**Kent Supported Homes Equality Policy**

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# Equality and Diversity for Children and Young People

This procedure summarises the local authority's commitment to provide inclusive and equal services to a diverse range of children and young people, and to promote equality and diversity as part of our recruitment and employment practices. The local authority will not discriminate (directly or indirectly) against any persons (including staff, potential staff, children or foster carers) on the basis of a protected characteristic under the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/2/chapter/2):

* Age;
* Disability;
* Gender reassignment;
* Marriage and civil partnership;
* Pregnancy and maternity;
* Race;
* Religion or belief;
* Sex;
* Sexual orientation.

Crimes committed against someone because of their disability, transgender identity, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation are hate crimes and should be reported to the police. These may include:

* Threatening behaviour;
* Assault;
* Robbery;
* Damage to property;
* Inciting others to commit hate crimes;
* Harassment;
* Online abuse.

You can report hate crime online via the [True Vision report a hate crime](https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force) form.

In addition:

* We encourage children to develop respect for themselves and for others;
* We deliver services that recognise and build on the strengths of children and young people from all cultures, religions, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability and backgrounds; in ways that meet their needs and help them to achieve their full potential;
* Every effort is made to ensure that services are welcoming to all children and young people and others significant to their care and wellbeing. Resources used to develop work with children and young people are chosen for their suitability, positive image and anti-oppressive nature;
* Children are offered opportunities to try out new experiences, which are not restricted by traditional gender options;
* Staff and foster carers are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way;
* Children are protected, and helped to keep themselves safe, from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, radicalisation and other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviours (direct or indirect) are challenged and help and support are given to children about how to treat others with respect;
* Managers are expected to monitor the range of children and young people placed in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability. This is to ensure the service provision is reaching all and not creating barriers to certain groups.

# Inclusion for Children and Young People

* All children are given the opportunity to be cared for and educated in order to develop their full potential;
* Before making any decision affecting a child placed or to be placed with a foster parent, due consideration is given to the child's wishes and feelings (having regard to the child's age and understanding), and religious beliefs, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background;
* Children are encouraged and supported to understand their rights and be well-informed about ways of challenging discrimination;
* Managers, staff and foster carers are expected to identify local community resources that contribute to meeting the needs of individual children and young people. These will be highlighted and promoted and where they do not meet required needs alternatives are sought and suitably identified regardless of geographical location;
* Children are cared for by carers who have been suitably trained in all aspects of equality and diversity including legislation and their responsibilities;
* Assessments of the child/young person's specific needs are carried out with an aim to support and develop each child to reach their full potential;
* Carers are expected to examine ways in which diversity can be valued and activities adapted to meet the individual child's needs including food preparation and menu choices;
* Additional support is offered to carers, staff and/or children who are finding difficulty in understanding diverse or complex situations.

# Equality in Employment

* We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedure, we will continue to ensure our approach and practice is monitored and revised if required. Breaches will lead to disciplinary proceedings and if appropriate, disciplinary action;
* The aim of the policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability;
* We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment;
* The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity;
* The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice;
* We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no worker feels under threat or intimidated.

## Recruitment and Selection

* The recruitment and selection process is crucially important. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or subconsciously, in making these decisions;
* All staff will receive training in Equality and Diversity;
* Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy;
* Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any person specifications;
* We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of the vacancies;
* We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources, which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group;
* All applicants who apply to work with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered on their ability to do the job in line with appropriate safeguarding checks e.g. DBS;
* All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate;
* More than one person should carry out shortlisting and interviewing;
* Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the position and will not be of any discriminatory nature;
* We will not disqualify any applicant because they are unable to complete an application unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job;
* Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.