


Title:	Equality & Diversity Policy	
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“Working Together”

Golden Gates Housing Trust (GGHT)

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Equality & Diversity Policy
2010-2012

Staff
contractors
GG
customers
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residents
board



Policy Statement

Golden Gates Housing Trust (GGHT) recognises its responsibilities to provide equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, and promote good relations in its activities as a social landlord, employer, contractor, partner and purchaser.

GGHT is totally opposed to all forms of discrimination because of any of the nine protected characteristics including age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender, transgender status, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity. We also recognise the need to support tenants with care or support needs, who have long term illnesses or who are at a disadvantage due to socio economic inequalities

As a Housing Trust, we take our duty seriously to promote Community Cohesion and to break down the barriers faced by Socio-economic inequalities.

“We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and have equal access to opportunities. We are determined to address discrimination and promote equality & diversity in the provision of services and employment.”

It is our vision to be a *“leading housing provider creating quality homes and neighbourhoods where people want to live.”*

Aims

This policy aims to summarise our Single Equality Scheme – **‘Working Together’** and also show how GGHT is working to eliminate discrimination (*direct or indirect*), promote good relations and increase equality of opportunity.

GGHT strongly believes that by **working together** with our staff, board, tenants, residents and partners, we can create an environment in which equality & diversity is embedded into the core of everything we do.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy covers ten areas, including:

3.1. Service Delivery

GGHT aims to be a leader in delivering services that meet the diverse needs of the communities. We are committed to improving services and meeting the different needs of the diverse communities in the borough.

3.2. Resident involvement

GGHT recognises the importance of **working together** with our stakeholders and in engaging and listening to the views of all of our customers. We will work to ensure our involvement methods operate in a fair and unbiased manner and will also take active steps to encourage participation from all sections of the community.

3.3. Access to Information and services

GGHT will strive to ensure that access to all of our services is easily accessible. We will **work together** with all stakeholders so we may listen to the differing needs of customers and their needs and then change with them accordingly. We will provide alternate formats of most information upon request and will endeavour to be inclusive.

3.4. Governance

GGHT's board will take the lead in ensuring equality issues are at the heart of our business and will set the vision, direction and standards. We will work on making sure the board, committees, sub boards and any other decision making groups are representative of the communities we serve so that every section of the community has a voice.

3.5. Community Cohesion

GGHT wants to contribute in creating communities where everyone feels that they belong and are a priority. We will work to improve our neighbourhoods and promote community cohesion in all events and actively consider it in service delivery, policy and practices. We will ensure we try to reduce socioeconomic inequalities through our involvement in 'Closing the Gap.'

3.6. 'Closing the Gap'

GGHT is working as part of The Warrington Partnership to 'Close the Gap.' The overarching priority of the programme is "In pursuing our ambitions we will prioritise closing the gaps in quality of life for our most disadvantaged communities." Warrington has 11 super-output areas in the top 10% nationally which is the most deprived. Within these areas, GGHT has 3000 properties. As part of the Warrington Partnership, GGHT has pledged to reduce the socio economic inequalities in regards to housing within these deprived areas.

3.7. Asset Management

GGHT aims to provide an effective and efficient improvement and repairs service and aids & adaptations service and ensure that our homes meet the individual needs of our diverse customers.

3.8. Procurement and supplier diversity

GGHT will ensure fair and consistent practices in attracting tenders from contractors. All contractors will be expected to meet our equality & diversity requirements set out in our pre-qualification questionnaire & procurement strategy. Support will also be given to organisations wishing to tender but who do not understand the process in the form of an easy to follow guide.

All contractors will be given brief equality & diversity training and will be monitored to ensure their compliance with our policy and single equality scheme.

3.9. Employment

GGHT wants to be recognised as being an employer of choice. We understand the business case for diversity and recognise that employing staff from a diverse range of backgrounds draws upon the widest possible range of views and experiences, meaning we will be able to listen to and meet the changing needs of our staff, customers and partners.

GGHT will endeavour to ensure that job requirements do not exclude any groups or individuals. We will also ensure that every job is accessible to all through advertising in a variety of locations and allowing applications to be made in a variety of ways on request. The selection processes used will be structured to make them fair and transparent and the induction will

be tailored to help the individual(s) understand their role in regards to equality & diversity and **'Working Together.'**

GGHT offers flexible working and encourages diversity within the workforce. GGHT will ensure equality of opportunity in development of its

staff and will provide additional training and employment opportunities for our tenants to embody our stance on **'Working Together'**.

