

## LISTER HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

### **POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES including HARASSMENT POLICY**

#### STATEMENT

Lister Housing Co-operative believes that no person should suffer disadvantage because of race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual preference, appearance, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, class or responsibility for dependants, HIV infection or HIV related illnesses.

#### POLICY

In order to implement Lister Housing Co-operative's equal opportunities statement we shall:

##### 1. *In General*

- a. Review the policies and practices of Lister Housing Co-operative regularly to make sure that they are in line with the equal opportunities statement.
- b. With regard to the Management Committee and all Sub-Groups be mindful of our commitment to equal opportunities and try to ensure that the composition of these groups reflects the racial, sexual and age mix of Lister's members.
- c. Try to eradicate racism and sexism and other areas of discrimination among our committee and employees by encouraging participation in the appropriate training.
- d. Discrimination by any member of staff is an infringement of this policy and may lead to disciplinary action.

##### 2. *In Housing*

- a. Monitor all housing applicants for race/ethnic origin, gender and disability.
- b. Establish close contact with groups representing disadvantaged minority groups in Edinburgh so that we can better understand the housing needs of the people represented by those groups.
- c. Help disadvantaged minority groups to benefit from our housing services.
- d. Make sure that we do not discriminate in housing on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, physical disability, marital status, age, class or responsibility for dependants, HIV infection or HIV related illnesses
- e. Make sure that there are reports each year on the results of monitoring and reviews of our practices and policy in the light of these reports.
- f. Make sure that the Allocations and Membership Sub-Group encourages the participation of its members in appropriate training
- g. Consider that racial harassment or violent, sexual harassment or attack is a priority in housing need or transfer request and that we will liaise with other housing organisations to make sure that the wishes of any victims of such attack can be dealt with to the victim's satisfaction.

- h. To arrange an interpreter for an applicant upon request subject to the availability of a suitable interpreter.
- i. To provide information on tape about the Co-operative, its tenancy agreement and its tenants handbook.

### 3. *In Employment*

- a. Try to employ staff from disadvantaged groups and in particular all vacancies for permanent positions will be advertised by means which give equal access to all sections of the community seeking employment.
- b. Make sure that all recruitment advertisements state that we are committed to an equal opportunities employment policy.
- c. Ensure that all skills specified for jobs are strictly relevant to the requirements of the job and that entry requirements are clearly and objectively justifiable for the principal functions of the post and that they shall be agreed by the Employment Sub-Group prior to an advertisement being published.
- d. Ensure that in order to help fulfil its commitment to equal opportunities the Employment Sub-Group will collect and monitor records of the gender and ethnic origin of all those applying for jobs with Lister Housing Co-operative.
- e. When hiring contractors and other agencies to work for Lister Housing Co-operative, be mindful of our commitment to equal opportunities and we will actively look for firms providing equal opportunities when drawing up our list of approved contractors and suppliers.
- f. Ask all contractors, suppliers of goods and services and other agencies we hire or pay to sign a document agreeing to respect Lister's equal opportunities statement.

### 4. *Equalities legislation*

- a. Lister will abide by the Equality Act 2010. Lister will implement as far as practicable provisions of the Codes of Practice relevant to this legislation.

### 5. *Responsible Officer*

The Responsible Officer for the equal opportunities policy shall be the Director.

### 6. *Monitoring Comparators*

The Co-operative has set a Comparator figure for allocations to households from ethnic minority groups. This figure is reviewed each year and aims to mirror the proportions of such groups in Edinburgh. The results are to be monitored over several years due to the low turnover of flats.

### 7. *Harassment*

- a. The Co-operative recognises that instances of harassment do occur on the grounds of a person's race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, gender and sexual preferences, HIV status, appearance, physical or mental disability, marital status, age, class or responsibility for dependants.

- b. Lister is prepared to counter negative reaction from its tenants to other tenants, co-tenants, or staff on the above grounds. Information and advice concerning these issues shall be available at the Lister office or through referral to appropriate agencies.
- c. All instances of harassment on one or more of the above grounds shall be taken seriously and fully investigated. Action shall be taken as soon as possible against the perpetrators. Identified cases shall be dealt with under the tenancy condition of nuisance - "not to cause a nuisance or annoyance to co-tenants or neighbours". Action by the Co-operative shall include repairing damage as a matter of urgency, improving home security and advising tenants of their option.
- d. In dealing with a serious case of harassment the Co-operative's main priority shall be to take action against the perpetrator of the harassment. Such action could include taking proceedings for the eviction of the perpetrator or the compulsory transfer of the perpetrator. These courses of action require sufficient evidence to enable there to be a good case in the courts for such actions,
- e. In serious cases of harassment, if the complainant wishes, then Lister will make every effort to re-house her/him either within the Co-operative or through the assistance of an outside housing agency. Proceedings for re-housing should be as quick and efficient as possible.

## 8. *Disability*

- a. Lister wishes to provide good quality housing appropriate to the needs of its members and prospective tenants. In particular Lister should aim to provide housing that meets the needs of tenants with disabilities, be they medical, physical or mental. Such people should continue to be housed in the community for as long as possible.
- b. Although Lister does not provide support services for its accommodation it welcomes applications from people with disabilities. Support services could for example be provided by outside agencies such as the Council's Children & Families Department.
- c. The prospective or existing tenant with the disability should be involved closely in discussions over their housing and support needs. The individual may wish family and/or co-tenants to be involved.
- d. Lister is constrained by the nature, type and location of its limited housing stock, much of which is not ideally suited for disabled people. Lister should aim to make the best use of its housing stock in matching properties to people. Where a tenant wishes to remain in their flat or alternative housing is not readily available then Lister should investigate what adaptations could be made to the flat in question.
- e. Where adaptation work is identified as desirable, Lister should press for such work to be approved and funded by the Council or any other agency. Requests for adaptation work should be dealt with as soon as possible.
- f. Where rehousing is appropriate and Lister does not have suitable housing, Lister should assist the disabled persons through contacting other agencies for assistance.
- g. Lister should review regularly its provision and services for disabled people and review this policy.

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