# Equal Opportunities Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Policy Approved by Committee</td>
<td>26 June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Period</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Due</td>
<td>June 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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POLICY CHANGE HISTORY

The following interpretation and abbreviations are used in this policy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Change Applied</th>
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<th>By</th>
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## INTERPRETATIONS & ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
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<tr>
<td>HHP or Partnership</td>
<td>Hebridean Housing Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>Means the Board of the Hebridean Housing Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>All Members of the Board including co-opted Members</td>
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All references to the masculine gender in this policy shall read as equally applicable to the feminine gender.
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) recognises that certain groups and individuals may be disadvantaged because of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc.

1.2 This discrimination can be direct or indirect and may take place at a personal or institutional level. HHP considers any form of discrimination to be unacceptable.

(i) Direct Discrimination
Treating a person less favourably on grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

(ii) Indirect Discrimination
Applying any requirement or condition which, though applied equally to everybody, is such that a considerably smaller proportion of people of one group can comply with it than the proportion of other people, unless the requirement or condition can be shown to be justifiable irrespective of race, age, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

HHP is aware that the business environment is changing and will endeavour to keep abreast of developing best practice and legislative and regulatory guidance.

STATEMENT OF POLICY
The Hebridean Housing Partnership:

• Is opposed to discrimination in any form and is committed to take all practicable steps as an employer and service provider to counteract discrimination

• Seeks to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be justified

• Provide appropriate means of communication with all groups

• Respects community diversity and seeks to ensure that all job vacancies and services are accessible to all sectors of the community

• Endeavours to provide users of all services with clear and accurate information regarding the services provided

• Consults with users and potential users in the provision of appropriate housing

• Treats all individuals fairly and any decisions on recruitment and selection will be based on the job criteria

• Provides equalities training for all staff and Board Members on an ongoing basis

• Will comply with anti-discrimination legislation and good practice requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator in employment and service provision

• Will issue this policy to all staff
Legislation and Best Practice

Relevant legislation includes:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
- Race Relations Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001


Relevant Codes of Guidance include:

- Disability Rights Commission 'Guide to Disability Equality Duty and Disability Discrimination Act 2005 for the Social Housing Sector'

Social Housing Regulator Guidance

Performance Standard GS2.1 on Equal Opportunities:

"We embrace diversity, promote equal opportunities for all and eliminate unlawful discrimination in all areas of our work".

EMPLOYMENT

2.1 HHP is committed to ensuring appropriate equal opportunity practices in relation to employment and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly when recruiting staff or in their subsequent employment.

2.2 HHP’s policy on staff recruitment and selection is based on the following principles:

“The Partnership will:

- Recruit and select the best candidate for every vacancy
- Ensure that access to employment opportunity is based on fair, objective and consistent criteria
- Undertake that all staff involved in recruitment and selection will receive appropriate training”

HHP As An Employer

2.3 HHP recognises that some employment practices may create barriers which prevent individuals obtaining employment. Positive measures therefore are to be adopted which should assist to redress any imbalance.
2.4 Such measures consist of:

- Good conditions of employment such as flexible working hours
- Positive statements in advertisements e.g all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria encouraged to apply
- Access to premises
- All staff in similar jobs shall be employed under the same terms and conditions of employment

**Resources**

2.5 Employees, wherever possible will be provided with the necessary aids and adaptations to enable them to carry out duties on equal terms.

**Application Forms**

2.6 All job applicants are asked to complete HHP’s job application form. Applicants are asked to provide information on gender, ethnic origin and disability. This information is kept separately solely for the purpose of monitoring applications.

**Training and Development**

2.7 HHP will within available resources provide training on equalities for both staff and Board. All new employees will be made aware of the equalities policy during the induction training.

Training for staff and Board members will concentrate on identifying discrimination and taking action which counters its effects.

**Harassment**

2.8 Sexual and racial harassment can constitute unlawful discrimination. Harassment can be either verbal or physical. In the case of sexual harassment this would include comments about the way a person looks, lewd remarks, intimate or physical contact.

**Disciplinary Procedures**

2.9 Any breach of Equal Opportunities Policy will be considered a serious disciplinary offence.

**Grievances**

2.10 All members of staff have the right to take action under a grievance procedure. HHP will seek to ensure grievances are dealt with quickly and effectively.

**SERVICE PROVISION**

3.1 The Partnership is committed to ensuring good equalities practice in relation to its housing services.

**Allocations**

3.2 The Allocation Policy is non discriminatory. Proper recording, reporting and monitoring is carried out. To ensure accountability and fairness more than one person is involved in allocations.

3.3 The housing application form does not ask for information on religion, race or sexual orientation. Information is sought on ethnic origin for monitoring purposes only and plays no part in the pointing system for allocating housing.
Design Standard

3.4 HHP will seek to ensure that all developments are built barrier free and to agree minimum standards to allow tenants to reduce their dependence on others and optimise choice in their daily life.

Housing Management and Maintenance

3.5 HHP aims to provide a good service to all tenants. Every effort is made to ensure that properties are kept in good repair and installations maintained in proper working order. As maintenance is one of the most important service provided to tenants, HHP will seek to deliver the same quality of service to all tenants. HHP, will however, recognise that certain groups such as older people, may be more vulnerable and consequently will be given priority on certain types of repair.

Contract Compliance

3.6 HHP’s contractors must comply with relevant health and safety, employment and equal opportunities legislation. Contractors will be required to abide by HHP’s Equal Opportunities Policy.

Contracts will be awarded to contractors who comply with good employment practice e.g fair wage conditions, health and safety, training, recruitment and selection and equal opportunities. Allegations of harassment or discrimination by contractors will lead to investigation by HHP staff. Persistent breaches of policy will lead to a contractor’s removal from the approved list.

HHP will monitor the review contractor performance in relation to equal opportunities.

Monitoring

3.7 Equal opportunities monitoring will be carried out by the Board on all the services HHP provides but in particular HHP will look at the following:

- Access
- Allocations
- Repairs and improvement
- Complaints
- Harassment
- Recruitment and employment
- Membership

GOVERNANCE

HHP will aim to promote equality of opportunity in the overall management of the organisation in respect of:

- Membership
- Membership of the Board
- Procurement of goods and services

Membership

4.1 HHP will seek to develop a broad membership base to reflect the communities served. Application for membership will be considered regardless of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation.
Board Membership

4.2 New members of the Board are elected in accordance with HHP’s rules. HHP will seek to recruit on a co-opted basis new members to the Board on the basis of meeting skills gaps and any imbalance on the Board. Training on equalities is provided for new and existing Board Members.

Procurement of Goods and Services

4.3 The Partnership Procurement Policies will ensure that there is no discrimination in the allocation of work to contractors and consultants. Efforts will be made to ensure that firms used by HHP can demonstrate a commitment to equalities. This will be done by the use of pre qualification questionnaires prior to accepting firms on to approved lists.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>TIMESCALE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appoint designated staff members within each functional area to ensure compliance with Equal Opportunities Policy</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
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<tr>
<td>When reviewing recruitment policy ensure employment practices are fair and non-discriminatory</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review training programme for staff involved in selection and recruitment</td>
<td>Director of Resources</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement procedures to ensure that an quality statement is part of the tendering requirements for contractors and consultants</td>
<td>Director of Operations</td>
<td>August 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review monitoring procedures in relation to the equality profile of:</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>December 2008</td>
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</table>
| - Members  
- Board  
- Housing Applicants  
- Applicants for Employment  
- Employees |