

# Equal opportunities for everyone



**This leaflet is for all customers of HomeZone Living including those in supported housing, and our colleagues and contractors. It explains:**

- our approach to providing services fairly to all
- the standards of service you can expect from us.

## **Our approach**

We are committed to promoting diversity and equality of opportunity in everything we do. This means ensuring that all members of the community have the same fair access to our services and opportunities. We believe this is the best way to fulfil our aim of creating homes and supporting communities where people really want to stay.

We want to “provide products and services to fit people”. So we believe that an essential part of our daily job should be making our services meet our customers’ differing needs, and providing the services they want and expect. We work hard to do this in the way we:

- develop, allocate, manage and repair our homes
- support our customers
- treat our colleagues
- deal with other people in the community
- work with our partners and contractors.

We work hard to develop good relationships based on honesty, respect and equality. We believe this is essential to achieving excellence in everything we do.

If anyone tells us they think they have been treated unfairly, we will investigate and take appropriate action.

We review and check our policies, procedures, strategies and working practices regularly to ensure they reflect our overall aims and meet legal requirements. When we review any policy, we also assess how far it meets our equality and diversity aims.

## Access to housing and other services

We aim to allocate our homes fairly and according to need, creating balanced, mixed-income communities where people can live in safety and peace.

When we allocate our rented homes, we use a system that allows choice, considers individual needs and ensures we treat everyone as fairly as possible. Our procedures and training ensure that the way we let our homes is consistent and fair.

We collect information on lettings to check how well we meet our community's needs. If needed, we use this information to change the way we work.

We build links with other agencies working in our communities to ensure:

- a varied range of housing applicants
- we can direct our customers to organisations with specialist skills and knowledge to help them, if needed.

If one of our customers needs housing support, we do our best to help. This could mean installing an aid or adaptation in their home, helping them get support from another organisation, such as social services, or helping them apply for housing in the first place.

## **Communication, information and services**

To ensure everyone has equal access to important information, our leaflets and guides can be translated into several languages and provided in Braille, large print or audio format.

We collect information from our customers to ensure we communicate effectively with them, in a way that suits them.

We also aim to ensure that our services are as accessible as possible for people with limited mobility or other disabilities. Here are some examples of how we do this:

- Our reception area is accessible to wheelchairs and has hearing loops.
- You can access our service by phone, fax, letter, email, text and Minicom.
- We will arrange home visits for people who need them.

We promote our commitment to providing services to all our customers and colleagues through our B1 magazine, leaflets and annual reports.

## **Recruitment and employment**

We try to recruit the best people to work with us. To help achieve this, our employment practices are designed to treat all job applicants fairly, regardless of their differences.

We collect information on who we employ, promote and train, and how satisfied they are with working at HomeZone Living. We do this to ensure that the mix of people in our workforce reflects the mix of people in the community. We use this information to change the way we work, if needed.

We give our colleagues training in diversity and equal opportunities. We expect them to build good relationships with each other, with our customers and with the communities we serve, based on honesty, respect and equality. We believe this is essential to achieving excellence in the workplace.

We also offer all our colleagues the opportunity to develop their personal and professional skills, as well as job-specific training to help them perform at their best.

## **Our partners, contractors and other suppliers**

We promote equality and fairness when using contractors and other suppliers and partners. To work with us, they must show they are committed to equal opportunities.

We expect everyone who works for us to help provide services that meet all our customers' needs. We are offering our contractors customer-service training to ensure this happens.

## **Leadership**

Our commitment to providing services that meet all our customers' needs and ambitions is reflected in how our Board is made up. Our Board has people with a wide range of skills, experience, ages and backgrounds, and a good balance of men and women.

Our Board members understand why providing services that meet all our customers' needs and wants is essential to us achieving business success, and they receive training on our approach.

The Board sets targets and checks who we employ, house and provide services to, and whether our customers, colleagues and communities are satisfied with our services. We aim to report and investigate any dissatisfaction with our services to make sure we don't accidentally exclude or discriminate unlawfully against any group.

Our senior managers and quality assurance teams check that all our services comply with the relevant laws and regulations, and with best practice. When we identify a gap or a failing, we make sure we deal with it.

## **Customer feedback**

When we consult our customers to help improve and develop our services, we try to get views from all sections of the community. We make a special effort to consult customers who, for various reasons, do not normally give us their views or have not done so in the past.

Our customers help us decide what we should work on next, and we always involve them in deciding any new policy or approach.

## **We won't tolerate harassment**

Our tenancy agreements contain a clause that bans racial and other harassment, and we take action against tenants who break this clause. We also work with local councils and other partners to help communities work together in a neighbourly way. For example, we run social events, and provide mediation for neighbours who are in disagreement to try and defuse conflict and promote understanding.

We check the quality of the environment on our estates. We act quickly to remove graffiti and abandoned cars, and to fix anything that has been vandalised. We want everyone who lives on our estates to feel safe, at home, and enjoy living there.

We don't tolerate bullying or harassment in the workplace, and we take action against anyone who behaves in this way, customers or colleagues.

## **Suggestions and complaints**

If you feel we have treated you unfairly or not followed this equal-opportunities policy, please tell us. We will be happy to give you a leaflet about how to complain.

We also welcome any suggestions for improving our approach to equality and diversity.

If you have difficulty understanding this information or would prefer to receive an alternative format (i.e. translated, audio, Braille or large print) please contact us.

## HomeZone Living

Tel 01543 420800

Minicom 01543 420878

Email [customerservices@homezonehousing.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@homezonehousing.org.uk)

If you are a customer of Bromford Support,  
please speak to the Bromford colleague who is  
working with you for more information.



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