

Policy Name:	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Lead Directorate:	Corporate Services
Authors:	Naz Ahmed, Director of Corporate Services
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APPROVAL PROCESS FOR CURRENT VERSION

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1. Introduction

Poplar HARCA's purpose is rooted in people and place. We work with residents, colleagues, partners and contractors to create opportunities together, deliver safe and respectful services, and support communities. Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to that purpose. They shape how we make decisions, design services, work with residents, support colleagues and hold ourselves to account.

This policy sets out our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. It explains the standards we expect from everyone working for or on behalf of Poplar HARCA, and how we will embed fairness, respect, accessibility and inclusion in our culture, services, employment practices, procurement and governance.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for how Poplar HARCA will promote equality, value diversity and create an inclusive organisation. It supports our legal and regulatory responsibilities, our values (the Poplar HARCA Way), our Code of Conduct and our commitment to providing services that are inclusive for all.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all colleagues, agency workers, contractors, consultants, suppliers, volunteers, Board and Committee members, involved residents acting in formal roles, and anyone delivering services for or on behalf of Poplar HARCA.

It applies to all aspects of our organisation and services, including employment, services to residents, resident contact, complaints, engagement, procurement, partnerships, community activity, communications, decision-making and governance.

4. Legal and regulatory context

Poplar HARCA will comply with all relevant equality, employment, housing legislation and regulation. This includes the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

This policy supports compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the requirements to treat tenants with fairness and respect, understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants, communicate clearly, enable influence and scrutiny, and use data and insight to improve services.

It also supports the Competence and Conduct Standard by linking expected behaviours, professional judgement, resident focus and inclusive practice.

Where relevant, Poplar HARCA will meet external funding and partnership requirements, including the Greater London Authority's Affordable Homes Programme equality, diversity and inclusion expectations. These include EDI training, zero tolerance of discrimination, harassment and bullying, inclusive recruitment, workforce diversity monitoring and publication of gender and ethnicity pay gap information.

5. Policy commitments

Poplar HARCA will embed equality, diversity and inclusion through the following commitments:

- We will treat residents, colleagues, partners and contractors with dignity, respect and fairness.
- We will deliver inclusive, accessible services that meet the diverse needs of our resident.
- We will understand individual circumstances and tailor our approach to ensure everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- We will make space for all voices, especially those that are less often heard, and use resident feedback, complaints, engagement and data to improve outcomes.
- We will communicate clearly, honestly and accessibly, including explaining decisions and next steps.
- We will take a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, hate incidents and abuse.
- We will promote inclusive recruitment, development, progression and leadership, and support colleagues to be competent, confident and accountable.
- We will collect and use workforce and resident insight proportionately and lawfully to identify barriers, monitor fairness and improve services.
- We will make reasonable adjustments where needed and design services with accessibility, vulnerability and support needs in mind.

- We will expect contractors, suppliers and partners to adhere to our policies when working with residents, colleagues and communities.
- We will use equality impact assessment proportionately when developing or reviewing policies, services and significant decisions.
- We will provide equality, diversity and inclusion training and awareness activity appropriate to roles and responsibilities.

6. Our approach

EDI is not a standalone activity. It is part of how we lead, manage, recruit, procure, listen, communicate, resolve complaints, design services and make decisions. We will take a practical and evidence-led approach, focusing on the areas where we can have the greatest impact for residents, colleagues and communities.

We will use the Poplar HARCA Way to bring this policy to life.

- Being resident focused means listening and acting in residents' best interests.
- Being outcome focused means measuring the difference we make, not just activity.
- Being accountable means explaining decisions and learning when things go wrong.
- Being inclusive means valuing difference and making space for all voices.
- Being innovative means challenging old models and finding better ways to meet diverse needs.
- Being resilient means acting with integrity and professionalism, even under pressure.

7. Responsibilities

Board: The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring Poplar HARCA meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities and receives appropriate assurance on equality, diversity and inclusion.

ELT: The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for setting expectations, ensuring resources and governance are in place, and promoting an inclusive culture.

Management: Directors and managers are responsible for applying this policy in their service areas, using evidence and resident insight to identify and address barriers, and supporting colleagues to meet expected standards.

Everyone: All colleagues and people working on our behalf are responsible for treating others with dignity and respect, completing relevant training, following policies and procedures, raising concerns early, challenging unacceptable behaviour safely, and considering equality and inclusion in their day-to-day decisions.

8. Training, awareness and competence

Poplar HARCA will provide equality, diversity and inclusion training and awareness activity appropriate to roles and responsibilities. This will include induction, mandatory learning, manager guidance and targeted development where service risks, resident insight, complaints, workforce data or regulatory requirements indicate a need. Training will be supported by the Code of Conduct, people policies, resident engagement arrangements and service procedures.

9. Raising concerns and responding to unacceptable behaviour

We want concerns to be raised early so they can be addressed fairly and promptly. Concerns may be raised through line management, People and Development, complaints, safeguarding, whistleblowing, contract management or governance routes, depending on the circumstances. We will protect people who raise genuine concerns from victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

10. Monitoring, assurance and reporting

Implementation of this policy will be monitored through the following

- workforce data and training completion
- resident insight,
- complaints analysis,
- service access and satisfaction data,
- equality impact assessments,
- audit findings,
- contractor performance

We will use this evidence to identify issues, understand root causes, agree actions and track improvement.

11. Policy review

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation, regulation, organisational priorities, resident insight or significant equality issues indicate that an earlier review is needed.

11. Impact assessment

How does the policy contribute to Poplar HARCA's corporate strategy and other aims?	The policy supports Poplar HARCA's corporate strategy by embedding fairness, inclusion, resident voice and accountability in decision-making, service delivery, employment, procurement and governance. It supports resident trust, service satisfaction, compliance, workforce culture and strong foundations.
Which group(s) of people will benefit from the policy? If any group could be disadvantaged, what is the mitigation or justification?	Residents, colleagues, contractors, partners, visitors and communities will benefit from clearer expectations, fairer access to services, inclusive employment practices and stronger use of insight. No group is expected to be disadvantaged. Where potential disadvantage is identified, reasonable adjustments, accessible communication, tailored support, consultation and service redesign will be considered.
Equality considerations	The policy is expected to have a positive equality impact. It directly supports compliance with the Equality Act 2010, including consideration of protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments. It promotes use of data, resident insight, complaints learning and equality impact assessment to identify and reduce barriers.
How have residents been involved in developing the policy? If they have not been involved, why not?	The policy has been informed by recent resident engagement and organisational work on values, behaviours, resident voice, complaints learning and the Code of Conduct. Resident scrutiny and feedback will continue to inform implementation, review and improvement, particularly through complaints, satisfaction insight, Estate Boards, Joint Estate Panel and engagement activity.
How will the policy be monitored and measured? (e.g. performance indicators?)	Monitoring will include workforce diversity data, recruitment and progression data, training completion, gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting, complaints and satisfaction analysis, service access data, equality impact assessments, audit findings, contractor assurance and governance reporting.
If any, what are the Value for Money implications?	The policy supports value for money by helping to prevent discrimination, reduce avoidable complaints and service failure, improve resident trust, support workforce engagement and retention, and target resources where evidence shows they will have the greatest impact.