

Nottingham City Homes  
**Equality and Diversity Policy**

## **Who are Nottingham City Homes?**

Nottingham City Homes (NCH) is an Arms Length Management Organisation where the housing stock remains in the ownership of Nottingham City Council. Nottingham City Homes is responsible for the management of 32,000 homes in Nottingham.

## **Who is this document for?**

This policy is for tenants and leaseholders, employees, partners, contractors and members of the public.

## **What is it about?**

The Equality and Diversity Policy sets out what Nottingham City Homes stands for - and what it is committed to - around Equality and Diversity.

Every member of staff is bound by their conditions of employment to uphold this Equality and Diversity Policy.

A further document – the Equality and Diversity Strategy – describes specific actions the Company will do to deliver on its commitment. These are set out in the action plan attached to the Equality and Diversity Strategy.

A summary version of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy is available.

We are happy to provide copies of any of these documents in other formats such as in large print, in Braille, on disk or in community languages. Please contact us on:

T 0115 915 7306 or 915 7268

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# Nottingham City Homes Equality and Diversity Policy

## Contents

Section	Page
1. Introduction	i
2. Nottingham City Homes Equality and Diversity Policy Summary Statement	1
3. The Vision for Nottingham	2
4. Background to the Policy	2
5. The aims of this policy	2
6. Putting the policy into practice	4
7. Employment practices	5
8. Providing services	7
9. Decision-making and our policies	8
10. Working with others	8
11. Buying services from others	8
12. Involving communities and consulting with others	9
13. Detailed Equality and Diversity Statements	10
a) Black and minority ethnic communities	10
b) Disabled people	11
c) Gender and transgender identity	12
d) Lesbians, gay men and bisexuals	13
e) Age	13
f) Religious or other beliefs	14
15. What to do if something goes wrong	15
Appendix: Definitions	16

# Nottingham City Homes Equality and Diversity Policy Summary Statement

Nottingham City Homes believes and recognises that the diversity of Nottingham's communities is a huge asset that should be valued and seen as one of the Company's great strengths.

As a major employer in Nottingham and the main provider of housing, the Company is committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, harassment and intimidation, and disadvantage. We are also committed to achieving the highest standards in service delivery, decision-making and employment practice. Equality of opportunity for all sections of the community and workforce is an integral part of this commitment.

The Company will not tolerate the less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of their gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents, trade union or political activities, religious or other beliefs, or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

In driving forward this policy we will:

1. Seek to ensure that our workforce reflects the diverse communities we serve and that every employee is treated fairly during the whole of their working life.
2. Take action to eradicate discrimination and inequality when delivering services, when employing or partnering others to deliver services on our behalf and when providing funding to others to provide services to the people of Nottingham.
3. Fulfil our obligations by adopting legal, national and local guidelines that seek to ensure equality of opportunity, eradicate discrimination and promote good relations between all the communities of Nottingham.
4. Evaluate the impact of our policies, services and functions on communities and make changes to them where they impact unfairly or adversely on any group/s.
5. Make equalities a part of everyday working practice and train our employees to carry out this policy.
6. Set challenging equality and diversity objectives and targets in relation to employment, service delivery and the carrying out of our functions.
7. Support the City Council in seeking to make it possible for everyone in the City to participate fully in the life of Nottingham.
8. Make any necessary changes to our working practices and our publicly available information so that the Company and its services are accessible to all.
9. Work with others to stamp out harassment and intimidation.
10. Use our influence and purchasing power to help make equality a reality for all and to help the City Council rid the City of prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage.
11. Consult with people from all the diverse communities in Nottingham to help shape the services we deliver and our policies and practices.
12. Consider the needs of all communities in the methods we use for communicating with customers, employees and residents.

## The Vision for Nottingham

As the leading City in the East Midlands, with a population of around 270,000 people, Nottingham City Homes wants to assist the City Council in their aim for Nottingham to be:

- **A safer, cleaner, ambitious Nottingham - a city we're all proud of**
  - Creating local jobs for local people and being the employer of choice
  - Developing cohesive communities and a strong sense of citizenship
  - Improving services for children and young people
  - Improving services for adults in need
  - Improving services for vulnerable older people
  - Improving performance and customer focus

## Background to the policy

Nottingham is home to around 650,000 people, of which 270,000 live within the City Council boundaries served by Nottingham City Homes. It is also the regional capital of the East Midlands and a major centre for cultural and leisure activities, with many more people coming to the City to study, work, shop or relax.