3.10. Hate Crime, Harassment & Discrimination

GGHT wants to be viewed as an organisation that is proactive and professional in preventing and responding to harassment & discrimination (*direct or indirect*) of any kind. This includes domestic violence, hate crimes, harassment & discrimination (*direct or indirect*) because of age, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender, transgender status, religion & belief, marriage & civil partnership and pregnancy & maternity. We will ensure our policies on these areas are well publicised and staff are trained to deal with these situations.

GGHT will also ensure that all staff members are aware of the no tolerance stance we take in regards to hate crime, harassment and discrimination (*direct or indirect*) of any kind. We do not accept it in any form and have procedures set in place to deal with this accordingly.

4.) Links to Other Policies / Schemes.

- 4.1 This Equality and Diversity Policy is linked in with the Single Equality Scheme known as **'Working Together'**. This Equality & Diversity policy serves as a simplified reference to the single equality scheme which has more detail in regards to the processes we will take to embed equality & diversity into the organisation.
- 4.2 This policy is also linked with the scheme of 'Closing the Gap.' The Closing the Gap programme focuses on socio economic inequalities and brings together all public service providers in Warrington with the aim of: getting local people healthier and more active, reducing child poverty in the area, providing good, affordable homes, getting more people into employment or training and building safer and stronger neighbourhoods.

- 4.3 This policy is linked with the 'Equality & Diversity Action Plan' which is accessible for all staff and customers.
- 4.4 GGHT has also established an Equality Impact Assessment process that must be applied to all policies to specifically consider equality & diversity issues when policies are produced and replaced.

5.) Context

This policy has been produced in accordance with the guidance provided by the Tenant Services Authority.

GGHT abides by the one main piece of legislation in force in the UK which makes discrimination in employment, and in the provision of goods, facilities and services unlawful; '**The Equality Act 2010**'.

The Equality Act combines the 8 previous existing pieces of legislation including:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976 (amended 2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (amended 2005)
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion & Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

GGHT also observes the Commission for Racial Equality code of practice on housing and associated guidance produced by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

6.) Definitions

GGHT

Golden Gates Housing Trust.

Equality

Treating people equally according to their individual needs.

Diversity

Recognising that people are all different and unique, and it's these differences that make us great.

Protected Characteristic

Nine characteristics protected from discrimination by the law which are age, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion & belief, gender, transgender status, civil partnership & marital status and pregnancy & maternity.

Age

How young or old a person is.

Race

Race refers to which ethnic group you belong to. An ethnic group is a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage that is real or assumed.

Disabled person

someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Sexual Orientation

Your sexual preference. For example: gay, lesbian, heterosexual, bisexual etc.

Gender

Your sex. Whether you are male or female or transgender.

Transgender

This is when someone's gender identity does not match their assigned gender from birth.

Religion or belief

Religion can be described as being humanity's relationship with the deity/deities in which they believe.

Pregnancy or maternity

The Equality Act 2010 has made it clear that pregnant or new mothers cannot be discriminated (*directly or indirectly*) against because they are pregnant or have a new baby. It also makes it clear that breast feeding mothers cannot be asked to leave a building.

Marriage or civil partnership

Civil partnership is a legal relationship, not exclusively for same-sex couples and distinct from marriage, but now under the law people in a civil partnership will have very similar rights and responsibilities.

Direct Discrimination

Consists of treating a person less favourably because of having one of the nine protected characteristics.

Indirect Discrimination

Consists of applying a requirement, which, internally or not, has a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group and can not be shown to be justifiable.

Victimisation

Where a person is treated less favourably because they have pursued or it is suspected they will pursue their rights under this policy.

Harassment

Where customers or staff feel there has been an interference with their safety or comfort. This can be in the form of verbal abuse or physical. This can be because of one of the protected characteristics.

Equality Act 2010

The new legislation that is intended to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

“Working Together”

GGHT’s Single Equality scheme 2010 – 2012

“Closing the Gap”

A programme GGHT are involved in to close the gap between the affluent and deprived areas in Warrington. Warrington has 11 super-output areas in the top 10% nationally which is the most deprived. Within these areas, GGHT has 3000 properties. As part of the Warrington Partnership, GGHT has pledged to reduce the socio economic inequalities in regards to housing within these deprived areas.

Approval process	When
Customer Consultative Panel	July 2010
News & Views	December 2010
Stakeholders	July 2010
Staff	July 2010
Equality Impact Assessment completed and signed off by Scrutiny Panel	July 2010
Board	July 2010