

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion **Policy**

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Date of Last Review: May 2025

Date of Next Review: May 2028

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) is at the heart of everything we do. Friday Hill Tenant Management Organisation (FHTMO) is committed to helping to create a more equal society which respects diversity and embeds inclusion. EDI is the responsibility of everyone in our organisation, and we expect that our staff, contractors, partners and suppliers practically apply the principles of EDI. This belief informs and shapes our Business Plan, business strategies, our mission and values.
- 1.2 Friday Hill TMO (FHTMO) wants to attract and retain the good staff, provide excellent and inclusive services to its residents and use the good contractors who provide quality and value for money. In all of our work we seek to uphold the principles outlined in the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing to prevent discrimination.

2. Aims

2.1 Friday Hill TMO aims are:

- to deliver a fair, inclusive and equitable service to all residents living within the area managed by FHTMO taking into account any special needs or protected characteristics of residents and where possible tailoring services accordingly;
- to ensure that the composition of the FHTMO membership and the Management Board seeks to reflect the diversity of our community and to encourage active participation from all persons or groups of persons living within the area managed by FHTMO.
- to ensure that all residents have access to meetings and information concerning the activities of FHTMO;
- to increase awareness within FHTMO of the needs of disadvantaged groups

- to ensure that no member of staff, or the Management Board or residents/users of services provided by FHTMO suffers discrimination.

2.2 Friday Hill TMO is committed to equal opportunities as a service provider, an employer and a democratic organisation. We will:

- Ensure that the needs of FHTMO residents are identified and taken into account in the planning and delivery of housing services;
- Work towards the elimination of harassment in our community, supporting victims and taking action against perpetrators;
- Work towards increasing the representation of under-represented groups in our formal consultation mechanisms, our management Board and workforce;
- Ensure that information we provide is accessible to residents;
- Take appropriate steps to make our services accessible by removing or altering physical and other barriers to access;
- Promote the value of diversity amongst staff and residents, recognising that people from different cultures and backgrounds add value to the housing service and the local community.

2.3 Friday Hill TMO will take positive action to overcome the results of unfair discrimination by encouraging and helping groups who may feel excluded to participate in the TMO's decision-making process and to receive equitable treatment in respect of service delivery and employment opportunities.

3. Procedures

3.1 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that our activities are conducted in accordance with the

- Equalities Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing
- The principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty

We comply with our legal obligations. However, we do much more than just complying with law and regulation. Our EDI Policy details the actions we take to enhance and sustain a culture and environment that allows every individual to flourish, and respects, values and rewards their needs and contributions.

3.2 Friday Hill TMO will aim to ensure that all residents, employees, contractors and other partners are dealt with fairly and equitably on the basis of their merits, abilities and

potential without any unjustified discrimination in relation to any of the following protected characteristics:

- **Age.** *People of all ages are protected. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified i.e. if it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination;*
- **Disability** (including issues arising from the disability). *A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and adverse long-term adverse effects on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities;*
- **Gender reassignment.** *A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected so someone who permanently decides to live as the opposite sex but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered. Transgender people such as cross dressers, who are not transsexuals because they do not intend to live permanently in the gender opposite to their birth sex, are not protected;*
- **Marriage and civil partnership;**
- **Pregnancy and maternity.** *A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled;*
- **Race** (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins). *A racial group can be made up of two or more different racial groups;*
- **Religion or belief** (including any religion, religious belief, similar philosophical belief, lack of religion and lack of belief);
- **Sex.** *Both men and women are protected;*
- **Sexual orientation.** *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LBGT), heterosexual, people are protected.*

3.3 Any proposed major change in the TMO's Equalities and Diversity policy must be referred to the TMO's Management Board through a Board Meeting.

4.4 Friday Hill TMO as a Service Provider

Repairs and maintenance

- 4.4.1 The circumstances of individuals will be taken into account when considering whether or not a repair is urgent. Priority will be given at the discretion of TMO staff to those households who are vulnerable or where there are young children, people who are elderly or housebound, or suffering from an illness or disability.
- 4.4.2 The circumstances of individuals will be taken into account in respect of recharging for repairs due to negligence / abuse or undertaking repairs / redecoration which are the resident's responsibility. Any repair due to hate crime or harassment will be treated as an emergency.
- 4.4.3 All employees and contractors will be required to conduct themselves in a polite, non-sexist, non-racist manner in their dealings with residents and their household. Friday Hill TMO will issue guidelines on equal opportunities to all our contractors and outline the standards it expects. Contractors shall be expected to have an equalities policy or agree to sign compliance with this equalities policy.