The people who live, work, study in or visit Nottingham, have diverse backgrounds and circumstances. They are of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, disabled and non-disabled, from all faiths, and all sexual orientations. They live in a range of different types of household and have access to widely differing levels of income. As a City there are extremes of wealth, with some areas of Nottingham being amongst the most deprived in the country.

These diverse communities are a great asset to Nottingham. However, some communities experience disadvantage and discrimination that has a negative effect on their quality of life. Although, this can affect all communities, most often it is women, black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, young and old people, lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people that are affected.

Nottingham City Homes is a major employer in Nottingham, employing around 1,250 people. We also spend millions of pounds every year to directly provide housing services to the residents of Nottingham City Council owned homes.

By adopting and implementing an Equality and Diversity Policy we accept our responsibility for addressing and tackling the imbalances caused by disadvantage and discrimination, so that we can make sure all communities have opportunities to access our services, be involved in what we do and be part of our workforce. We recognise that there is a great deal of work we still need to do and we hope that this policy will act as a means and impetus for carrying out this important work.

## The aims of this policy

We believe our responsibility for equality and diversity is wider than those areas currently covered by present legislation. We are committed to achieving equality for all by removing direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age;
- Gender or transgender identity;
- Race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin, being a traveller or gypsy;
- Disability, including deaf people, blind people, people with a learning disability, people with a mental illness, and people living with HIV and AIDS;
- Religious belief or non-belief, or other beliefs;
- Marital status, family circumstances, or caring responsibilities;
- Sexual orientation;
- Income, employment status or housing circumstances;
- Membership or non-membership of trade unions, or involvement or non-involvement in trade union activity;
- Any other ground that cannot be shown to be justified.

One of the Company's key objectives is:

**“To promote access, equality of opportunity and diversity, both as an employer and service provider”**

We will do this by:

- Meeting all our responsibilities for equal opportunities in relevant legislation, codes of practice and Company policies or strategies;
- Making equality and diversity a mainstream to our work. This means making sure that all aspects of what we do, such as our policies, plans, practices and procedures, reflect and incorporate equality objectives and targets;
- Setting challenging equality objectives and targets in relation to employment and service delivery.
- Tackling all forms of bullying, harassment and intimidation;
- Taking positive action to address social, economic and geographical disadvantage;
- Making equalities the responsibility of every Board Member, Manager, employee and representative of the Company
- Use the “Social Model of Disability” as the basis for our work to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination against disabled people;
- Training our employees to implement this policy;
- Making copies of this policy freely available in a range of community languages, Braille, large print and tape version, on video in British Sign Language, as a printed document or in

an electronic format so that it can be emailed or obtained from our Internet Site or Intranet Site.

- Monitoring the actions we take under this policy and publicly report on progress;
- Making our services and the buildings we deliver them from more accessible. This includes offering a range of ways for customers and users to obtain our services and information;
- Improving the diversity of our workforce so that it truly reflects the population we serve, and;
- Working with Nottingham's diverse communities to tackle disadvantage and discrimination

## **Putting the policy into practice**

### **Responsibility**

The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Company's Strategic Board, who will ensure that the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team have systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis.

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group is responsible for developing and delivering this policy and the Company's equality and diversity objectives generally, on an ongoing basis and comprises of the Executive Directors and the Action on Diversity Team.

This Group will produce quarterly reports to the Strategic Board and company's "Champion" for Equality and Diversity on the progress of this policy and other equalities initiatives. It will meet regularly to drive forward the Company's work on equality and diversity. The members will be responsible for ensuring that the Directorate they represent carries out the work necessary to adopt and implement this policy.

The Company has set up a team of officers to work on equalities issues. This team is called the Action on Diversity Team. The team carries out work including monitoring in relation to this policy and other equalities work which affects the Company.

As a contractor of the City, we have an obligation to put this or similar policies into practice. Therefore, we will provide training and advice to our employees on their specific responsibilities under this policy.

