

1. Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Policy (EDI Policy)

2. Reference Number 4.1

3. Statement of intent including cross-reference to bdht's corporate objectives

3.1 The aim of bdht's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy is to: *Reduce inequalities, promote respect, and create an equitable culture within our organisation.* The strategy and this policy reflect our commitment to creating a fair, inclusive, and respectful environment for everyone at bdht. It seeks to remove barriers faced by marginalised groups, whether they are current or future employees, customers, or communities.

3.2 The EDI policy will help to achieve the following corporate objectives:

- Be an Excellent Landlord
- Be an Excellent Employer
- Build & Support Viable & Vibrant Communities

3.3 In addition to the corporate objectives this policy will help deliver the EDI strategies three objectives:

- EDI in Governance & Partnerships
- Inclusive Services, Homes & Communities
- Be an Inclusive Employer

3.4 This policy encompasses all the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment.

In addition to the above legally defined protected characteristics this policy will also give consideration to socio-economic and caring background. Additionally, it aims to address the impact of intersectionality.

- 3.5 We recognise that different people and communities have varying needs, which may require us to offer a range of services to meet these diverse requirements.
- 3.6 This policy outlines our dedication to promoting and practicing equality and diversity, as well as addressing any form of discrimination or harassment. It also details how the policy will be implemented and monitored to achieve these goals.
- 3.7 The following definitions have been used in the formulation of this policy:

Equality: Ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity and is not treated differently or discriminated against based on their characteristics.

Equity: Providing individuals with what they need to ensure fairness. This involves giving more to those who need it, proportionate to their circumstances, to ensure everyone has the same opportunities. For example, offering additional support to a vulnerable tenant.

Diversity: Recognising and valuing the differences between people and groups.

Inclusion: Actively striving to meet the needs of different individuals and taking deliberate actions to create environments where everyone feels respected and can achieve their full potential.

4. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 4.1 The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect individuals and promote equality, the act broadly covers five areas:
- Defines protected characteristics.
 - Sets out types of discrimination.
 - Places a public sector equality duty.
 - Combines previous legislation into one single act.
 - Sets out the scope of the duties such as in employment, education etc.

4.3 Regulator of Social Housing

- 4.3.1 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) introduced the consumer regulatory standards, following the social housing white paper. The Regulator aims to drive improvements in the sector, particularly in the services offered to residents

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4.3.2 Housing associations are expected to understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard outlines that Registered Providers should:

- “Treat all tenants with fairness and respect”
- “Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs”.

5. Policy Statement

5.1 Overall Policy Aims

5.1.1 Our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity is a core component to our corporate mission and values. We will ensure that we:

- Offer access to Board membership, employment, contracts, homes and services to all members of the community.
- Deliver a high standard of service to our customers, understand and respond to individual needs.
- Design and develop our services to meet the diverse needs of all our customers.
- Encourage all communities to take part in decision-making and developing services through resident input and partnerships.
- Develop a culture that values diverse opinions, feedback and life experiences.
- Protect residents, service users, customers, Board members, employees and service providers from bullying, harassment, victimisation and unfair treatment.

5.2 Key Objectives

5.2.1 The main objective of this policy is to ensure that we become and remain an inclusive organisation, by promoting fairness and implementing best practice in all of our strategies, policies, practices and operational plans.

5.3 Be an Inclusive Employer

5.3.1 Our desire to meet diverse needs is achieved by having an Organisation that reflects diversity and has the skills and understanding to achieve our corporate, strategic and operational objectives.

We will:

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- Not unlawfully discriminate against any staff, agency workers or contractors working on behalf of bdht.
- Provide a psychologically safe working environment that celebrates difference.
- We will look to utilise appropriate advertising media to reach underrepresented groups within the community.
- Ensure that our recruitment and selection policies and procedures are non-discriminatory.
- Ensure that unlawful discrimination does not occur in terms and conditions of employment, learning and development opportunities, promotion and other benefits, and in achieving a work life balance.
- Provide job details on request in appropriate formats.
- Accept job applications in appropriate formats such as large print and audio and making arrangements for the use of signers or interpreters if required in the selection process.
- Keep records of applicants and employees' EDI data to ensure that this policy is operating properly.
- Only ask for relevant criteria in person specifications.
- Make reasonable adjustments for applicants, candidates and employees in respect of disability, and where possible, other personal needs.
- Provide appropriate training to those conducting job interviews.
- Develop an organisational culture which values people from different communities and supports the contribution each individual can make.
- Promote this policy and the requirement of all staff in relation to equality and diversity within the staff induction process.
- Ensure that any temporary or agency staff are aware of this policy and relevant procedures so that they can comply with them.
- Specifically address disability issues in accordance with the Employment Service "positive about disabled people scheme"
- Ensure that staff are provided with appropriate tools, training and culture so they feel able to discuss EDI issues and raise any concerns.
- Ensure that harassment, bullying or victimisation of Board members, employees, service providers, customers or residents is not tolerated in any circumstances. We will take appropriate action against anyone who behaves in any such manner. Claims will be speedily and fully investigated in accordance with bdht's Dignity at Work Policy.

5.4 Inclusive Services, Homes & Communities

- 5.4.1 We recognise that in order to deliver excellent customer service we must understand who our customers are, their needs and be able to deliver flexible services around those diverse needs.

