

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, and INCLUSION POLICY – EMPLOYEES

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Consultation Process:	Employee Forum	Distribution:	Synergy
Last Reviewed:	May 2022	Next Planned Review:	May 2025
Approving Body	Employee Forum	Recommending & monitoring body	Employee Forum
Change Record			
Version No.	Nature of Change	Last Approved	
4	Minor change	October 2021	
3	Planned review	January 2013	
2	Planned review	January 2011 (updated Equality Act)	
1	Original content	October 2004	

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy Statement

1. CHS Group Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Commitment statement – published on CHS Group website

CHS Group is proud to be an equal opportunity, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist organisation committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment for our workforce and the communities we serve.

2. Equality, Diversity, and inclusion Policy Statement

- 2.1 CHS Group is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination across our workforce and promoting a culture that actively values differences and recognises that people from different backgrounds and experiences can bring valuable insights to the workplace and enhance the way we work.
- 2.2 To demonstrate our commitment CHS has appointed a Board-level Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion champion which demonstrates a genuine commitment to diversity and cultural change. Board members are able to raise diversity issues at the highest level and have a high degree of influence over the organisation's strategy and its culture. CHS has also set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group which consists of representatives from across CHS.
- 2.3 CHS strives to be a fair and inclusive organisation and we are committed to providing equal opportunities throughout employment including in the recruitment, training, and development of employees, and to pro-actively tackling and eliminating discrimination. No one working for CHS should experience discrimination, harassment, unfair and unequal treatment or victimisation. All employees have a responsibility for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions, or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be investigated in accordance with HR policies and practice.
- 2.4 CHS recognises that its ability to meet the needs of individuals and communities is improved by having a diverse workforce which reflects the diversity of the local communities within which it operates, and which has a range of skills and competence to better enable CHS to achieve its objectives

3. Purpose and scope

- 3.1 This policy sets out CHS's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion specifically in relation to our workforce, however this policy links strongly with the ED&I Customer Policy (under development).
- 3.2 The policy is applicable to all employees, secondees, casual/relief workers and agency staff, whether permanent or temporary.
- 3.3 CHS will:
 - A. Comply with all of the legal and regulatory requirements placed on us by:
 - a. the Equality Act 2010 we are committed to meeting the duties of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act protects people with 'protected

characteristics' of; age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity leave, those who are married or in a civil partnership from discrimination. We will ensure that no employee or job applicant is discriminated against or receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their protected characteristics.

- b. The Human Rights Act 1998
- c. Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England - Our Regulator specifies the requirements on housing associations through its Standards framework. Regulatory standards contain specific expectations and the outcomes that we are expected to achieve in relation to Governance, Value for Money, Rents, Tenant Involvement and Empowerment, Homes, Tenancies, and Neighbourhood and Communities.
- d. Public Sector Duty Act - Under this duty all organisations providing a public service are required to have due regard to the need to achieve the following objectives: (i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (ii) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- e. Care Quality Commission regulations
- f. Any other relevant employment law regulations.

In addition to fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to promote equality and diversity in all of its activities, CHS is committed to developing an organisational culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution each individual can make to its work – to support that commitment CHS aims to:

- A. Develop services to achieve equality and diversity in all its activities
- B. Understand how valuing diversity can improve its ability to deliver better services
- C. Provide all employees and managers with the training and development they need to enable them to ensure we value diversity, achieve organisational goals and challenge inappropriate behaviours
- D. Provide a supportive, open environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential
- E. Ensure that employees are paid equitably for work of equal value regardless of their gender
- F. Involve employees in the development of this organisational culture
- G. Operate and monitor Human Resources policies and practices that prevent unlawful discrimination and promote equality across all protected characteristics / equality groups.
- H. Provide equality of opportunity in recruitment and selection, promotion, access to training / personal development initiatives and all other areas of employment
- I. Consider the disability needs of employees and make reasonable adjustments where required.
- J. Aim for our Board and workforce to be representative of the community we serve and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best

