

Granta Housing Society

Equality & Diversity Policy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Granta fully supports the active principles of equality and diversity, and will ensure that workers and service users are treated with respect and dignity as individuals. The value of diversity is recognised and promoted by Granta as an employer of choice and a community-focused service provider.
- 1.2 Granta believes that its employees are its most valuable resource, and is committed to ensuring that all workers are provided with a positive working environment that is free from discrimination. Granta recognises that it is in its best interest, as well as the interest of its employees and clients, to utilise the skills of the total workforce. Tackling discrimination and promoting diversity at work helps attract, motivate and retain staff and enhances an organisation's reputation as a service provider and as an employer. Eliminating discrimination helps everyone to access services and employment and to develop their skills.
- 1.3 Granta is committed to promoting equality and inclusion in its approach to provision of services. This policy forms part of an overall framework and strategy towards achieving this.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 No individual will receive less favourable treatment or be subject to offensive behaviour on the grounds of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, age, disability, HIV status, religion or belief, membership or non-membership of a trade union or other representative body. Nor will they be disadvantaged by any other condition or requirement, which effectively discriminates and cannot be justified as necessary and effective in meeting business requirements.
- 2.2 The Society will ensure that individuals are treated fairly and that:
 - harassment of any kind is not supported, ignored or tolerated and aims to minimise and tackle its occurrence through the [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and the Staff Charter; and
 - housing, care, support and other services are provided on a fair and equitable basis in accordance with the published tenant selection and allocation procedures and other corporate/local policies and are responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents.

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- All customers (internal and external) will be treated with respect and courtesy irrespective of race, gender, nationality, colour, religion, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability or asylum/refugee status.
- decisions on all staffing and employment matters, including recruitment, selection, development, promotion, terms and conditions, transfers and dismissals are based solely on objective and job-related criteria;
- Access to information and advice, participation in surveys and consultation exercises for both customers and employees will be given fairly and without discrimination or prejudice.
- All contractors and consultants used by Granta will be required to meet the requirements of the legislation.
- The Granta Board and Committees are fully conversant with this Policy and conduct their roles at Granta in accordance with it.

3.0 Legislation & Codes of Practice

- 3.1 Certain types of discrimination are unlawful. There is legislation to protect people against discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, gender reassignment, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

It is generally unlawful to discriminate on any of the grounds set out above. Unlawful discrimination can take various forms:

- **Direct Discrimination**
Treating one party less favourably on any of the above grounds, to the way another party would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.
- **Indirect Discrimination**
By the application a criterion, provision or practice which disadvantages people of any group protected by the legislation (unless it can be objectively justified).
- **Harassment**
Conduct that violates another's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment having regard to all circumstances and the perception of the victim. Additionally, unfavourable treatment on the grounds of a person's submission to or rejection of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Victimisation**
Subjecting someone to less favourable treatment because they have made or intend to make a complaint or allegation or have given or intend to give evidence in relation to a complaint of discrimination

To discriminate or harass someone in certain circumstances *after* the working relationship has ended is also illegal

3.2 Genuine Occupational Qualifications (GOQs)

- 3.2.1 The use of Genuine Occupational Qualifications at Granta will only be permitted with the authorisation of the Director of HR.

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3.2.1 An employer can lawfully discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief only where it is able to show that being of particular group or groups is essential for the job in question. GOQs can be used when recruiting, training, promoting or transferring a person.

3.2.3 An advert that contains a GOQ must explicitly state the part of the relevant legislation that applies and permits the inclusion of the GOQ.

3.2.4 In determining whether a GOQ applies, the test is that the requirement can most effectively, rather than only, be provided by a person of the particular sex, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

3.3 Positive Action in Employment

3.3.1 Legislation on sex, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief permits Positive Action in the form of:

- provision of facilities to meet the special needs of people of a particular group, in relation to their training, education or welfare; and
- Training for and encouragement to apply for jobs where particular groups are under-represented in a particular areas of work, targeted at those groups.

3.3.2 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates or employees in recruitment, training and other aspects of employment.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 While the overall responsibility for the implementation of this Policy rests with the Business Management Team, the maintenance of an environment that is positive and free from discrimination is also the responsibility of every employee irrespective of position.

4.2 Workers

4.2.1 Each worker is responsible for his/her own behaviour and has a responsibility to themselves, and those who are in contact with them, to ensure that they conduct themselves in a manner that ensures that the environment is not discriminatory, harassing or could be construed as victimisation.

4.2.2 It is the responsibility of all workers to ensure that the services Granta provides are of the highest possible standard. The manner in which workers treat our customers (as well as each other) is key to our continued success.

