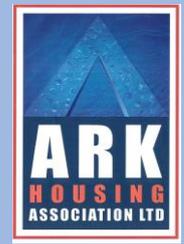




Equality Policy



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1.0 ARKs Values

Our organisational values are the basis for everything that we do, from providing housing, care and support to tenants and service users to ensuring that staff have clear standards of performance set. ARK believes that everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life. We value:

- The worth of each person
- Trusting relationships
- Understanding difference
- Challenging oppression
- Personal and organisational accountability
- Caring for our physical environment
- Enjoyment

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to confirm our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and service delivery, and to set out the measures that we will put in place to ensure that we meet that commitment.

3.0 Policy Statement

ARK will ensure that we comply with all relevant obligations in relation to the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act').

ARK will put measures in place to ensure that we do not discriminate in relation to the nine 'protected characteristics' set out in the Act:

1. Disability
2. Age
3. Race (including Gypsy Travellers)
4. Gender reassignment
5. Sexual Orientation
6. Pregnancy and Maternity
7. Religion or Belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Marriage and civil partnerships (just for the first aim of the public sector equality duty)

ARK will give 'due regard', or consciously consider, the need:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- To advance equality of opportunity between those who have protected characteristics and those who don't
- To foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who don't (tackling prejudice and promoting understanding)

By implementing these measures ARK will comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by s149 of the Act.

4.0 Scope

All Board of Management Members and employees are required to abide by this policy.

5.0 Legal/Regulatory Framework

The key piece of legislation underpinning this policy is the Equality Act 2010.

In terms of regulatory expectations, Standard 5.3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management requires that each RSL should, in accordance with the requirements of the Act:

'pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work including governance arrangements.'

As well as the legal and regulatory imperatives, ensuring that ARK meets its obligations in relation to the Act is also in keeping with ARK's Values, ensures safe policy making, and therefore makes good business sense, as well as supporting continuous improvement.

6.0 Responsibilities

6.1 Board of Management

ARK's Board of Management is responsible for consideration and approval of this policy, and for ensuring that its decisions are taken in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory expectations, training and guidance.

6.2 Executive Team

ARK's Executive Team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed in accordance with ARK's schedule for review of policies, or sooner if required. The Executive Team is responsible for ensuring that its decisions, and that the decision of officers, are taken in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory expectations, training and guidance.

6.3 Senior Leadership Team

ARK's Senior Leadership Team is responsible for review of the policy, and for ensuring that its decisions, and that the decision of officers, are taken in accordance with relevant legislation, regulatory expectations, training and guidance.

6.4 Managers

ARK Managers will be responsible for the effective implementation of this policy within their area of responsibility. They must also ensure that each member of their staff, through induction, and team meetings, is made aware of this policy and participates in relevant training.

6.5 All Staff

All ARK employees are required to familiarise themselves with this policy and comply with its provisions as well as undertake any training implemented as part of the rollout of this policy.

6.6 Third Parties

ARK will ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is complied with when 3rd parties, such as contractors, are carrying out functions on behalf of ARK.

7.0 Related Policies & Procedures

This policy should be read in accordance with ARK's Equality and Diversity Procedure.

8.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

The key tool which ARK will use to meet its obligations in terms of this policy will be an Equality Impact Assessment.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to assess the impact that a proposed activity will have on the different protected groups. An 'activity' could include introduction or review of a policy or procedure, guidance, decisions, or when significant changes are being made at the start of an activity.

ARK will develop and share guidance to support relevant staff in relation to completions of EIAs.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to the development of this policy.

9.0 Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

No data protection implications have been identified in relation to the development of this policy, and consequently a DPIA has not been completed.

10.0 Stakeholder Consultation

In developing this policy the following groups were consulted:

- ARK Board of Management
- ARK Executive Team
- ARK Senior Leadership Team
- ARK Area Managers
- ARK Working Group

11.0 Monitoring and Review

11.1 Monitoring

ARK's Executive and Senior Leadership Teams will monitor implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to ensuring delivery of Equalities Impact Assessments, and in relation to ensuring that relevant decisions within ARK are taken in line with the obligations and expectations set out in this policy.

11.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years from the date of approval by our Board of Management, in accordance with ARK's policy review framework.

Approved by SLT in:

February 2019

Approved by Board of Management in:

March 2019

Next review of policy due by:

March 2022