Tenancy management

- 4.4.4 Allocations and Transfers – If decisions are within the TMO's remit, we will ensure that properties are allocated in strict accordance with Council policies and that applicants and potential tenants are treated sensitively and according to need.
- 4.4.5 Breaches of tenancy – Friday Hill TMO will ensure that complaints are fully investigated in accordance with the Breach of Tenancy or Lease.

Rent and service charge collection and arrears control

- 4.4.6 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that all tenants and leaseholders fully understand how and when they should pay their rent and/or service charges pay by direct debit wherever possible. Friday Hill TMO will inform and advise tenants of welfare benefits that they may be entitled to and signpost them to relevant agencies where appropriate.
- 4.4.7 Friday Hill TMO will deal sensitively with tenants and leaseholders whose accounts fall into arrears ensuring they are accessing available benefits and/or support and that they fully understand their obligations. However persistent or deliberate non-payment will be dealt with in accordance with our Rent Collection and Arrears policy or Leaseholder Service Charge policy.

Office opening times and accessibility

- 4.4.8 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that office opening times are published. We will ensure that our premises and services are accessible to people with disabilities, as far as possible.

Consultation and participation

- 4.4.9 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that the views of a representative range of household types and residents are taken into account if new policies or initiatives are being considered.

4.5 Friday Hill TMO as an employer

Recruitment and Selection

- 4.5.1 All vacant posts will be advertised in the local or national press and/or circulated to local Job Centres. All adverts shall include the statement 'The TMO aims to be an equal opportunities employer'.
- 4.5.2 A copy of the job description, person specification, and background information about the TMO, including the Equalities and Diversity policy, and an application form will be sent to each applicant.
- 4.5.3 Friday Hill TMO shall ensure that our recruitment policy is followed at all stages, and that interview panels are representative of our membership, and include at least one person of each gender where possible. Panel members shall have attended training in recruitment and selection.

Conditions of service

- 4.5.4 The TMO will treat all employees fairly and create a working environment which is free from unlawful discrimination, and which respects the diverse backgrounds and beliefs of employees. Terms and conditions of service for employees will comply with anti-discrimination legislation. The provision of benefits such as flexible working hours, maternity and other leave arrangements, performance appraisal systems, dress code, bonus schemes and any other conditions of employment will not unlawfully discriminate against any employee on the grounds of their age; gender and gender reassignment; marital status; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation or on the grounds of disability.
- 4.5.5 Where possible and necessary, we will endeavour to provide appropriate facilities and conditions of service which take into account the specific needs of employees which arise from their ethnic or cultural background; gender and gender reassignment; responsibilities as carers; disability; religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Promotion and career development

- 4.5.6 Promotion within the TMO will be based solely on merit. The selection criteria and processes for recruitment and promotion will be kept under review to ensure that there is no discriminatory impact on any particular group.

Training Plan

- 4.5.7 Friday Hill TMO will identify equality and diversity training needs and include in the training plan together with other training needs. The plan will include details of the sort of training that will be provided, who will be trained, when training will be provided and who is responsible in the TMO for ensuring that training is delivered. Employees and Management Board members will be informed of our EDI policy and training plan.

4.6 Advertising/tendering contracts

- 4.6.1 Friday Hill TMO will maintain a list of approved contractors. The list will be reviewed periodically on the basis of an assessment of those contractors included. Contractors will be assessed according to value for money, reliability, standard of work, cost, safe working and equality and diversity.
- 4.6.2 All contractors included on the approved list must have clear policies in respect of equalities and diversity and health and safety at work. In the absence of their own equalities policy, the contractor must sign a statement to the effect that they will comply fully with the TMO's Equalities and Diversity policy as it applies to them and their work.