## **Co-ordinating this policy with other Company strategies and plans**

### **Performance management and Equalities**

Equality and diversity issues are central to the way in which we carry out our duties on behalf of Nottingham City Council. Best Value also requires us to continuously improve the way we do our work and deliver our services. As part of Best Value we will have to review our services to make sure they are efficient, effective and economical by providing good value for money.

As part of Best Value we will ensure equalities issues are addressed within the company's performance management systems. We will also ensure guidance on how to incorporate equality and diversity issues within Best Value and performance management is available to managers and those involved in service planning.

We will include measurable objectives and targets in our Company Plan and Service Plans.

We will continue to work to meet all relevant Best Value and local Performance targets relating to equality and diversity.

## **Other plans and strategies**

We will ensure that equality and diversity aims are reflected in all plans and strategies that form the infrastructure of the Company.

In addition, our Equality and Diversity Strategy will set out specific actions that the Company as a whole will do to deliver on its commitments around Equality and Diversity.

## **The Company's Equality and Diversity Action Plan**

We will produce an Equality and Diversity Action Plan to show how we will be implementing this policy.

The action plan will be updated yearly to reflect changes in the action plan and the wishes of communities, following ongoing consultation with people from all communities. This Action Plan will be included in the Equality and Diversity Strategy document.

## **Making sure our employees know about the policy**

Employees are required to comply with and support the Company's policies in relation to equality. Failure to do so may result in action being taken against employees. The Company will ensure that all our employees:-

- Are made fully aware of the Equality and Diversity Policy and Strategy and how they affect their work;
- Understand any action plans relevant to them and their responsibilities for implementing these plans, and;
- Are provided with a copy of a summary statement version of this policy and the Strategy.

We will also issue a shortened version of this document as part of the information given to everyone who applies for a job or training with the Company, and to any contractor or organisation employed by the Company to carry out work on our behalf. This is to ensure that anyone seeking work knows about our policy and that anyone seeking contracts or work from us will be clear about the expectations that the Company will have of them and their own employees.

## Employment practices

Nottingham City Homes will:

- Seek to develop a workforce that reflects the diverse population we serve, by taking steps to ensure that people from groups currently under-represented in our workforce are encouraged to obtain employment with us. This includes setting targets each year in relation to recruitment and the retention of employees.
- Have regard to equality and diversity in all aspects of employment, from advertising vacancies, recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, training and personal development, to reasons for ending employment. We will do this by:
  - Asking only for the skills, abilities and qualities actually needed to do the job.
  - Including in all jobs a requirement to implement equality and respect diversity, with all job applicants being assessed against this requirement;
  - Advertising jobs using methods that reach all communities and in particular methods that allow all groups who are currently under-represented in the workforce to be targeted;
  - Providing job details and accepting job applications in formats such as large print, Braille and audio, offering a mini com service for job queries and making arrangements for the use of interpreters if required in the selection process;
  - Valuing skills gained through non-traditional or informal work, such as voluntary work and caring responsibilities. The competencies gained through this kind of experience will be balanced against those gained through more formal methods;
  - Making sure that all job applicants, existing employees or people who do not currently work for the Company demonstrate that they are qualified, motivated and competent to do the job;
  - Recognising and supporting the potential of all employees by offering opportunities for training and personal development.

Specifically address disability issues by:

- Interviewing all disabled applicants who, at the short-listing stage, show that they meet the requirements to do the job;
- Making sure that there is a system in place to discuss with disabled employees and Jobcentre Plus Access to Work Schemes what we and they can do to make sure that disabled employees can develop and use their abilities;
- Promoting the Company as a supportive employer of disabled people and by encouraging employees to declare that they are disabled;
- Making every effort if employees become disabled to ensure they retain their employment with the Company;
- Taking action to ensure that all employees are trained to be able to implement our commitments to disabled people;