4.2.3 It is imperative that if any worker is subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation that they report it to their Line Manager or HR Advisor. Moreover, the Society expects all workers not to support or ignore any actions or behaviour that could be a breach of our commitment to ensure the working environment is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying behaviours.

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4.2.4 If any employee is found to have acted in a discriminatory way towards other employees or service users, they will be subject to disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

4.2.5 In the event of Employment Tribunal or civil proceedings being issued, a harasser or discriminator may be personally liable for the award sanctioned by the tribunal or court, and may also be liable to criminal prosecution in some circumstances.

4.3 Managers

4.3.1 In addition to the responsibilities of all workers, it is the responsibility of all managers to be aware of and understand Granta's Equality and Diversity policies and:

- to attend/complete relevant training as required by the Society;
- to offer advice on the policy and procedures when required to do so as part of their duties;
- to ensure that workers are aware of the policies and raise and maintain its profile; and
- to ensure that they monitor employees and customers and provide information to Human Resources when appropriate.

4.4 Customers

4.4.1 Granta Housing Society provides high standards of service to its customers in accordance with its Equality & Diversity Policies. Additionally, the Society expects that all customers treat our workers with respect and courtesy.

4.4.2 It is not acceptable for Granta workers to be subjected to harassment, bullying or discrimination, including verbal or physical abuse, by service users. Such incidents will be reported to the appropriate Line manager. If it is discovered that any customer has abused or harassed Granta workers, the Society reserves the right to impose a suitable sanction upon them, which may result in the withdrawal of services and possibly legal action.

4.5 Human Resources

4.5.1 The Human Resources Director will take responsibility for reviewing and updating Equality and Diversity policies and ensuring that the Society is kept up to date with changes in legislation, and will also provide advice and support to managers and workers in respect of equality and diversity issues.

4.5.2 The Human Resources and Learning Team will develop and assist in the delivery of effective training in relation to equality and diversity to raise awareness and also ensure that employees are able to interact with a diverse community and workforce.

4.6 Contractors

The Society requires all its contractors to comply with this policy and the provisions of the legislation listed in 3.1. This responsibility to communicate the policy to contractors rests with the manager arranging the contract.

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5.0 Communication

5.1 This Policy will be:

- Circulated to all new and existing workers;
- Available on the Society's Internet and Intranet pages;
- Communicated in the Staff Handbook;
- Positioned on office reception notice boards;
- Made know to applicants for employment;
- Communicated to residents through the General Housing and Supported Housing teams; and
- Communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibility towards equal opportunities.

5.2 Granta will also communicate its commitment to this Policy through:

- Recruitment advertising;
- The Residents' Charter; and
- The Staff Charter.

6.0 Implementation

6.1 The Business Management Team will continue to set and communicate an Action Plan to meet the requirements of this Policy with clear, achievable and measurable objectives and targets.

6.2 The Director of Human Resources will continue to ensure that training and guidance is provided for key decisions-makers such as managers and supervisory staff and those involved in people and service management practices.

6.3 The Director of Human Resources will develop and review existing procedures for recruitment, selection, promotion and training in line with this policy and changes in relevant legislation.

6.4 The Director of Human Resources and Directors of Operations and Care Services will develop and review mechanisms for resolving grievances about unfair discrimination and harassment.

6.5 The Director of Human Resources will work with managers to monitor the consistent application of the policy and to use lawful positive action training and encouragement.

6.6 The Society has encouraged and supports a Promoting Diversity Steering Group plus Board level diversity Champions.

6.7 The Society's Board of Management will review the policy on a regular basis in consultation with staff through the Joint Consultative Committee.

7.0 Enforcement

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- 7.1 All employees have the right to seek redress for their grievances. Employee complaints will normally be processed through the Grievance Procedure or may alternatively be made under the Harassment Policy if considered more appropriate by the complainant.
- 7.2 The Complaints Procedure and Harassment Policy provide routes for non-employee complaints.
- 7.3 Anyone who complains about discrimination in good faith shall not, for that reason, receive less favourable treatment.
- 7.4 Particular care must be taken to deal effectively with all complaints of discrimination, victimisation or harassment. In the event of any uncertainty about responding to a complaint, Granta workers are encouraged to contact Human Resources for advice.
- 7.5 Allegations of direct or indirect discrimination will be fully investigated by a senior manager and action taken as appropriate. Management action could include action under the Society's Disciplinary Procedure or tenancy agreement as applicable.
- 7.6 A deliberate breach of this policy by an employee will be seen as a disciplinary offence. Serious breaches (e.g. deliberate harassment whether on grounds of sex, race, sexual orientation, age, religion/belief or gender re-assignment), will be treated as gross misconduct.

8.0 Further Information

- 8.1 In the event of any queries relating to this policy or for further details about the Action Plan, training or monitoring in relation to this Policy, employees should contact the Director of Human Resources at Head Office.