

Policy:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Date effective from:	May 2019
Date approved:	July 2016 Minor amendment to policy approved by Executive Directors 21 May 2019
Approved by:	Executive Directors
Lead director:	Hugh Owen, Director of Strategy and Public Affairs
Applicable to:	The Riverside Group, including all subsidiaries
In consultation with:	Equality & Diversity Best Practice Group Equality & Diversity Staff Groups Executive Directors Board of Irvine Housing Association Impact Board
Review date:	Three-year cyclical review May 2020
Associated documents:	Hate Crime and Harassment Policy and procedures Domestic Abuse Policy and procedures (for both staff and customers) Aids and Adaptations Policy and procedures Safeguarding/Child Protection and Adult Support and Protection Policies Modern Slavery statement



Name of policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how The Riverside Group is committed to supporting and promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I). This commitment is embraced by our governing Boards and informs all of our activities and their impact on our customers, employees and other stakeholders.

2. Policy

Riverside aims to:

- Prevent discrimination, eliminate prejudice, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity within the organisation.
- Be fair in our dealings with all people - board members, staff, customers, volunteers and partners - with whom we have relationships taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and backgrounds.
- Ensure that ED&I is embedded in everything we do.

Our policy covers all aspects of equality including race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age (as specified by the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012).

Our policy applies to everyone who receives a service from us, forms part of our governance, is employed by us or volunteers their services. We will also seek to ensure that anyone who works on our behalf demonstrates commitment to ED&I.

The policy will help us deliver our vision of ‘transforming lives; revitalising neighbourhoods’ and uphold all our values. It underlines our commitment to develop as an open and inclusive organisation, a key priority set out within the Corporate Plan.

It also aims to ensure that we comply with all our legal and regulatory responsibilities; current requirements are set out principally in the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights legislation and by the English and Scottish Housing Regulators.

As a Group wide policy it has been the subject of consultation with customers, board members, employees and staff groups, and sets out to reflect their requirements and priorities.

We will:

- Comply with all legal and regulatory requirements which apply to the Equality Act's protected characteristics (see definitions).
- Comply with the Scotland Act 1998 and any subsequent legislation e.g. Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and 2010 to ensure that equal opportunities requirements are met (see definitions).
- Ensure that Group Board, the boards of any subsidiaries, and the Leadership Team are accountable for the embedding of our ED&I approach and for monitoring our performance.
- Promote equality through all of our activities as an employer, partner, influencer and service provider
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure our partners, suppliers and groups connected to us are actively committed to ED&I principles.
- Actively encourage customers and staff to engage with us in shaping the organisation and its services.
- Ensure that colleagues comply with our policies on hate crime and harassment, promoting community cohesion in our neighbourhoods.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures conform with the ED&I policy.

To achieve this we will:

Adopt clear strategies

- Devise a group-wide action plan and review it each year, reporting the outcomes to Group Board.
- Use our ED&I demographic model to enable regional and departmental action planning.
- Put in place appropriate resources to deliver our objectives.

Use information and analysis to drive strategy and action

- Carry out equality impact assessments on all policies and significant change programmes to ensure they deliver our ED&I objectives.
- Collect, review, and measure data on a regular basis to inform us on ED&I performance including governance, recruitment, staffing, lettings, complaints and satisfaction.
- Summarise the data gathered, within a demographic context where relevant, and report to Executive Directors and Group Board with appropriate recommendations to support assurance and management of risk.
- Provide a full explanation of why information is collected and what we use it for, treating sensitive personal data confidentially and only for the purposes of promoting and ensuring equality and fairness and improving outcomes.
- Take active steps to address any issues identified by the above reporting.

Embed best practice

- Ensure that all board and committee members, staff and volunteers receive regular, relevant and up to date training and support to enable them to champion and meet the organisation’s policy objectives.
- In particular seek to help employees understand how to address prejudice and unconscious bias.
- Support individual commitment to and ownership of ED&I objectives by ensuring that appraisal conversations focus on Riverside’s Ways of Working.
- Ensure that ED&I informs every aspect of our approach to customer care.
- Support and promote our ED&I staff groups, allocating resources which are sufficient for their remit.
- Ensure that through our procurement processes we appoint partners and suppliers with a robust and compliant approach to ED&I.
- Provide guidance and support on all aspects of ED&I by reference to our best practice group and sector experts.
- Actively encourage people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Have in place reasonable and accessible procedures and approaches to support ED&I

- Make a clear commitment to customers on how we meet service requirements.
- Support effective communication by providing a range of contact methods, shaped to customers’ requirements, including effective use of digital services.
- Ensure that no current or potential customer is discriminated against by letting or selling a property on less favourable terms due to a protected characteristic.
- Ensure that all human resources and recruitment procedures reflect the principles in this policy including equality of opportunity; this includes flexible working arrangements to help maximise the potential of all current and potential employees, and relevant procedures for board and committee members.
- Have up to date and recognised procedures for the management of incidences of domestic abuse, hate crime and other forms of abuse and discrimination.
- Involve customers in shaping and scrutinising services.
- Have procedures in place to ensure our properties comply with our legal obligations to meet requirements arising from disability and other protected characteristics including Aids and Adaptations procedures for customers.
- Recognise that disability includes mental health and that not all disabilities are visible.
- Ensure that our workplace is both compliant with legislation and welcoming to those with particular requirements regarding accessibility

	<p>and that this extends to use of other venues and conduct of meetings.</p> <p>— Recognise that some vulnerable groups of people may need particular support and address this by having robust procedures in relation to Safeguarding/Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection and Modern Slavery.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Definitions</p> <p>Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics.</p> <p>Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all staff and service users are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.</p> <p>Promoting diversity is about recognising that everyone is different and creating a working environment that values each customer and employee ensuring that services are delivered that suit all sections of the community.</p> <p>Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.</p> <p>Protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 are: race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age.</p> <p>Equal Opportunities within the Scotland Act 1998 refers to the elimination, regulation and prevention of discrimination across a number of areas: sex, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin or other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Notes</p> <p>This policy will be communicated to all key stakeholders and made available upon request.</p> <p>Riverside’s Group Board must agree any material changes to this policy statement.</p> <p>All Riverside policies should contain the following wording:</p> <p><i>‘This policy aligns with the Riverside Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment’.</i></p>