- On a yearly basis review our commitments against what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and inform employees and the Employment Service about progress and future plans.
- Keep records of applicants' and employees' race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief and where possible, in the future, sexual orientation, to make sure this policy is working properly.
- Promote Work-Life Balance policies and procedures for employees.
- Make sure the working environment is supportive and non-threatening by not tolerating any acts of discrimination or harassment, and by introducing standards of behaviour contained within a code of conduct for all our employees. We will implement and review our policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment at work.
- Monitor all cases of disciplinary action and carry out work to ensure that this action does not disproportionately affect any specific group of employees.
- Monitor all cases where employees bring a grievance against the Company, their manager or a work colleague and take appropriate action to ensure that grievances do not unfairly or adversely affect any specific group of employees.
- Access funding to provide workplace adaptations and aids to enable disabled people to obtain and retain employment with the Company.
- Ensure that all managers discuss this policy and any relevant action plans with their teams, including how they can contribute to achieving our equality and diversity aims and objectives. Managers will deal with any breaches of the policy and failure to carry out relevant action plans. Failure to tackle issues of discrimination or harassment could result in line managers being held liable for such action.
- Recognise that the Trade Unions representing employees make a valuable contribution to equality. We will continue to work closely with Trade Unions to develop our Equality and Diversity Policy and action plans.

## **Providing Services**

Nottingham City Homes will:

- Run our services in line with the core values, priorities and principles identified in our Company Strategic Plan and other Service Plans and strategies.
- Deliver services throughout Nottingham to people who need them, without discriminating against, stigmatising or patronising people. Every customer or service user will be treated in a professional manner, with courtesy and respect.
- Set challenging equality objectives and targets in relation to service delivery and the carrying out of our functions.
- Continually improve access to our services and to information provided.
- Working with the Council to ensure that the buildings that we use and that are open to the public, including community facilities, can be accessed and used by all communities.

- ❑ Make sure that our employees are trained and supported to deliver the highest possible levels of customer service in line with this policy.
- ❑ Make sure that our services meet the needs of our diverse communities by involving communities in identifying their needs and by seeking to meet these needs.
- ❑ Develop our services to make sure there is maximum take up by all communities and particularly those groups facing disadvantage and discrimination. We will do this by:
  - Providing information in plain English and use methods other than written documents to present information as appropriate;
  - Offering information in accessible formats, including spoken community languages, Braille, large print, audio tape, on video in British Sign Language and on the Internet, in line with a Communications Policy and this policy;
  - Providing interpretation, translation and sign language services as appropriate, in line with a Communications Policy and this policy.
- ❑ Make sure that the organisations we buy services from or provide funding to operate similar policies and practices on equality and diversity.

## **Decision-making and our policies**

Nottingham City Homes will:

- ❑ Consider the potential impact and assess the effect on customers and communities of our policies, practices and decisions, taking action if they may result in discrimination or disadvantage to any groups or communities.
- ❑ Develop a robust system for carrying out equality impact assessments in relation to all the work we do, including existing policies and services.
- ❑ Commit to consulting with communities, community groups and organisations, over proposals or changes to services, policies or functions carried out by the Company, before implementing changes.
- ❑ Produce a report annually outlining the major changes or developments in relation to equality and diversity. This report will also outline the Company's progress in relation to any requirements specified by the City Council in relation to the Equality Standard for Local Government, Race Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme.
- ❑ Use the feedback we receive from the City's diverse communities to help shape future plans, decisions and policies.

## **Working with others**

Nottingham City Homes will:

- ❑ Use our position in the City to help shape public opinion to promote equality and diversity within Nottingham;
- ❑ Insist that our customers respect our staff and conduct themselves in an acceptable and non-threatening way. We will take action where their behaviour is unacceptable.

- ❑ Share information, experience and examples of good practice on equality through links with other public, private, voluntary and community organisations in the City;
- ❑ Promote equality and diversity within partnership working and in our dealings with the media;
- ❑ Work with other organisations and our partners, including the City Council, to develop plans jointly to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination and disadvantage;
- ❑ Involve people from Nottingham's diverse communities in influencing our work and progress on equality
- ❑ Learn from the equality and diversity policies and plans of other Arms Length Management Organisations and local authorities and organisations.

## **Buying services from others**

Nottingham City Homes is a major purchaser of services. Every year we issue construction and engineering contracts worth many millions of pounds. We purchase many other things so that we can carry out our work and deliver our services. We have recognised that our spending power gives us the chance to influence how others work too, and we will:

- ❑ Require any company or business that wishes to be one of our contractors or suppliers to have developed policies on equalities in relation to employment and service delivery.
- ❑ Seek to encourage any company, business or individual wishing to provide goods or services to the Company to contribute to our policy by implementing fair practices in employment and training.
- ❑ Seek to support the City's diverse communities and the businesses operating in those communities.
- ❑ Review our own policies and practices and where necessary make changes to them to ensure they do not discriminate or place unfair requirements on small businesses from Nottingham's deprived or disadvantaged communities.
- ❑ Encourage businesses and suppliers to employ and provide training to local people and to use other local businesses and suppliers as a means of supporting the City's economy and improving the employment prospects for the people of Nottingham.
- ❑ Monitor the practices of any contractor or business we employ, contract or purchase from to ensure they act in accordance with our policies on equality and diversity.
- ❑ Cease issuing contracts to, purchasing from or commissioning any contractor, business or organisation, where we believe they fail to comply with our values in relation to equality and diversity.
- ❑ Follow good practice by having a procurement strategy that gives a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination and disadvantage.

## **Involving communities and consulting with others**

Nottingham City Homes will:

- ❑ Develop and support all forms of consultation and the involvement of communities in the planning of services and decision-making.

- Target resources at communities facing disadvantage and discrimination to help them to become fully involved in the social, cultural, political and economic life of the City.
- Make sure there is a range of appropriate ways to allow different communities to be consulted and involved.
- Develop effective working relationships with all the diverse communities in the City through appropriate groups, forums and networks.
- Involve Nottingham's diverse communities in verifying the work we do in relation to equality and diversity.
- Work closely with partner organisations.
- Set up opportunities in local communities for people to be involved in planning services and influencing decision-making.

## Detailed Equality and Diversity Statements

These statements explain how Nottingham City Homes' Equality and Diversity Policy relates to some of the main groups of people who most often face discrimination and disadvantage. The statements are in addition to the information given in the main parts of this policy. Where the company does not currently have a statement, these will be developed.

- ❑ **BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES (Race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality and immigration status. Travellers are included within this category as a distinct racial group).**

Nottingham City Homes knows that Black and Minority Ethnic communities face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that one race is better than another. This kind of belief is usually called racism. Racism covers these kinds of negative beliefs whether they are based on race, colour, and nationality, national or ethnic origin, being a Traveller or because of someone's immigration status. It is Black and Minority Ethnic communities who most commonly experience disadvantage or discrimination because of racism. Racism can result in Black and Minority Ethnic people being treated as inferior and being denied a good quality of life. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 was implemented following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. This inquiry showed that public institutions could be institutionally racist and discriminate, even though they have policies in place. This act requires the City Council to publish a Race Equality Scheme, which is an action plan on race equality. Nottingham City Homes will work with the City Council towards this Race Equality Scheme and will ensure that actions set out in the Scheme are included within the company's Equality and Diversity Strategy and action plan.

Nottingham City Homes will try to meet the specific needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities by:

- ❑ Carrying out our duties under the law including the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, to stop discrimination, provide equality of opportunity and promote good race relations,
- ❑ Working with Nottingham City Council's Race Equality Scheme as it relates to our housing management responsibilities;
- ❑ Challenging racism by any of our employees, Board Members, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of our services;
- ❑ Dealing effectively and consistently with racial harassment and violence, both in the workplace and in the neighbourhoods in Nottingham;
- ❑ Supporting campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for Black and Minority Ethnic people;
- ❑ Working with others to make Nottingham a safe place for Black and Minority Ethnic communities to live, work, study and spend their leisure time;
- ❑ Supporting all Black and Minority Ethnic employees to fully develop their potential;
- ❑ Aiming to develop an overall workforce that better reflects Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Nottingham, especially at senior manager level;

- Carrying out specific work to ensure that Black and Minority Ethnic employees are not adversely affected by the Company employment procedures;
- Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for Black and Minority Ethnic employees and service users
- Reviewing all our policies, services and functions in order to identify objectives and targets for improving race equality.

We recognise that Black and Minority Ethnic people are part of diverse communities and that racism affects these communities in different ways. We will take responsibility for making sure we meet the range of needs that arise from this.

We also recognise that Black and Minority Ethnic people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their age, gender, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, because they are disabled or because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual or transgender. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of Black and minority ethnic communities.

- **DISABLED PEOPLE (including deaf people, blind people, people with learning difficulties, people with a mental illness, and people living with HIV and AIDS,)**

Nottingham City Homes knows that disabled people face discrimination and disadvantage, including institutional discrimination. This is because of the attitudes and actions based on the belief that disabled people are less able than other people. These kinds of beliefs are based on an idea that disabled people are impaired in some way, rather than recognising that it is other people, organisations and systems in society that create barriers which prevent disabled people from having a full quality of life and realising their full potential.

