



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

sussex

<b>Approved by:</b>	OPC	<b>Date of Approval:</b>	25 April 2022
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	April 2027	<b>Document Owner:</b>	Head of HR, Learning and Development
<b>SMT Approval Date:</b>	N/A	<b>Version Number:</b>	V1

We believe that equality and diversity play a key role in enabling BHT Sussex to achieve our mission, aims and objectives. BHT Sussex is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against organisations, or individuals, using or seeking to use goods, facilities or services provided by BHT Sussex.

BHT Sussex is committed to reducing the disadvantages that individuals may experience by making services more responsive to individual needs. Compliance with this policy should ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination. In valuing the diversity of all communities, BHT Sussex will ensure that its services, facilities and resources are accessible to all.

BHT Sussex has a commitment to the following:

1. To ensure, promote and increase equality and diversity of opportunity and treatment in the provision of our services, housing and in our employment.
2. To respect and value the diversity of our employees. Job applicants and BHT Sussex employees will not be treated less favourably than other individuals because it is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, gender history or gender reassignment, pregnancy, race; including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, employment status or because someone is married or is a civil partner. It is also unlawful to discriminate unjustifiably on grounds of disability or to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to employment caused by disability.
3. To not discriminate in the provision of our services and housing against individuals on the grounds of age, gender history or gender reassignment, pregnancy, race - including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or is a civil partner or because someone has a disability.
4. To identify the needs of disadvantaged groups in our area of operation.
5. To collect and monitor a range of indices from services, housing and job applicants and to ensure that job applicants are aware that collection of this data is optional and will not be used in decisions affecting their application.
6. To take corrective action should any monitoring results indicate areas of under-representation.

7. To make this statement available to applicants for our services, housing, employment, volunteering and intern opportunities and BHT Sussex contracts.
8. To make the complaints and grievance procedures available for individuals who consider they have suffered discrimination.
9. To develop services that increase equality and diversity in our activities
10. To having a workforce that reflects the local population.
11. To allow our understanding of the experiences of different individuals to inform us in improving our ability to deliver better services.
12. To consult with users of our services to ensure the delivery of our mission.
13. To consult with different individuals to ensure that our services are responsive and reflect the diversity of need.
14. To provide employees with the training and development they need to achieve the BHT Sussex objectives regarding equality and diversity.
15. To provide a supportive, open environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## **Protected Characteristics**

Our policy and procedure cover all of the protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We have also made additional provision for carers and are committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate on the grounds of employment status (i.e. fixed term and part time employees).

## **Eliminating Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation**

We will remove all direct discrimination. We aim to treat everyone fairly and equally and we will ensure that no individual is treated less favourably than another individual because of a protected characteristic. This applies to clients, tenants, employees, volunteers, job applicants, interns, suppliers and other stakeholders.

We aim to remove all indirect discrimination. We will ensure that we do not impose any policies or procedures which unfairly or unjustifiably limit access to employment or to our services, or disadvantage individuals with a protected characteristic. We will use our equality impact assessment process to identify and mitigate any potential adverse impact and will ensure we capitalise on opportunities to promote equality.

We are committed to eradicating bullying and harassment in our organisation and specific procedures relating to this are set out in our Dignity and Respect Policy. We aim to develop a working environment where bullying and harassment is unacceptable and where individuals feel confident to challenge unacceptable behaviour and, where necessary, raise complaints without fearing prejudice.

We are committed to ensuring that no individual is adversely affected by any action they take in relation to the Equality Act, such as making or supporting a complaint or raising a grievance about discrimination, or because it is suspected that they have taken or may take such action. An individual will not be given this protection if they maliciously make or support a complaint which is later found to be untrue.

## **Equality and Diversity in Recruitment and Selection**

BHT Sussex will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

It is BHT Sussex policy to:

- Advertise roles as widely as possible to generate a wide field of candidates.
- Provide full and fair consideration to all job applications, assessing them solely against job-relevant criteria.
- Require employees involved in the recruitment process to undergo relevant training, which will include embedding equalities awareness.
- Maintain records in recruitment, selection and promotion and to have a programme for reviewing the data to identify areas of inequality.
- Collect and analyse equalities monitoring data (by all protected characteristics) in relation to recruitment, selection and promotion and to ensure that any patterns of inequality are reported to the Executive and Senior Management Teams. This can be part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group's Action Plan, in conjunction with HR.
- Undertake periodic reviews of our recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that they are fair and reflect current best practice.

There may be occasions when vacancies are only advertised internally but in general roles should be advertised as widely as possible. Managers should consult with HR as appropriate

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training**

It is BHT Sussex policy to:

- Undertake a review of our training strategy, policies and procedures to ensure that they are geared toward both the equality and diversity objectives of BHT Sussex and our business plan.
- Provide training (including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training) to managers and individuals involved in recruitment or other decision-making

processes where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise, and to support them to meet employees' needs in recognising and meeting their work responsibilities.

- Provide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for managers which is tailored to their level of responsibility and will equip them to meet their responsibilities under this policy.
- Maintain training records (to include data on equalities, grade and contract status i.e. full-time, part-time, temporary etc) and to have a programme for reviewing the data to identify areas of inequality.
- Ensure that employees receive fair consideration of their training and career development needs. Employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

## **Equality and Diversity in Employment**

It is BHT Sussex policy to:

- Ensure that employees complete a thorough induction process which encompasses our approach to equality and diversity as well as detailing relevant employment practices and procedures, including performance management, grievance and disciplinary processes and expected standards of behaviour.
- Where possible, modify employment practices and procedures to reduce barriers experienced by individuals who are disadvantaged, or who are excluded from opportunities, when seeking employment and during employment.
- Continue to develop vigorous harassment, bullying and dignity at work processes that can operate within a safe and open environment and to undertake periodic reviews of these policies and procedures.

## **Equality and Diversity in Service Delivery**

It is BHT Sussex policy to:

- Challenge all types of direct and indirect discrimination and create an accessible environment where everyone feels valued and safe.
- Identify the needs of disadvantaged groups in our areas of operation and aim to assist such groups to benefit from our services.