- K. Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (colour, nationality including citizenship, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation
- L. Oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination. This includes in pay and benefits, terms, and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training, or other developmental opportunities
- M. Not tolerate prejudice, discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Breaches of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

4. CHS Commitment

- 4.1 Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality, and respect for all. CHS will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination, harassment or victimisation committed against an employee, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:
 - sex
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage and civil partnership
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality, and national origin)
 - disability
 - sexual orientation
 - religion and or belief
 - age.
- 4.2 Diversity is not just about race and ethnicity, but about all of us and our range of identities. CHS believes that it should be about each and every one of us being recognised as an individual and responded to accordingly, without discrimination. Diversity does not advocate that we rid ourselves of our prejudices but that we recognise them, understand how they impact on us and the people we use our prejudices against and to endeavour to change them. CHS believes that we should not be closed to prejudice but be equipped to challenge it.
- 4.3 CHS wishes to ensure, through the adoption of its Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures, that employees have confidence that they will be treated with respect and dignity throughout their association with CHS and that they can trust that CHS will challenge inappropriate behaviours
- 4.4 Employees and Board Members of CHS have a responsibility to treat others with respect and dignity – if an employee or Board Member has been found to have acted in a discriminatory manner, appropriate disciplinary procedures will be applied.

- 4.5 If an employee believes they have been subject to discrimination in the CHS's employment practices, which is in direct conflict with our commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity, they should raise the issue with their line manager or HR or register a complaint through the grievance procedure.

5. Responsibility

- 5.1 The Equality Policy is fully supported by the CHS Group Board and the Executive Management Team. The Board is ultimately responsible and will provide leadership to ensure that the policy is successful. The day-to-day responsibility lies with the Chief Executive and Management Team.
- 5.2 Staff are responsible for acting in ways that are in accordance with this policy and with CHS values; acting fairly and compassionately; treating other people as individuals responding to their needs; respecting others' privacy and dignity; ensure they do not discriminate, harass or intimidate others or encourage other people to do so; taking account of their own behaviour and its effects on others; undertake relevant equality and diversity training and inform their manager or HR if they become aware of any behaviour that undermines equality and diversity in the workplace.

6. Key Terms/Definitions

6.1 Equality

Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe or whether they have a disability. Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics have experienced discrimination.

6.2 Diversity

Diversity is psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles. A diverse group, community, or organisation is one in which a variety of social and cultural characteristics exist.

6.3 Inclusion

Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters, and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.

6.4 Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (known as protected characteristics)

6.5 Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

6.6 Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may also involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or be related to gender reassignment or sex. The conduct can either be a serious one-off event or be a 'course of conduct', i.e. it happens on a number of occasions.

6.7 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly (suffers a detriment) because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010 or because they are suspected of doing so.

7. When does this policy apply?

This policy applies to all conduct in the workplace and also to conduct outside of the workplace that is related to your work (e.g at meetings, social events, and social interactions with colleagues) or which may impact on CHS's reputation (e.g. the expression of views on social media, contrary to the commitments expressed in this policy, that could be linked to CHS).

8. Employment Regulation:

CHS will fully comply with all legal duties and this policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by CHS to assess its effectiveness and may be amended from time to time.

The following Acts of Parliament and Employment Regulations underpin CHS's commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Gender Recognition Act (2004)
- The Civil Partnership Act (2005)
- The Race & Religious Hatred Act (2006)
- The Equality Act 2010 (this act brought together all of the previous discrimination laws into one and replaced a whole raft of long-established legislation including sex discrimination act, race relations act, disability discrimination action etc).

Related CHS documents and policies

CHS Group Vision, Mission and Values
Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy
Capability Policy and Procedure
Code of Conduct – Board and Committee Members

Code of Conduct – Employees
Data Protection Policy and procedure
Disciplinary Procedure
Domestic Abuse Policy
Exit Interview Policy
Grievance Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Email, Internet, and Social Networking Policy
Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
Training and Development Policy
Whistleblowing and Confidential Reporting
Dignity at Work Policy
ED&I customer policy (in development)
Other ED&I policies currently under review