This can mean that disabled people are the subject of negative stereotypes or attitudes. They are often patronised by other people and not given the same access to the full range of services, social work and leisure opportunities as other people. Disabled people can also face harassment, hatred and violence.

Nottingham City Homes uses the “Social Model of Disability” as the basis for its work to improve equality for and tackle discrimination against disabled people. This model says that it is the world and society that creates barriers that limit or prevent disabled people from enjoying the same opportunities as people who are not disabled.

The Company will try and meet the specific needs of disabled people by:

- Carrying out our duties under the law, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, to stop discrimination and to provide equality of opportunity,
- Promoting positive images of disabled people and challenge attitudes that patronise or discriminate against them;
- Dealing effectively and consistently with any harassment and violence towards disabled people;
- Developing our services and the environments we deliver them from, to remove barriers preventing disabled people from having the same access as other people;

- ❑ Specifically recognising British Sign Language as a main method of communication for Deaf people and increasing the number of frontline employees who can communicate proficiently in British Sign Language.
- ❑ Supporting campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for disabled people;
- ❑ Work with others to make Nottingham a safe and accessible place in which disabled people can live, work, study and spend their leisure time;
- ❑ Aiming to develop a workforce that better reflects the disabled communities in Nottingham;
- ❑ Supporting all disabled employees to fully develop their potential;
- ❑ Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for disabled employees of the Company, service users with a disability or who care for people with disabilities
- ❑ Work in conjunction with the City Council's Disability Equality Scheme

We also recognise that disabled people can face other forms of discrimination or disadvantage because of their race, age, gender, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of disabled people.

## **GENDER AND TRANSGENDER IDENTITY**

Nottingham City Homes knows that people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination, because of their gender or gender identity. This is because of attitudes and actions based on the belief that one gender is better than another. This kind of belief is usually described as sexism. Women often experience disadvantage or discrimination because of sexism. Sexism can mean that women are the subjects of negative stereotypes and attitudes, treated as inferior, and denied the same quality of life as men. It can also mean they face harassment, hatred and violence. There are also times when men can experience discrimination due to sexism.

Transgender people also face inequality and discrimination because of their transgender identity. This can be due to fear, a lack of understanding, or because of hatred and intolerance.

The Company will try and meet the needs of different gender groups and transgender people by:

- ❑ Carrying out our duties under the law including the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Equal Pay Act 1970 and the Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999, to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity,
- ❑ Challenging sexism by our Board Members, contractors, partners, employees, other organisations and users of our services;
- ❑ Dealing effectively and consistently with sexual harassment and violence;
- ❑ Supporting campaigns and activities for achieving full equality for all genders;
- ❑ Working with others to make Nottingham a safe place in which all can live, work, study and spend their leisure time;
- ❑ Supporting all employees to fully develop their potential;
- ❑ Aiming to develop an overall workforce that better reflects an equal balance of women and men, especially at senior levels;
- ❑ Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for all employees of the Company and for all genders
- ❑ Supporting all genders in areas where they experience inequality and discrimination.

We also recognise that all genders and transgender people can face other forms of discrimination and disadvantage because of their race, age, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, because they are disabled or because they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of women.

## **LESBIANS, GAY MEN AND BISEXUALS (LGB)**

Nottingham City Homes knows that lesbians, gay men and bisexual people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination. This is because of the attitudes and actions based on the belief that same sex relationships between lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are wrong or unnatural– often described as homophobia – or the belief that the lives of heterosexual people are better or more valid.

The Company will try to meet the specific needs of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals by:

- Challenging homophobia by our employees, Board Members, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of our services;
- Carrying out our duties under the law including the Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity.
- Dealing effectively and consistently with any harassment and violence towards heterosexuals, lesbians, gay men, or bisexuals, including in neighbourhoods;
- Supporting campaigns and activities for achieving full equality, including legal equality, for lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals;
- Working with others to make Nottingham a safe place for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people to live, work, study and spend their leisure time;
- Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for lesbian,gay, bisexual and transgender employees of the Company and service users
- Supporting the right of lesbian, gay, and bisexual service users, employees and others we work with to be open about who they are. We will do this by creating an atmosphere and environment where it is safe for them to do so, by acknowledging that relationships between people of the same gender are equally valid to those between men and women, and by not assuming that employees or users of services are heterosexual;
- Specifically providing the same tenancy rights to lesbians, gay men and bisexual people as heterosexual people.

