

<b>Policy name:</b>  <b>Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</b>	<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>01/Mar/ 2009</b>
	<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>21/May/ 2009</b>
	<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>21 May 2012</b>
	<b>Policy author:</b>	<b>Kamaran Rasheed</b>
	<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Operational Management Team</b>

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Policy meets the requirements of the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code Section 2.7 which states that Housing Associations must demonstrate, when carrying out all their functions, their commitment to Equal Opportunities. They must work towards the elimination all discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- 1.2 This policy also meets the requirements of the Audit Commission's Key Line of Enquiry (KLoE) on Equality & Diversity. KLoE documents are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services.

## **2. Policy Aims & Objectives**

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to set out how A2Dominion (Group), will achieve its statutory responsibility and its commitment to equal opportunities for all residents and staff, treating others fairly and without discrimination regardless of their Age, Religion, Gender, Disability, Sexuality or Ethnicity.
- 2.2 There are three core equality statutory duties that we aim to comply with. These are the Race Equality Duty (implemented in April 2001), Disability Equality Duty (implemented in December 2006) and Gender Equality Duty (implemented in April 2007). Our commitment however goes beyond, race, disability and gender and will include people as diverse as a result of faith and religion, age and sexuality.
- 2.3 In addition to fulfilling our statutory responsibility, the Group will support our commitment by providing a framework of continuous improvement which meets regulatory and best practice guidance. The policy covers procedures and other initiatives such as our Equality & Diversity Strategy, Equality & Diversity Action Plan, Single Equality Scheme and Equality Impact Assessments which have been

established to ensure that the Group and staff monitor and measure our performance and participate fully in eliminating discrimination.

### 3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 A2Dominion Group (A2D), partners, stakeholders and contractors are committed to providing equal treatment and opportunity in access to housing, provision of services and access to employment. We recognise and respect diversity and aim to embrace principles and practices in service delivery across the range of our activities that promote equality and are relevant to the diverse needs of the communities in which we work.

### 4. Implementation

The Group has a set of values under the acronym **DRIVE** which support and underpin all our activity:

#### **D** eliver

We will take ownership of our work and deliver what we promise: high quality homes, excellent customer services and strong business results.

#### **R** espond

We will listen to our customers and partners, understand their needs, and respond effectively in order to improve their homes and communities.

#### **I** nnovate

We will seize opportunities to develop innovative services that lead the sector. We will be flexible in our approach to new ideas and welcome positive change.

#### **V** alue diversity

We will embrace the diversity of our employees, customers and their communities, and the benefits they bring to our organisation.

#### **E** nterprise

We will be commercially oriented and competitive to support our business objectives.

Under this acronym (V) it states that we will embrace the diversity of our employees, customers and their communities and the benefits that they bring to our organisation. The group therefore has a commitment that it:

- develops services to achieve equality and diversity in all its activities
- is strongly opposed to any form of discrimination whether this involves staff who work on behalf of the Group or users of its services
- strives to have a workforce reflecting the area in which the organisation is based

- understands how valuing diversity can improve its ability to deliver better services
- actively consults with all its customers and agents to ensure the delivery of our goals
- provides all employees with the training and development they need to enable them to achieve organisational goals
- provides a supportive, open environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential
- listens to its customers and involves them in the development of services that recognise and value diversity; and
- believes that both customers and employees have important parts to play in making this happen.

4.1 The Group will apply this policy in carrying out its statutory and corporate responsibilities and will seek to ensure that its partners, stakeholders and agents are equally committed to its delivery and implementation.

4.2 The group will ensure its own policies, procedures and services are regularly reviewed and are non discriminatory (Equality Impact Assessments).

4.3 The Group will take every step to combat direct and indirect discrimination in the activities and services we provide. Any incidents of discrimination or harassment will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

4.4 The Groups overall objectives in the Equality & Diversity strategy is to ensure that its Equality and Diversity Policy is applied fully, fairly and consistently across the Group as an integral part of its staffing, business planning, processes and service it provides. The objectives are:

- To promote corporate ownership of Equality
- To ensure fair access to services and excellent customer care
- To ensure effective resident involvement in order to ensure services and homes reflect needs
- To work in partnership with others to promote community cohesion
- To have a diverse workforce that reaches its potential and create an environment where staff value and respect each other

## 5. Implementation across the Equality Strands

### **Ethnicity:**

- 5.1 We will aim to deliver a high standard of service to people from BME communities and ensure our services are accessible and available to all members of Black and Minority Ethnic organisations
- 5.2 Work with other agencies and community organisations to promote racial equality and eliminate racial disadvantage and harassment
- 5.3 Strive to create an environment, which is free from racial harassment and racist behaviour
- 5.4 Have an awareness of people's needs which respect their cultural and social identities