4.7 Friday Hill TMO as a Democratic Organisation

- 4.7.1 All tenants and leaseholders of Friday Hill TMO who's principal home is managed by Friday Hill TMO are eligible to become a member of Friday Hill TMO, attend general meetings and put their name forward for election to the Board. All members of FHTMO and employees will be expected to comply with the principles set out in this policy.
- 4.7.2 Friday Hill TMO will hold an introductory meeting with all new tenants (normally held after tenancy sign up) informing them of the opportunities to become a member and participate in the TMO's affairs.
- 4.7.3 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that no person or groups of people are restricted from participating either directly or indirectly. To this end, the Board will regularly review practice in respect of the venues where meetings are held, to ensure that access is suitable for disabled people, and the days and times that meetings are held, to give residents equal opportunity to participate. We will assess any special needs such as childcare facilities, translations, and escorts to and from meetings that groups of people may require in order to assist them to participate.

4.7.4 Details of all meetings and events organised by FHTMO will be sent to all residents. TMO members may attend meetings of the Board although some parts of Board meetings may be restricted to Board members only where confidential items are discussed.

4.7.5 Communications and Consultation

All residents will receive a regular newsletter and FHTMO's annual report will be presented at the TMO's Annual General Meeting. We may also use a website and social media as communications tools. All communications will be written in plain English and promote the principles enshrined in this policy. Summaries of the main points to arise from Board meetings and general meetings will be included in the newsletter and sent to all residents.

4.7.6 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that information that unlawfully discriminates against people on any grounds does not appear in TMO communications including the website and social media.

4.7.7 Friday Hill TMO's staff will provide all residents with assistance in obtaining information they require about the TMO's activities. The TMO's CEO is primarily responsible for advising the Board where policies, procedures and practices require further consultation with residents, in particular where such consultation is required by legislation.

4.7.8 Friday Hill TMO will undertake regular self-completion questionnaire surveys of all residents to measure resident satisfaction with the range of services provided by the FHTMO and the Council. This will include residents' views about how services might be improved. The staff will ensure that assistance will be given to all those who require it in completing the questionnaire. A summary of all consultation responses will be sent to all residents or included in the newsletter.

4.7.9 Friday Hill TMO will ensure that no person or group of people are restricted from participating in meetings, either directly or indirectly. All those who attend and participate in any meeting organised by the TMO will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that respects the rights of all other people.

Board composition and equal opportunities obligations.

4.7.10 Friday Hill TMO is responsible for ensuring that the Annual General Meeting and the invitation for nominations for election to the Board are published in accordance with the constitution.

4.7.11 Friday Hill TMO will work towards the Board becoming representative of the community we serve. The Board may co-opt non-elected members on the basis that they belong to a group or groups of people under-represented on the Board provided that the constitution allows them to do so.

- 4.7.12 All new Board members must undertake a programme of induction which includes knowledge of the aims and objectives, key policies and procedures of Friday Hill TMO, including the EDI policy.

5. Breaches of procedures

- 5.1 Any breach or complaint concerning Friday Hill TMO's Equalities and Diversity policy or its implementation will normally be referred through the Complaints procedure or where appropriate through the Code of Conduct.
- 5.2 Any deliberate breach of FHTMO's Equalities and Diversity policy or failure to rectify faults which have been brought to the person's attention will render any employee, officer or member liable to disciplinary action. FHTMO members and Management Board members will face expulsion from FHTMO membership/Management Board for serious breaches in accordance with the constitution.

6. Monitoring and review of Equalities and Diversity policy and procedures

- 6.1 This operation of this Equalities and Diversity policy will be reviewed every 3 years or due to major policy change, also to ensure that aims and objectives are being fulfilled and information is up to date.
- 6.2 The following areas will be monitored:
- the standard of repair service provided to each household;
 - the standard of service provided generally to each household;
 - the representativeness of the Board and membership;
 - recruitment and selection of staff;
 - inclusion of contractors on approved list and compliance with equal opportunities;
 - the composition of the membership of the TMO;
- 6.3 Information will be collected in the following ways:
- management complaints;
 - regular self-completion questionnaire surveys;
 - regular performance reports to the Board;
 - regular updating of household database.
- 6.4 Information will be collected by means of a survey about each household and updated regularly concerning the following areas:
- race and ethnic origin
 - age
 - disability
 - gender;

- sexuality
- religious choice or belief
- main language spoken;
- special needs

6.5 Where relevant, reports to the Board will include an assessment of the potential impact of any initiatives/proposals on this EDI policy (an Equalities Impact assessment). Each year the Council may monitor the effectiveness of the EDI Policy and report to the TMO's Board on its findings. The TMO will consider the report and make such changes as the Council may reasonably require.