However, we recognise that the ways we deal with other forms of discrimination may not be appropriate to deal with homophobia. Because of the nature of this type of discrimination, lesbians, gay men, and bisexual employees and users of services may not always feel able to disclose who they are. This can mean that services are designed and delivered in a way that may be inappropriate for these groups. We will work with individuals and groups who are part of the wider lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities to make sure our policies in this area are effective. We will work to eliminate assumptions that all our employees, users of services and others we work with are heterosexual.

We also recognise that lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals can face other forms of discrimination and disadvantage because of their race, age, gender, marital status, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or because they are disabled. We will make sure our policies to tackle these issues include ways to address the needs of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

## **AGE**

Nottingham City Homes knows that young people and older people face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination. This is because of the attitudes and actions based on views or beliefs held about young or older people. This discrimination is known as ageism and can particularly affect people seeking employment or services.

The Company will specifically try to meet the needs of young people and older people by:

- ❑ Challenging ageism by our employees, Board Members, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of our services;
- ❑ Carry out our duties under the laws as they develop to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity;
- ❑ Reviewing our own policies in relation to the retirement of staff and the employment of people over retirement age;
- ❑ Dealing effectively and consistently with any harassment and violence towards young people or older people;
- ❑ Supporting campaigns and activities for achieving full equality, including legal equality, for people of all ages;
- ❑ Working with others to make Nottingham a safe place for people of all ages to live, work, study and in which to spend their leisure time;
- ❑ Supporting the formation of groups, networks and services for young and older employees of the Company and service users

## **RELIGIOUS AND OTHER BELIEFS**

We know that people from various religious faiths or with strong religious or other beliefs face disadvantage and discrimination, including institutional discrimination. The Company will seek to ensure that people can worship and express their religious and other beliefs freely, without fear of intimidation and that an individual's choice to practice their religion or belief is respected. The Company will respect the right of every citizen and employee to hold political and other beliefs, or to be a member of a Trade Union if they wish.

However, the Company will not permit its employees to impose on others, their religious, political or other views or philosophies, where these seek to limit the dignity or rights of others, cause offence, or incite racial, religious or other hatred, whilst carrying out their employment.

In order to support the rights of individuals to worship freely or to hold beliefs, Nottingham City Homes will:

- ❑ Challenge religious and other intolerance by our employees, Board Members, contractors, partners, other organisations and users of our services;
- ❑ Carrying out our duties under the law including the Employment (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, to stop discrimination and provide equality of opportunity,
- ❑ Deal effectively and consistently with any harassment and violence towards people practicing their chosen religion or belief;
- ❑ Support campaigns and activities for achieving full equality.
- ❑ Work with others to make Nottingham a safe place for people from all religions and beliefs to live, work, study and in which to spend their leisure time; and
- ❑ Campaign against organisations who incite religious, racial and other hatred.

## **OTHER CATEGORIES**

We will review the policy statements from time to time and may add other categories of people who experience discrimination and disadvantage.

The Company's equality and diversity policy is not confined to the groups listed. The policy is intended to outline the Company's commitment to personal and collective freedom, to tackling inequality wherever it exists and to eradicating the unacceptable treatment of any person, when this happens.

## **What to do if something goes wrong**

### **Members of the public**

If you think we are not providing a service in line with this policy or you think you have been treated unfairly in any way, you can complain to the Company. Our complaints procedure explains how you can do this. You can obtain a copy of this procedure from most Nottingham City Homes offices, by telephoning 0115 915 7400 or emailing [customer.services@nottinghamhomes.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@nottinghamhomes.org.uk). You can make a complaint by telephoning or by writing to the section or part of the Company you are unhappy with.

### **Company employees**

If you are concerned about any equality issues relating to your employment you can speak to your line manager, or to the Company's HR section.

If you feel embarrassed, humiliated, offended, distressed, alarmed, apprehensive or fearful because of someone else's behaviour towards you, you have the right to make a complaint and ask for the behaviour to be stopped. The Company's Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure explain how to do this and how you can get support from the Mediation Service. You can find out more information by speaking to the HR Department or from the Company's Intranet site.