We will:

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- Have fully accessible customer contact points that meet the requirements of the Equality Act.
- Ensure that information is accessible including large print and other formats as required.
- Interpretation and translation services are provided to remove communication barriers.
- Home visits for housebound or vulnerable residents where requested.
- Maintain up to date information on the diversity of our customers and their needs.
- Ensure that this information is available for staff to use in strategy and policy formulation as well as in frontline service delivery.
- Use Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) to identify where projects, policies or strategies could discriminate. Use these findings from EIAs to amend policies, procedures, strategies etc.
- Use Customer Insight to highlight vulnerable groups, ensuring appropriate services are targeted toward these groups.
- Staff who are well-trained to deal with the diverse needs of customers.
- Undertake Access to services analysis and use this to remove barriers.
- Ensure we provide homes that are accessible, this will be assisted by the OT service and Aids & Adaptations services at the Local Authority.
- We will work with Partner Agencies to tackle hate crime; this will be dealt with under the Hate Crime Policy.
- The maintenance of a register of properties adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Whenever possible, we will let adapted properties to applicants who have a need for this type of accommodation.

5.9 EDI in Governance & Partnerships

5.9.1 **Governance** - The bdht Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that progress against equality and diversity targets are met. It is important that Board members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to ensure effective scrutiny.

- Ensure that the selection and appointment process is fair and transparent.
- Test potential Board members understanding and commitment to the principles of equality and diversity.
- Provide equality and diversity training for all Board members.
- Include equality and diversity as a key component of the Board member induction process.
- Monitor Board membership against the local community profile (last Census data) and identify any barriers to recruitment from particular groups.
- Where barriers are identified actions will be implemented to remove the barrier.
- Encourage under-represented groups to apply when vacancies occur.

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- Ensure that bdht's commitment to EDI is strongly publicised in all external media, paying particular attention to bdht websites, including the careers site, and recruitment media.

5.9.1 Partnerships - We procure a number of services from private companies, public sector and voluntary sector organisations. We recognise that we have a responsibility to ensure that the services and goods provided by suppliers on our behalf are of a high quality, do not discriminate, and promote equality of opportunity. To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure that all contractors agree to work in accordance with this policy.
- Include appropriate terms and conditions for contracts to ensure that our equality commitments and legal duties will be met by suppliers.
- Work with suppliers to ensure that the services and functions they are delivering on our behalf meet our equality commitments, legal duties and are consistent with our approach to equality.

6. Summary of Service Standards

6.1 All service delivery policies are accompanied by a Service Standard. Service standards include specific standards ensuring all customers can access services and information.

7 Priorities

7.1 It is essential for the effectiveness of this policy, that all stages are given equal priority.

8 Policy Implementation

8.1 The Board will take responsibility for ensuring that EDI is considered and included in making decisions.

8.2 The Board has appointed an EDI Champion, and the Executive has nominated the Housing & Communities Director as their Champion. These Champions will ensure strategic oversight, and that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) receive the necessary importance at a strategic level within the organisation.

8.3 Members of the bdht EDI Group will champion equality and diversity within the Organisation.

8.4 It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that their work is carried out in line with this policy and any related procedures.

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- 8.6 **Training** - bdht will ensure that all staff receive appropriate equality and diversity training to ensure that they can deliver the requirements of this policy and supporting policies, procedures and service standards. Each member of staff will undertake EDI training on a 3 yearly basis, this will be mandatory and any refusal/failure to attend without good reason would follow bdht's disciplinary process.

Monitoring of the policy - The effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored by the Governance & Remuneration Committee twice a year and annually by Board.

9 Links to associated external Documents

- [Guidance for employers about their rights under the Equality Act 2010.](#)
- [Guidance for service providers about their duties under the Equality Act 2010.](#)

10 Link to associated internal Documents

- Asset Management Strategy
- Equipment & Adaptation Policy
- ASB Policy
- Allocation & Tenancy Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Customer Care & Access to Services Policy
- Resident Involvement Policy

11 Approval was gained

- 11.1 EMT approved the policy on 30th April 2009 and was updated in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015 to take into account regulatory and legislative changes.
- 11.2 The Board Approved the policy on October 2019, October 2022 and again in May 2025.

12 Review Date

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed in May 2028

13 Responsibility for implementing the policy

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- 13.1 The Director of Housing & Communities, Head of People & Head of Customer Experience are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

14 Equality Policy Statement

- 14.1 At bdht, we are proud to serve and work within a diverse society. We recognise that some individuals and communities face systemic barriers, disadvantage, and discrimination, including those related to socio-economic background, caring responsibilities, and the impact of intersectionality.
- 14.2 We believe that discrimination in any form is unacceptable. In all our areas of work we are committed to ensuring that our policies, practices, and services promote fairness, equity, and respect for all. We aim to reduce inequalities, promote respect, and create an equitable culture within our organisation.
- 14.3 bdht fully complies with the Equality Act 2010 and all relevant statutory and regulatory guidance, including that issued by the Regulator of Social Housing, Homes England, the Government Equalities Office, and our funding partners.
- 14.4 We believe that equality of opportunity is fundamental to delivering excellent services and building vibrant communities together. Our commitment is underpinned by clear policies, regular monitoring, and continuous review, all of which are actively supported by our Board and Teams.

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