



Title:	Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Person Responsible:	Managing Agent Director of Business Improvement
EIA required	This will be a requirement on all policies.
EIA Completed (date):	February 2025
Approved by:	Board
Business Strategy Objective:	All Themes
Approval Date:	February 2025
Links to other Policies:	Home Standard Local Lettings Plan Adaptations Policy Complaints Policy Code of Conduct Code of Governance
Review Date:	February 2028

Document management		
Version	Date amended	Amendments
1.0	Feb 2025	New policy

1. Introduction

LVRHA was formed in 1989 and now owns more than 100 properties across a wide geographical area in rural communities from Lancaster to Wyre and North Yorkshire. Our mission is to provide quality homes in rural areas in and around the Lune Valley for people who are in housing need with a local connection.

2. Policy Purpose and Connection

LVRHA is actively committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion. LVRHA is an organisation which values differences where individuals can be their authentic selves. The aim is for our organisation to be truly representative of all sections of the society and communities we serve for our tenants and other stakeholders to feel respected and valued.

LVRHA also has responsibilities under legislation, regulation and codes of governance including but not limited to;

- the Equality Act 2010 (incorporating the Public Sector Equality Duty);
- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- the National Housing Federation Code of Governance and Code of Conduct;
- the Regulator of Social Housing.

3. Defining Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

While the terms equality, diversity, and inclusion often go hand in hand, they are not one and the same.

Equality is the fair and unbiased treatment of others, taking into account systemic and structural inequalities. This ensures equal opportunity and access for all groups which are protected by legislation.

Diversity refers to the presence of people who, as a group have a wide range of characteristics, seen and unseen, which they were born with or have acquired. These differences can go beyond the protected groups set out in legislation.

Inclusion goes further and 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 can perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity, or circumstances. An inclusive workplace has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.

These terms are Independent and go hand in hand in promoting a culture that is actively equal, diverse, and inclusive.

4. Duties under the Equality Act 2010

LVRHA is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and to promoting equal opportunities in the provision of services. The Equality Act 2010 protects people with 'protected characteristics' from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

5. Duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty

LVRHA is mindful of its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) so far as it should apply to our organisation as a Registered Provider of social housing. Therefore, we continue to have regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- A. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- B. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- C. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6. Other Duties

LVRHA understands that diversity and risks of discrimination go beyond the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and that it has a moral duty to address discrimination as a landlord and as a provider of services. We are committed to tackling inequality in its widest sense and challenging discrimination based on a variety of social and cultural characteristics such as the protected characteristics above, but also including:

- Socio-economic background
- Class
- Appearance
- Language
- Accents
- Education

- Learning styles
- Political affiliation
- Domestic abuse
- Spent convictions
- Caring responsibilities

7. Our Objectives and Commitments

The managing agent (SLH) has agreed to a set of objectives and commitments that reflect LVRHA values for embedding an equal, diverse, and inclusive culture in the organisation.

The policy is part of a long-term commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion progress will be reported regularly to the Board., customers and stakeholders.

Roles and Responsibilities

8. Accountability and Reporting

The Managing agent is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day implementation of this policy for and by colleagues, volunteers and contractors including fair and equal service delivery to customers. The managing agent will monitor report and publish information about work we have done to deliver on equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments as well as reporting to the Board.

9. The Boards Role

The Board is committed to taking a clear and active lead in its commitment to achieve equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. This is in all of the activities of our organisation, including understanding the needs of our residents and communities, as well as the composition of the Board.

The managing agent recognises a clear commitment is needed from the Board to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded throughout the organisation. The developing agent will also consider diversity considerations on new build schemes and within specifications and accessibility standards (where feasible). LVRHA's Lettings Policy will also have consideration for equality, diversity and inclusion – including meeting housing needs in line with local authority Choice Based Lettings schemes and Allocations Policies.

The Board establishes effective leadership and implements robust governance arrangements to support the organisation in meeting its equality, diversity and inclusion objectives and commitments. The Board

shall provide leadership on this policy and, working with the managing agent, ensure that it is implemented.

People with direct lived experience of or particular insight into, the communities we serve shall also be meaningfully engaged in our governance structures.

10. Board Recruitment

LVRHA is committed to ensuring that our Board composition comprises of people with diverse backgrounds and attributes, having regard to the diversity of the communities that we serve.

11. Training

The managing agent is committed to ensuring that the Board, colleagues and contractors receive appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion training on a regular basis and that they are aware of this policy. The LVRHA Board will receive training as part of their induction.

12. Procurement

The managing agent will ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are taken into account when procuring and commissioning services on behalf of LVRHA. We will always seek to maximise economic and social value.

13. LVRHA Tenants

LVRHA is committed to ensuring equality of opportunities in the provision of its housing and other services. Details of these commitments are set out below:

- Proactively promote dignity and respect for all where individual differences, backgrounds, experiences and contributions are all recognised, celebrated and valued;
- Not treat individuals or groups less favourably because they belong to one of the protected groups;
- Liaise with statutory agencies to share assessments of the housing needs of local communities and any groups facing discrimination and review if/how it can meet these needs;
- Partner with specialist agencies where appropriate to meet the needs of any disadvantaged groups;
- Consider the needs of a diverse range of communities when designing and developing new homes, ensuring new homes are suitable for people with disabilities where feasible;
- Monitor allocations and nominations to ensure direct or indirect discrimination is not occurring and take action where appropriate;
- Ensure all residents are treated with fairness and respect;

- Consult with customers to obtain their views including in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and seek to ensure engagement activities promote involvement from all groups of customers;
- Ensure relevant communications, policies and procedures are clear, simple and accessible to customers;
- Zero tolerance on harassment of residents and proactive working with other agencies to tackle all forms of harassment;
- Ensure housing and associated services take into account the sensitivities and needs of different groups including in relation to the equality strands, social and cultural and religious needs and residents with additional support needs.

14. Non-compliance

LVRHA will take complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by customers, tenants, suppliers, or any others in the course of the organisation's activities seriously. The managing agent will take appropriate and proportionate action with all complaints. Failure to comply with this policy by Board members may result in disciplinary action.

15. Data Protection

When handling data related to equality, diversity and inclusion the managing agent will encounter personal information. The handling and use of this data will be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018, with particular emphasis on 'sensitive' data.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by statutory regulation or best practice. If you have any questions in relation to this policy, please contact our managing agent via email customerservices@southlakeshousing.co.uk