You also have the right to take up issues through the Grievance Procedure. You can obtain information about this procedure from your line manager, the Company's HR section or the Company's Intranet site.

If you are in a Trade Union, you can contact them for advice and support. Please refer to your local Trade Union representative for more details.

### **Let us know what you think**

We welcome your comments and suggestions at any time. Please contact the company's Action on Diversity Team on 0115 915 7306 or 0115 915 7268 if you wish to discuss this policy or make any comments or suggestions on the work we are aiming to do to carry out this policy. You can also email us on [actionondiversity@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:actionondiversity@nottinghamcity.gov.uk).

We are happy to provide copies of this document in other formats such as in large print, in Braille, on disk or in community languages. Please contact us using the details above.

## Appendix: Definitions

### Access to Work Scheme

The Access to Work programme is a government funding scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. It provides financial assistance towards the extra costs of employing someone with a disability.

### Community Cohesion

The Local Government Association provides the following definition of community cohesion. Community cohesion is:

- A common vision and sense of belonging for all communities
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances being appreciated and positively valued
- Those from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

### Discrimination

It is recognised that discrimination can take different forms:

- **Direct Discrimination**

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourable on racial grounds than another person is or would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.

- **Indirect Discrimination**

Indirect discrimination is creating a condition or requirement, which cannot be shown to be justifiable and will be to the detriment of those who cannot comply with it and which in practice precludes people from certain groups.

- **Harassment**

Harassment is when a person harasses another on the grounds of race or ethnic or national origins when he or she engages in unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

- **Institutional Racism**

It is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping.

- **Victimisation**

Victimisation is where a person is treated less favourably because they have pursued or it is suspected they will pursue their rights under the equality legislation or under equal opportunities policy via the complaint procedure or legal proceedings.

## **Equality**

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognises that their needs are met in different ways.

Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of race, gender, disability and, more recently, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Age will also be covered soon. A recent amendment to the Race Relations Act adds a duty for us to actively promote race equality and avoid race discrimination, by acting before it happens.

People must not be unfairly discriminated against because of any of these factors and we must all contribute to creating a positive workplace environment where discriminatory practices and discrimination no longer happen.

## **Diversity**

Diversity is about valuing individual differences. A diversity approach aims to recognise value and manage differences to enable all employees to contribute and realise their full potential. Diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences in our employees and, customers and stakeholders in order to make the Company a better place for everyone.

## **The social model of disability**

The Disability Rights Commission defines the social model of disability as the view that disabled people do not face disadvantage because of their impairments but experience discrimination in the way we organise society, including failing to make services accessible, failing to remove barriers of assumption, stereotype and prejudice and failing to outlaw unfair treatment in our daily lives.

The social model of disability is different from the 'medical model' of disability which focuses on the impairment of the individual as the core of the problem believing medical treatment or cures must be used to 'normalise' the individual.

The 'social model' of disability aims to address the problems with social and environmental barriers in terms of discriminatory policies, practices and attitudes which cause social exclusion.

## **Nottingham City Homes (NCH)**

NCH is an Arms Length Management Organisation where the housing stock remains in the ownership of Nottingham City Council. However, Nottingham City Homes – which is a non-profit making company limited by guarantee – is responsible for the management of the housing stock

through its Board of Directors. The City Council remains the legal landlord of the properties and tenants retain their secure tenancy status. We have a degree of independence from the City Council that enables us to make decisions and manage services more effectively.

Our Key Company Objectives are:

- To provide good quality, affordable and well managed housing that meets the needs and aspirations of current and future customers
- To deliver good quality value for money housing services that will achieve at least a 2 star status.
- In partnership with Nottingham City Homes, to achieve Decent Homes in Decent Neighbourhoods by 2010
- To promote access, equality of opportunity and diversity both as an employer and service provider
- To improve customer satisfaction with opportunities for involvement and with the quality of our services

## **Statutory framework for Equality and Diversity**

- Race Relations Act 1976, and associated Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- CRE Code of Practice in Rented Housing
- The Housing Act 1996
- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1986 1999 (as amended)
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1975, Law 2005 and associated Codes of Practice
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- European directive Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- European directive Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006