

BUSHBURY HILL ESTATE MANAGEMENT BOARD

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board (EMB) is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. We are dedicated to creating an environment where everyone is treated with dignity, fairness and respect and where diversity is recognised as a strength that enriches our organisation and community.

We believe that every person has the right to live, work and participate in our services free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice.

The EMB recognises that inequality and discrimination continue to exist within society. We are committed to taking positive steps to eliminate barriers, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people from different backgrounds and experiences.

2. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by relevant legislation, including but not limited to:

- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**
- **Data Protection legislation (UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)**
- **Housing and social housing regulatory requirements and guidance**

Failure to comply with this policy or relevant legislation may result in disciplinary action for staff and action under the EMB's Code of Conduct for Board members.

3. Our Commitments

The EMB is committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity for all.
- Fostering good relations between different groups within our community.
- Ensuring services are accessible and responsive to diverse needs.
- Promoting an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and respected.
- Making reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- Providing equal access to participation, training, employment and development opportunities.
- Monitoring our performance and taking action where inequalities are identified.

4. Protected Characteristics

We recognise the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010. The EMB will not discriminate against any person on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We also recognise the importance of supporting individuals who may experience disadvantage due to socio-economic circumstances, caring responsibilities, health conditions, or other factors that may affect access to services and opportunities.

5. Equal access to Membership and Housing

No individual or group will be treated less favourably when applying for membership or housing within the EMB area.

Decisions will be made fairly and without discrimination on the basis of any protected characteristic or socio-economic factor, including health status or caring responsibilities.

6. Participation and Engagement

The EMB will ensure equal access to democratic processes, including:

- Attendance and participation at General Meetings
- Election of Officers, Committee members and representatives
- Access to information, training and development opportunities

Prospective members will receive an information pack outlining the EMB's purpose, policies and expectations. All new members will be asked to sign a statement confirming their understanding and support of this Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

The EMB will consult and communicate regularly with members through meetings, newsletters, surveys and direct contact.

7. Service Delivery

We are committed to delivering services fairly and consistently to all members and tenants.

This includes:

- Repairs and maintenance services
- Housing management services
- Communication and support services

When working with contractors, suppliers and external agencies, we will:

- Expect compliance with our equality standards
- Take appropriate action where discriminatory practices are identified
- Reserve the right to cease working with organisations that do not align with our values.

8. Employment Practices

As an employer, the EMB is committed to:

- Fair and inclusive recruitment and selection practices
- Equal access to training and development opportunities
- Supporting staff wellbeing
- Providing reasonable adjustments for disabled employees

All employees will receive clear terms and conditions of employment and be treated with dignity and respect.

9. Safeguarding Rights and Preventing Harassment

The EMB is committed to ensuring all tenants and members can enjoy their homes safely and peacefully.

We will:

- Act promptly in response to harassment or discrimination
- Work with the Council and appropriate agencies where necessary
- Not tolerate discriminatory language or behaviour in meetings, communications or activities.

10. Breaches of Policy and Procedures

The EMB recognises that equality, diversity and inclusion principles underpin all aspects of its work and are reflected throughout its governance framework, policies and procedures. This policy should be read in conjunction with:

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- a. The EMB's Rules of Registration, including arrangements relating to membership, consultation and General Meetings.
- b. The Management Agreement with the Council, including responsibilities relating to service delivery, repairs and staffing arrangements.
- c. Associated policies and procedures contained within the Management Agreement, including those relating to allocations, harassment, complaints, resident engagement, procurement and contractor management.

All of the above documents contain mechanisms through which individuals may raise concerns, make complaints or seek redress. The EMB will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of its policies and procedures to ensure compliance with equality legislation and to promote fair and equitable outcomes.

The EMB takes any allegation of discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or other breach of this policy seriously. All complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially, in accordance with the EMB's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

In the first instance, complaints relating to alleged breaches of this policy will be investigated by a Senior Officer. Where the Senior Officer is the subject of the complaint, the matter will be referred to the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Management Board for investigation or appropriate action.

A written record of all complaints received, investigations undertaken, findings reached and actions taken will be maintained and reported to the Management Board, in accordance with confidentiality requirements and data protection legislation.

The EMB will seek to resolve concerns wherever possible through informal resolution, mediation, conciliation or policy review. However, where a serious breach of this policy is identified, appropriate action may be taken, including but not limited to:

- Withdrawal of EMB membership in accordance with the EMB's Rules.
- Referral to the Council for consideration of tenancy enforcement action where appropriate.
- Disciplinary action against an employee, up to and including dismissal.
- Removal of a Board or Committee Member from office in accordance with the EMB's governing rules.
- Termination of contracts or arrangements with contractors, suppliers or partners found to be acting contrary to this policy.

The EMB is committed to ensuring that all complaints and allegations are handled fairly, consistently and without victimisation of any person raising a genuine concern.

11. Monitoring and Review

The EMB will actively monitor equality outcomes to ensure this policy is effective.

Monitoring will include:

- Membership and recruitment
- Allocation of properties
- Participation levels
- Committee representation
- Contractor conduct
- Nature and frequency of complaints (Reported quarterly)

The Chief Officer will review performance Annually, with findings reported to the Board.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

The EMB maintains secure records in line with data protection legislation.

- Access to sensitive information is restricted
- Personal data is handled confidentially and securely
- Information is only used for legitimate purposes

13. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current legislation.

Amendments may be made at a Special General Meeting, in accordance with the EMB's governance arrangements.