptable and the use of such language will be considered a disciplinary offence for staff and a breach of the code of conduct for Management Committee and sub-committee members and members of the cooperative.
- That we will not discriminate in favour of or against a particular ethnic group or in favour of or against gender except where this is permitted as a genuine occupational qualification as it is introduced as a single 'occupational requirement', which applies to all of the protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010.

Complaints

- Complaints concerning breaches of the co-operative's commitment to equality and diversity will be treated seriously by the co-operative and properly investigated and reported to the Management Committee.
- Members of staff should use the grievance procedure contained within their contract of employment to raise any complaints.
- Tenants and members of the general public (including applicants for employment) should raise their complaints using the co-operative's formal complaints procedures.
- Tenants who have suffered from bullying, victimisation or harassment should use the co-operative's harassment policy to ensure that the matter is thoroughly and promptly dealt with.

Monitoring and auditing

- Procedures and practices throughout Phoenix Community Housing Co-operative are regularly reviewed to ensure that no group is put at a disadvantage and/or treated less favourably, either directly or indirectly (intentional or unintentional), deliberately or inadvertently.
- The Management Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented. This policy will be reviewed periodically (at least every three years) following consultation with staff and the co-operative's membership on proposed changes.
- To aid us in the process, we will collect appropriate data in order to monitor the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy in the following areas:

    - People applying for, short listed for and appointed to employment vacancies.
    - Those on our waiting list for housing.
    - Those members housed by us.
    - Members of the Management Committee.
    - Those organisations providing services to us, such as contractors, suppliers, consultants and other bodies.

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Appropriate monitoring reports will be submitted to the Management Committee annually. Data will be monitored against appropriate comparison data – such as but not exclusively restricted to, census data, ethnic profile information of local authority waiting lists etc. The Management Committee will review the monitoring data and set targets for improvement as appropriate. The findings of the monitoring will indicate the extent to which our equality and diversity policy is being achieved and if our claim to diversity holds true.

Much of the Equality and Diversity monitoring data that may be collected will be classified as "sensitive personal data" under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. The co-operative will ensure such data is handled in compliance with the provisions of the Act.

Policy Reviewed on November 14th 2022

Adopted by Management Committee on 30th November 2022