

Equality and Diversity

- Religion, Faith and Belief Policy



Religion, Faith and Belief Policy

Purpose

We aim for excellence by positive engagement with people from all religions, faiths and beliefs. In this way we will make the most of the potential of the individual and so benefit the organisation and local communities. We welcome comments and ideas for improvement.

Introduction

Our Stardust Strategy describes how we deal with our customers, staff and partners. Our values are *Openness, Honesty, Reliability, Respect, Innovation, Empowerment and Professionalism*. These values are the basis of our Equality and Diversity Policy. We also have a Code of Conduct which describes the detailed behaviour that applies to all our staff.

This policy is part of a collection of policies that describe how we operate. This policy sits within our overall Equality and Diversity Policy which includes specific policies relating to Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Religion, Faith and Belief. Other related policies include our Customer Care Policy, and our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy which looks at the responsibilities of our customers.

The Religion, Faith and Belief Policy describes the specific actions we are taking to tackle intolerance on the grounds of religion, faith and belief. In doing this we will work with our customers and staff of diverse religions, faiths and beliefs.

Principles

Diversity is important to all our services and we actively support cohesive communities. The Audit Commission, within its 2005 inspection report stated:

“Whitefriars Housing Group is clearly committed to recognising and promoting diversity, to ensuring that its services address a wide range of needs and are free from discrimination, and that staff are well trained and supported to do this.”

We will seek to continuously improve our services, whilst continuing to comply with legislation and regulatory requirements.

We will review the content of this policy every three years.

Consultation

This policy has been written in consultation with customers, staff and community representatives including Age Concern, the West Indian Community Association, a representative of faith groups within the City, the Council of Disabled People, Terrence Higgins Trust, Coventry Refugee Centre, Coventry Domestic Violence Partnership and Coventry Youth Council. We would seek to widen this group and welcome new people and groups to the Equality and Diversity Champions Group.

Expected Outcomes

- We expect to focus on and learn from the diverse and specific needs of people of all religions, faiths and beliefs
- We expect to contribute to the improvement in the life chances and experiences of people of diverse religions, faiths and beliefs in the delivery of our services
- We will assess the impact of our performance against this policy and publish the results in Home, which is our customer magazine, and on our website.

Policy

The substance of this policy states that we will treat people according to merit. We will seek to make the most of the positive contribution that people can make to Whitefriars by using the skills and knowledge that each individual possesses.

We have a duty of care to our customers and staff. We will evaluate the impact of our performance on people of diverse religions, faiths and beliefs.

We will operate the policy taking account of best practice, statutory obligations and the needs of the business relating to religion, faith and belief.

The application of the policy is the responsibility of every person within Whitefriars. Review of the content and overall implementation will be the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Manager.

Within this policy we will:

For Customers

- Seek to consult with the appropriate interest groups to make sure our services are appropriate to the needs of our customers from diverse religions, faiths and beliefs
- Take into account the specific requirements of people from different religions, faiths or beliefs in delivering our services
- Take account of the needs of customers from diverse religions, faiths and beliefs when developing and improving our homes
- Tackle prejudice and assumptions on the grounds of religion, faith or belief
- Support our customers of all religions, faiths and beliefs who experience hate crime, harassment, domestic violence or any other forms of abuse. This may take the form of emotional, financial, mental, physical, psychological, sexual or verbal abuse.

For Staff

- Value, empower and provide training and development opportunities irrespective of religion, faith or belief
- Review our flexible working arrangements to take account of the diverse needs of our staff
- Continue to develop our Modern Apprentice Scheme to encourage young people from diverse religions, faiths or beliefs to join our organisation, and ensure a positive introduction to their employment with Whitefriars
- Tackle prejudice and assumptions on the grounds of religion, faith or belief
- Support our staff of all religions, faiths or beliefs who experience hate crime, harassment, domestic violence or any other forms of abuse. This may take the form of emotional, financial, mental, physical, psychological, sexual or verbal abuse.

For Communities

- Develop a relationship through the Equality and Diversity Champions Group with people and organisations that represent diverse religions, faiths and beliefs within Coventry
- Work with our partners and communities to tackle hate crime
- Work with our contractors, consultants and suppliers to make sure that they meet our requirements on staffing, customer satisfaction and harassment regarding matters of religion, faith and belief
- Work with our partners to make sure that community regeneration and community development help to achieve the full potential of local communities and local areas
- Throughout our governance and customer activities seek to engage with all sectors of the community to ensure their views are taken into account within our work.

Implementation

The policy will operate in all parts of the organisation and will be effective from the date of its agreement by our governing board.

We will make the following resources available for the successful operation of this policy. They are:

- Direction from the Equality and Diversity Manager
- Monitoring of progress by the Equality and Diversity Champions Group
- Training of our staff on new approaches
- Feedback from our customers and staff

Measurement and Review

This policy reflects the views of our Equality and Diversity Champions Group. Our progress on the actions in this policy will be reviewed by the Champions Group. Members of the group include customers, staff and community representatives including Age Concern, the West Indian Community Association, a representative of faith groups within the City, the Council of Disabled People, Terrence Higgins Trust, Coventry Refugee Centre, Coventry Domestic Violence Partnership and Coventry Youth Council.

We will report to our governing board once a year on our progress.

If you would like to contribute to the development of this policy or to become a member of the Equality and Diversity Champions Group, please contact:

Equality and Diversity Manager
Whitefriars Housing Group
9 Little Park Street
Coventry CV1 2UR
Tel 024 7676 7099
Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk

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 024 7676 7000

Whitefriars Housing Group Ltd

9 Little Park Street, Coventry, CV1 2UR

Web www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk Email info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk

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