



## REIDVALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Approved	30.03.2022
Due for Review	March 2025
Author	Housing Manager

## POLICY SUMMARY

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to set out Reidvale Housing Association's policy in relation to all aspects of equal opportunities.
<b>Legislation/Guidance:</b>	The Association is a company under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, and a company regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Statutory Guidance The Scottish Social Housing Charter Requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator
<b>Regulatory Compliance</b>	Standard 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.  Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.  Standard 3: The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.  Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.  Standard 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity
<b>Linked policies</b>	Allocation Policy Assignment Policy Succession to Tenancy Policy Anti Social Behaviour Policy Void Management Policy Rechargeable Repair Policy Arrears Recovery Policy Privacy Policy Complaints Policy Maintenance Policy
<b>Financial Impact</b>	Low
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Medium
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment</b>	Yes
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	March 2022

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Reidvale Housing Association is a community based housing association operating in the South Dennistoun area of the east end of Glasgow with the aim of providing good quality, affordable, rented accommodation for those in housing need whilst promoting a balanced community.

Reidvale Housing Association is an equal opportunities organisation. We are committed to providing an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging diversity and eliminating discrimination. No person or group of persons applying for housing and housing services will be treated less favourably than any other persons or groups of persons because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to outline Reidvale Housing Association's policy in relation to all aspects of equal opportunities.
- 2.2 To ensure that no person, group of persons or organisation who deals with the Association in any way or who requires a service, assistance or advice from the Association, or who is employed by (or serves) in any capacity by the Association, is treated less favourably than any other person, group of persons or organisation.
- 2.3 To promote the policy so that anyone dealing with the Association in any capacity is made aware that the Association has a policy and that there is a zero tolerance of any act which contravenes the policy/policy principles in any way.

## **3. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 Reidvale Housing Association is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, a registered social landlord and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- 3.2 We are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). Their Regulatory Framework sets out seven Standards of Governance and Financial Management. Relevant to this Policy are particular elements under these Standards:

Standard 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

Standard 3: The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.

Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

Standard 5: The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity

- Standard 5.3  
The RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.

- 3.3 The Human Rights Act 1998 provides for the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of the property, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of convention rights.
- 3.4 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and 2010 placed a legal obligation on housing associations to promote equal opportunities.

Section 39 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires social landlords, when performing housing services, to:

“...act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the requirements of the law for the time being relating to equal opportunities.”

- 3.5 The Equality Act 2010 seeks to promote to achieve equality of treatment and Opportunity for all groups in society without discrimination or prejudice on any grounds. It defines protected characteristics and sets duties for specified public bodies. The protected characteristics are those “ground” on which it is unlawful to discriminate. These are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

- 3.6 The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous duties in respect of race, disability and sex by the duty known as the *Public Sector Equality Duty*. This duty contains three elements that cover discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other form of conduct prohibited under the Act. The second and third elements of the Duty apply to all of the protected characteristics except marriage and civil partnerships.

The Duty requires specified public bodies (or those that carry out public functions) to;

- eliminate conduct prohibited in law;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

RSL's are not included in the list of designated bodies covered by the Duties, but many of the specific functions that they carry out are likely to be of a public nature,

and so the Duty applies to these functions. The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides the following examples of public functions in relation to registered social landlords:

- Allocation of housing
- Setting rent levels
- Complaints procedures
- Tenant participation
- Termination of tenancies
- Terms of tenancy
- Anti-social behaviour

Standard 5.3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator (2019) Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management reflects the ethos of the statutory duty.

To comply with these duties, landlords must collect data relating to the protected characteristics for existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff.

### 3.7 Data Protection Law

The main law relevant to social landlords is the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### 3.8 Equality Impact Assessment

In addition to the above the Scottish Housing Regulator promotes equality impact assessments through the regulatory framework requirements to:

- Have assurance and evidence that (each social landlord) considers equality and human rights issues properly when making all of its decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in its day-to-day service delivery.

## 4. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY

### 4.1 General Requirements

- 4.1.1 All of the Association's key strategic documents and policies will take account of the principles of this policy and will contain an equal opportunities statement to reinforce this.
- 4.1.2 The Association will maintain existing and develop new policies and procedures which deal with specific issues that are key to the delivery of this policy. Including data collection.
- 4.1.3 We will, where feasible, make information and official documents available in alternative formats such as large print, braille, audio tape or alternative language.
- 4.1.4 We will ensure our employment practices, including recruitment and conditions of employment are fair and not discriminatory against any group or individual.
- 4.1.5 We will encourage those we work with, such as contractors and consultants to have appropriate equal opportunities policies.

## **4.2 The delivery of equality of opportunity in all areas of our service provision**

- 4.2.1 The Association will provide equal access to housing and the associated housing management and maintenance services. This will include working with third party organisations to achieve this objective. For example, Glasgow Housing & Social Care Partnership.
- 4.2.2 We will gather equal opportunities statistics for applications for housing, our tenant members, applicants for employment, staff members and governing body members to help us monitor this policy and any targets set within other policies. We will benchmark performance against comparable service providers where possible.
- 4.2.3 We will encourage and support active participation in our governing structure and service users which reflect the composition of our community.
- 4.2.4 We will consult with service users, stakeholders and the wider community where relevant in the review of policies.

## **4.3 Respective responsibilities with regards to equal opportunities**

### **4.3.1 Staff Responsibilities**

The Association has designated the Director to have responsibility for the operation and monitoring of the equal opportunities policy.

All employees have a responsibility to apply this policy in their day to day work. All job descriptions have a statement which reinforces this requirement. Where posts have specific responsibilities these will also be clearly stated in the job description. All staff have a duty to bring any discriminatory behaviour or attitudes that they become aware of to the attention of their line manager.

### **4.3.2 Governing Body**

The Management Committee has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Association's policy and practices are faithful to its equal opportunities commitment.

## **4.4 Equal opportunities monitoring and data collection**

- 4.4.1 Reidvale Housing Association will, within reason, collect and monitor information that will allow the Association to ensure that no groups are discriminated against in relation to employment, membership, service user or rehousing opportunities. Whilst the Association collates equalities information the data will not be linked to individuals and will not be used in such a way that would make it attributable to individuals.
- 4.4.2 All information will be collected on a voluntary basis and kept in complete confidence, in line with our privacy policy. It will be used only for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring in relation to the activities of the Association. The areas of activity that will be monitored include:
  - applications for housing
  - new tenancies
  - Governing body membership

- Association employment (including request for application forms, job applications, shortlists and successful candidates)
- Contractors' policies and activities

4.4.3 The Association will present information on collected data to the Governing Body. We will also use the results to influence the Association's service planning process.

4.4.4 The Association will report our performance in respect of equality to tenants and other service users through the Association's Annual Report and Newsletter.

## **5. STAFF TRAINING**

5.1 Reidvale Housing Association will ensure that all staff and the governing body members receive appropriate and regular training on equal opportunities.

## **6. COMPLAINTS**

6.1 Although we are committed to providing high levels of service, we accept that there may be occasions where a service user may not be satisfied with the service received from the Association. We value all complaints and use this information to help us improve our service. Any service user, complying with the procedure, but remaining dissatisfied with any aspect of the service they have received have the right to submit a complaint to the Association in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure.

## **7. GDPR**

7.1 Reidvale Housing Association will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current General Data Protection Regulation and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our Fair Processing Notice.

## **8 POLICY REVISION**

8.1 The Association undertakes to carry out a comprehensive review of all aspects of this policy at least every three years. The review will take account of legislative changes, new policy guidance, best practice advice and the views of service users.