

Service/s: Corporate

Policy: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Date: January 2018 **Issue no.** 4

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Our commitment

1.1 Shap Limited is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and creating a working environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination or harassment. Respect is one of our values, and this policy confirms our commitment to equality diversity and inclusion in employment and service delivery.

1.2 We value diversity and recognise the benefits of employing a diverse workforce in the provision of our range of services, which include:

- accommodation, support and floating support services for vulnerable and socially excluded single adults
- accommodation, support and floating support services for lone parents and couples with children who need support to improve or enhance their parenting skills and to secure permanent accommodation
- personal / 'life' coaching for vulnerable and socially excluded adults who wish to address unhelpful patterns of behaviour and move their lives forward
- advocacy services for vulnerable people who need to have their voices heard and respected
- specific independent mental health advocacy for patients detained under the Mental Health Act
- capacity advocacy for people who need help to make specific important decisions about their lives
- specialist legal advice for those who cannot afford a lawyer
- nursery provision.

1.3 As an employer, we will help ensure fair treatment for all members of the community regardless of race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, disability, religion, marital status, maternity, sexuality or sexual orientation, or age.

1.4 Shap recognises that various forms of unlawful treatment can exist (as outlined below) and will, through implementation of its policies and procedures, ensure that

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no one is treated unlawfully. Victimisation, discrimination and harassment are disciplinary offences within the organisation.

Direct discrimination

- 1.5 Where an employee or prospective employee is less favourably treated because of their race, sex, marital status (including civil partnerships), religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity

Indirect discrimination

- 1.6 This occurs where the effect of certain requirements, conditions or practices imposed by an employer has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other.

Harassment

- 1.7 Workplace harassment is any unwelcome or unwanted conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or an aversion toward another person on the basis of any characteristic protected by law. A conduct is unwelcome if the employee did not solicit, instigate or provoke it, and the employee regarded the conduct as undesirable or offensive.

Victimisation

- 1.8 Where an employee is singled out for using their workplace complaints procedures or exercising their legal rights.

Failing to make reasonable adjustments

- 1.9 Shap will make reasonable adjustments to any of their provisions, criteria or practices that place a disabled person at a particular disadvantage compare to non-disabled persons.

2. Our Duties

- 2.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a responsibility to promote equality of opportunity. The Act makes discrimination unlawful in relation to the nine '*protected characteristics*' (see below).

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- 2.2 While Shap is not a public body, we take account of the Public Sector Equality Duty when delivering services that are public in nature. Under this Duty we must give due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity
 - foster good relations (tackling prejudice and promoting understanding).
- 2.3 The organisation aims to respond to the needs of diverse service users, treating all residents, tenants and clients with fairness and respect including those with protected characteristics and those with additional support needs.
- 2.4 Equality Act 2010 – protected characteristics:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender re-assignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion and belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation
- 2.5 To ensure that the policy is operating effectively (and for no other purpose). Shap maintains records of employees' and applicants' racial origins, gender and disability and age. Shap will also maintain the same records for those referred to, or benefiting from our services.
- 2.6 Shap will monitor and record hate incidents through use of the accident and incident reporting procedure and use the records to devise strategies to reduce the number and impact of such incidents and to contribute to wider strategies within the communities in where services are provided.

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2.7 The ongoing monitoring and regular analysis of such records provide the basis for appropriate action to eliminate unlawful direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

3. Our values

3.1 Our services are delivered in line with the following values and all staff are expected to interact with internal and external colleagues accordingly:

- Approachable
- Creative
- Determined
- Having integrity
- Positive
- Respectful
- Safe
- Supportive

3.1 These values guide our work, so

- respect means we believe everyone has a right to be treated with dignity, fairness and respect, and we
- value the diversity and talents of all individuals
- support and empower people to succeed in our organisation
- create a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace
- understand the diverse needs of our customers
- promote equality of opportunity in employment and services
- deliver appropriate, flexible and accessible services
- challenge prejudice discrimination and harassment
- promote equality diversity and inclusion with our customers, partners, stakeholders and supply chain.

4. Our approach

4.1 Employment

We are committed to creating a positive and inclusive culture with a well-trained workforce. To help achieve a diverse workforce we monitor recruitment and progression.

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4.2 Equality and diversity is included in training for all colleagues and Board members and specific training is provided appropriate to roles.

4.3 **Positive action**

We recognise that overcoming barriers to equality of opportunity can require positive action. We will consider measures where we believe we can address such barriers, for example:

- ensuring fair representation of minority communities in the workforce and governance structure
- setting targets for recruitment of under-represented groups
- becoming a '*positive about disability*' employer
- using apprenticeships and other training opportunities to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

4.4 **Service delivery**

Shap will record the reasons for the selection and rejection of applications of its services.

4.5 Shap will regularly monitor its applications process and produce an analysis of the information – taking corrective action wherever possible.

4.6 Shap will publicise and make available its application process and eligibility criteria.

4.7 **Harassment, bullying, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence**

We are committed to dealing promptly and effectively with harassment (racial and other), bullying, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence affecting service users, clients and employees.

4.8 Separate policy and procedure are in place for each of the above, providing clear guidance to staff, service users, clients and customers.

4.9 We have effective policies and procedures on dignity at work and whistleblowing.

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4.10 **Procurement**

We are committed to achieving best value in procurement while upholding our equality and diversity principles. We ensure this policy is reflected in all suppliers or contractors working on our behalf and our principles are maintained in their dealings with customers and colleagues. Where appropriate, we will use opportunities that arise through procurement to achieve social value and inclusive outcomes.

4.11 **Data protection**

The use of personal information will be treated with full regard to data protection legislation. We will ensure data is processed lawfully, accurate, secure, relevant and retained for the appropriate period.

4.12 **Governance**

The policy is reviewed every two years.

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Policy Review Record and Version Control

Policy: **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

Version Number: 4 Final

Date Reviewed: 15th January 2018

Persons conducting review

Paulette Campbell, Head of Housing, Support and Wellbeing

Details of Revisions

Policy title changed from Equal Opportunities Policy.

Main body altered to refer to protected characteristics

Employment Policy and Eligibility for Services amended as these commitments are clear from the rest of the text.

Circulation plan

To be circulated to all Services, Schemes settings for discussion at team meetings.

Approved for circulation:

Mark Weights,
Chief Executive