



**saha**  
Transforming Lives

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**DIRECTORATE / DEPARTMENT:** Corporate Services

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## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

If you would like this policy in an alternative accessible format please contact Customer Services on 0800 970 6363

### 1. Purpose

1.1. saha's Mission, which is underpinned by our Christian values (Servant Leadership, Passion, Inclusion, Respect and Effectiveness) is to transform lives. The Association's belief is that promoting equality of opportunity, valuing the diversity of our people and creating a culture of inclusion built on respect and dignity is an integral part of achieving our Mission.

### 2. The following documentation can be relied upon to support this policy:

- a) The Equality Act 2010
- b) The Equality Act Codes of Practice
- c) Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- d) Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- e) Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014
- f) The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- g) The Localism Act 2011
- h) The Human Rights Act 1998
- i) European Convention on Human Rights
- j) The Gender Recognition Act 2004
- k) <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance>
- l) [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/human\\_rights\\_at\\_home.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/human_rights_at_home.pdf)
- m) Procurement Policy
- n) Recruitment and Selection Policy
- o) Supported Housing Strategy

### 3. Introduction

3.1. Our purpose is to provide social housing and support for some of the most vulnerable people in society without discrimination. Our experience has taught us that the people we house and support need extra help in order to have the same opportunities in life as others.

- 3.2. The culture of the Association is to acknowledge difference and work in an inclusive way so that everyone is able to have access to opportunities which include housing, services, employment, learning and support.
- 3.3. The Equality Act 2010 sets out saha's responsibilities as an employer and service provider. In line with the Act, saha will treat everyone fairly and with dignity and respect.
- 3.4. We take a firm stance against discrimination or harassment based on a person's protected characteristic for example, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disability discrimination or any other form of unlawful discrimination towards a person or group of people.
- 3.5. Under the Equalities Act 2010, it is unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise someone because they have or are perceived to have a "protected characteristic" or are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

## **4. Scope**

### **4.1. Stakeholder Groups**

There are three specific stakeholders groups this policy applies to;

#### **4.1.1. Customers**

For saha's customers, the Association will:

Provide services without discrimination

- a) Understand the needs and aspirations of all its customers, particularly those from marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- b) Work with its customers to design and adapt services, wherever possible, to ensure that they are accessible and appropriate in satisfying their needs.
- c) Foster access to housing, health, education and employment opportunities for marginalised and vulnerable groups.
- d) Take steps to promote understanding and good relations between different groups of people

#### **4.1.2. Employees**

For saha's Employees, the Association will:

- a) Adopt employment policies and practices that reinforce its vision and promote the organisation as an exemplar with an inclusive and engaged culture.
- b) Promote a culture of inclusion where diversity is valued and difference is respected.
- c) Recruit, train and develop employees on merit and utilise initiatives such as those under disability confident where appropriate
- d) Monitor our recruitment processes to identify bias or disadvantage
- e) Ensure our workforce is adequately trained in equality diversity and inclusion to enable them to and understand their responsibilities

- f) Strive to have a workforce that reflects the communities in which the Association operates, at all levels.

#### **4.1.3. Suppliers, Contractors and Managing Agents**

For its suppliers and contractors, the Association will:

- a) Promote the rationale for equality, diversity and inclusion as making good business sense.
- b) Use equality practice as part of the evaluation criteria for selecting potential suppliers and contractors.
- c) Ensure that procurement processes are open to a diverse range of suppliers to encourage participation of underrepresented groups and increase supplier diversity.
- d) Work with our Contractors and Managing Agents to ensure they have the same like-minded approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

## **5. Objectives**

5.1. This policy aims to enable us to achieve the following objectives:

- 5.1.1. To mainstream equality, diversity and inclusion within the Association so that a positive, working, living and social environment is created where all people feel valued and are treated with dignity and respect;
- 5.1.2. To understand and dismantle barriers which exclude and limit equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion;
- 5.1.3. To support people from all backgrounds ensuring they are all able to access to our services and opportunities in order to achieve their full potential;
- 5.1.4. To recognise and protect vulnerable people and marginalised groups from discrimination ,disadvantage and exclusion ;
- 5.1.5. To comply with legislation and regulation and in particular the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

## **6. Definitions**

6.1. Protected Characteristics

The 'protected characteristics' under the Act are:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Marriage and civil partnership
- e) Pregnancy and maternity
- f) Race

- g) Religion and belief
- h) Sex
- i) Sexual orientation.

6.2. **Equal Opportunity** – this is a concept underpinned by legislation. It does not mean treating everybody the same but rather it is about recognising that everybody is different yet deserving of an equal level of respect and that all people should have an equality of opportunity. This can include, for example, access to services, facilities, employment and learning. The law states that no person should be treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

6.3. **Diversity** - This is a given. It is not an option or something to decide to have or not to have. Where there are two or more people, you have diversity. Diversity is difference and we are all different from each other. Differences include family background; age; ethnic origin; gender; physical abilities and qualities and appearance; nationality; sexual orientation; educational background; marital status; parental status; religious beliefs; life and work and experience; the other experiences that have touched our lives or influenced our thinking. Diversity is concerned with recognising, respecting and valuing the positive aspects of difference. It is also about creating a positive environment and culture where the diverse needs of all people can be met.

6.4. **Inclusion** - This is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work. The process of inclusion engages each individual and makes people feel valued.

6.5. **Discrimination** - The law defines discrimination as being direct, indirect or associative:-

6.5.1. **Direct discrimination** is where a person is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic.

6.5.2. **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.

