



## Equality and Diversity Policy

### 1. The Society's Commitment

Uppingham Homes CLT (The Society) is committed to providing equality of opportunity and respect for human diversity for its volunteers, staff, membership and tenants. This policy is intended to assist putting this commitment into practice. The Society is also committed to ensuring that the work, volunteer and tenant environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. To this end The Society has appointed the Secretary to be the accountable reporting officer on all matters relating to this policy.

### 2. The Law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of a 'protected characteristic'. Equality legislation defines the protected characteristics as being age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief. It is also unlawful to discriminate against or harass a member of the public or service user in the provision of The Society's services or to fail to make reasonable adjustments where practicable.

### 2. Types of Unlawful Discrimination

- **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. However discrimination may be lawful if there is an occupational requirement which is core to a job or volunteer role and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- **Indirect discrimination** means putting in place, a rule, or policy, or way of doing things that has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one, when this cannot be objectively justified.
- **Harassment** is where there is unwanted behaviour which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.
- **Third-party harassment** occurs where an employee, volunteer or tenant is harassed by third parties such as service users.
- **Victimisation** is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality legislation i.e. because they have supported a complaint or raised a grievance, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee, volunteer or tenant is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

### **3. Recruitment**

The Society's employee and volunteer recruitment practices aim to attract applicants with the knowledge, skills and experience required for the job or volunteer role, irrespective of an applicant's background. Diversity in the team supports The Society's understanding of the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders. It may therefore take positive action to improve its diversity amongst its volunteers and staff.

### **4. Equality of Opportunity**

The Society will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of its service provision, contracting and employment.

### **5. Service Users, Suppliers and Others**

The Society will not discriminate unlawfully against service users using, or seeking to use, the services it provides. If a Society member or resident is bullied or harassed by a service user, supplier, contractor, visitor or others, reporting of the incident to The Society Secretary is encouraged.

### **6. Training**

The Society will provide information and guidance to those involved in recruitment and decision making where equal opportunity and diversity issues are likely to arise to help them understand their responsibilities and to avoid the risk of discrimination.

### **7. Responsibilities**

All members, staff and volunteers are responsible for supporting the organisation in meeting its commitment and avoiding unlawful discrimination. If anyone experiences a level of discomfort or disagreement with something that happens during The Society's activities, they are encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of the Secretary. It is possible that others are not aware or have not considered the impact of their actions, have not understood our policy, or possibly The Society's practices need to be updated.

Employees, volunteers and service users can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees, volunteers and tenants who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence. Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees, volunteers or tenants are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under The Society's approved procedures. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal from a volunteer or employed role without notice.

### **8. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be monitored periodically to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. The Secretary will report to the Board of The Society on any actions or activities undertaken to improve equality of opportunity and diversity. Any information provided by job or volunteer role applicants for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with current data protection legislation.