### **Religion:**

- 5.5 Strive to create an environment which recognises and respects religion and belief and is free from unlawful discrimination or harassment
- 5.6 Improve the understanding of religion and belief among our staff so that they can sensitively address the needs of individuals of different faiths
- 5.7 Work with other agencies and community organisations to promote understanding and good relations between people of different faith communities

### **Gender:**

- 5.8 Strive to create an environment which is free from harassment and sexist language and behaviour
- 5.9 Introduce action and development opportunities to encourage women to take up employment and training opportunities in areas and levels where they are under-represented and encourage progression
- 5.10 Recognise our duties under the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay legislation and codes of practice and undertake to strive for gender equality in employment and service provision

### **Sexuality:**

- 5.11 We want to create an environment where Lesbians, Gay men, Transsexuals and Bisexuals are free from unfair treatment and harassment and feel safe to be open about their sexuality and difference, if they choose so to do.
- 5.12 Make our services accessible to everyone and will work to ensure that our employment policies and service delivery are not based on the assumption that everyone is heterosexual.

5.13 End unfair treatment and harassment and work towards the equal application of all terms and conditions of service irrespective of any employee's sexuality.

**Disability:**

5.14 Recognise its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and other legislation and will follow the relevant DRC Code of Practice for employment, premises and provision of services

5.15 Strive to provide services, which are relevant to the needs of people with disability and ensure all our premises, services and documentation are accessible and available for all customers and any member of staff who has disabilities

5.16 Provide training for all employees in awareness and confidence to support people with a disability where needed

**Age:**

5.17 The Group recognises that age discrimination can affect all age groups and both genders, that age is no indicator of effectiveness in most work activities, that employment decisions should not be based on age alone (with the current exception of retirement ages) and that services should be sensitive to the needs of all age groups. The Group will value people regardless of age and seek to ensure that its employment policies are relevant and fair to all age groups

5.18 We will work to create an environment where people are judged on their talents, skills and experience, rather than on misconceptions and prejudices about age.

5.19 Provide recruitment, promotion and training on the basis of need regardless of age.

5.20 Work with other agencies and community organisations to eliminate age discrimination

## **6. Performance Measures & Targets**

The Group has in place a strategic Performance Management Framework which ensures that performance against the objectives are monitored and reported on. Other measures in place to capture information include:

- Staff surveys
- Customer surveys
- Feedback from the Staff Consultative Committee and Resident Forums
- Analysis of complaints
- Research
- Community Mapping and Equality & Diversity data gathered from our residents

Key Performance indicators include:

- Board membership to reflect the profile of the relevant regions – London, North & South and to reflect the 6 equality strands.

- Satisfaction with service generally for all 6 equality strands – disability, race, age, religion, sexuality, gender.
- Lettings to reflect local need and to also include disability & gender. Figure to be broken down into smaller groups where BME population is 10% or more
- Complaints made based on the profile of the local community
- Service user involvement in either formal or informal opportunities to participate reflects local community profile in terms of 6 equality groups.

## 6. **Responsibility and Reporting Arrangements**

- 6.1 All staff have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is put into practice and to comply with the formal procedures designed to ensure its successful implementation. Compliance with the Policy is included in the person specification for each post within the Group. Any breach of the policy is treated as a disciplinary matter.
- 6.2 The Board, Committees and Senior Management have ultimate responsibility to ensure that the Group is fully compliant with the Equality & Diversity Policy
- 6.3 The Board will receive an annual report on Equality & Diversity
- 6.4 Diversity Champions forum will review performance against Our Single Equality Scheme and action plan three times a year
- 6.5 Managers will ensure that staff are trained effectively to deliver the Equality & Diversity Policy

## 7. **Monitoring and Review Arrangements**

- 7.1 We will monitor the effectiveness and implementation of this Policy to ensure that customers are treated fairly and equitably.
- 7.2 This Policy will be reviewed every three years, unless legislation or sector developments require otherwise, ensuring that it continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.
- 7.3 We will consult with our customers on any review of this Policy and demonstrate how their views have influenced the process.

**8. Associated Documents**

Equality & Diversity Strategy  
Equality & Diversity Action plan  
Single Equality Scheme  
A2 Dominion Disability and Gender Equality Action Plans 2008-10  
Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments

**9. Record of Amendments**

Date	Details of Amendment	Name