6.5.3. **Associative discrimination** means treating someone less favourably because they are associated with someone with one of the protected characteristics.

6.5.4. **Discrimination by perception** is discriminating against someone because you think incorrectly that they have a particular protected characteristic.

6.5.5. Failing to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people is also a form of discrimination.

6.6. **Harassment**- this is unwanted behaviour related to a protected characteristic which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or which creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

6.7. **Victimisation**- this is treating someone unfavourably because they have taken some form of action relating to the Equality Act, e.g. made a complaint under the Act or supported somebody who is doing so, such as appearing as a witness.

6.7.1. The law allows people to complain of harassment which is behaviour related to a protected characteristic with the intention or effect of violating their dignity or creating a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

6.7.2. The law also protects people against victimisation if they have complained of discrimination or have supported someone who has.

## **7. Policy Statement**

7.1. Respect for the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of saha's mission. The Association recognises that all people are different, have different needs and that there are many positive aspects that result from difference. Treating people according to their needs is key to ensuring an equality of opportunity for all and this is underpinned by law.

### **7.2. The community**

7.2.1. For the communities saha works in, the Association will cooperate and work with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in a cohesive and inclusive manner.

7.2.2. Although not the main audience for this policy, saha expect residents to demonstrate a basic level of respect for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in their interaction with other residents or service users. Behaviours such as bullying, discrimination or harassment of other residents or service users will not be tolerated. Training will be made available to staff so they can work with residents to increase their understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

### **7.3. Disability - Reasonable Adjustments**

7.3.1. We will make any reasonable adjustment required to facilitate disabled access for applicants, clients, residents, visitors and employees who become disabled while working for the organisation. This could be in the form of changing the way things are done, removing physical barriers or providing auxiliary aids or auxiliary services. We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

7.3.2. We encourage employees to tell us about their conditions so that we can support them as appropriate. If an employee experiences difficulties at work because of their disability, they may wish to contact their line manager or the Human Resources Department to

discuss any reasonable adjustments that would help overcome or minimise the difficulty. The Human Resources Department may wish to consult with the employee and their medical adviser about possible adjustments. We will consider the matter carefully and try to accommodate an employee's needs within reason. If we consider a particular adjustment would not be reasonable we will explain our reasons and try to find an alternative solution where possible.

#### **7.4. Complaints**

7.4.1. Any member of the public, a resident, or member of staff has the right to make a complaint if they believe that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy has not been applied properly. All complaints are taken seriously and investigated properly.

7.4.2. Customers and applicants for housing/services can complain by phoning, emailing or writing. Complaints will be dealt with under our Complaints Policy and information on how to make a complaint is also available on the Association's website. Members of staff should use the organisation's Grievance Procedure.

### **8. Monitoring and Reporting**

8.1. Any serious breach of this Policy will be reported to the Governance and HR committee.

8.2. The effectiveness of this policy, including staff understanding of it, will be reported to the Governance and HR committee. Equality Analysis, also known as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessments, are completed as part of policy reviews. We will also look at uptake of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, both E-learning and face to face and look at statistical information around client and staff data. This information will inform any necessary changes as part of our continuous improvement approach.

### **9. Implementation**

9.1. saha will ensure that the implementation of this policy is proactively inclusive across all areas of activity and paying particular attention to the nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief (including non-belief) sex and sexual orientation , whilst also being mindful towards the inclusivity of other vulnerable and marginalised groups that may be affected.

### **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

10.1. The Board is the driving force behind this policy. It provides leadership with the assistance of a dedicated Champion in setting a direction to achieve our vision and policy objectives.

10.2. Executive and Senior Management have a performance monitoring and oversight role on progress with implementing this policy and the corporate and local actions required for the achievement of desired outcomes.

10.3. All employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the contents of this policy, upholding, respecting and acting in accordance with this policy.

10.4. Management provide the training and support to ensure employees understand their responsibilities and can apply this policy in their areas of work.

## **11. Policy Review**

11.1. We will review the operation of this policy in consultation with our residents, staff and relevant stakeholders (where appropriate), in light of current best practice, amending the policy where required.

11.2. The Directorate of Corporate Services and the Director of Housing, Care & Support Services have overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy, and each local manager will have direct responsibility to ensure it is implemented effectively.

## Document History Log

Author	Date			Version	Approval	
	Created	Revised	Expiry		By	Date
DoCS	26/03/2008		Dec2010	1.0	Board	BD.022/08
DoCS		27/05/2011	May 2014	1.1	Board	BD.05/11
DoCS		27/10/2014	Nov 2017	1.2	Board	BD.086/14
BSO		01/02/2017	Feb 2020	1.3	EMT	13/11/18
HoBSI		August 2017		1.4	Board	
HoHR		Nov 2018	Nov 2021	1.5	Board	22/11/18

Equalities Monitoring Form			
Name of Policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy		Carried out by: BSO	Date: September 2018
Protected characteristics	Impact (Positive, Negative, Neutral)	Protected characteristics	Impact (Positive, Negative, Neutral)
Age	Positive	Disability	Positive
Sex	Positive	Race	Positive
Religion or Belief	Positive	Sexual Orientation	Positive
Marriage / Civil Partnerships	Positive	Pregnancy / Maternity	Positive
Gender Reassignment	Positive		
If Negative impact is identified, please complete The Full EMF, including mitigations of risks section, and return to BSI Team.			

Privacy Impact Assessment Form			
Privacy Policy:	Data Impacting	Timescales for Retaining Data:	Notes:
N/A			