

Equality & Diversity Policy



Policy Reference:

Policy/HR001 Issue 3

Approved by:

Senior Management Team

Date approved:

19 October 2017

A Scope and objectives

bpha recognises our service-led imperative to respond to the wide social diversity in contemporary society and to reflect this as an integral part of our organisational culture and through our policies and practices. We recognise that in valuing the differences between individuals, we make our organisation a better one and this helps us to develop and improve our services and explore new ideas. We believe that everyone should be made aware of, and be able to use, all of the services we provide.

bpha values and aims to encourage diversity in everything we do. We would seek to challenge discrimination and intolerance based on an individual's characteristics. Equality and diversity is about being fair to everyone in everything that we do, and at the same time recognising and celebrating our differences. This applies to work undertaken for us by external consultants and contractors as well as our own employees.

We believe in a society free from discrimination, harassment and prejudice. We recognise that some people are disadvantaged and do not always have the same opportunities as others. People have been, and continue to be, discriminated against. Our aim is to continue raising awareness within our communities and amongst our employees to ensure that a culture where equality and diversity issues are taken into account in everything we do is recognised as a fundamentally better way to do business.

bpha is committed to fulfilling wholeheartedly statutory and regulatory requirements to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between different groups. We seek to maintain an organisational culture which values people from all sections of the community. We also recognise that bpha households may contain higher than average proportions of people who experience discrimination and other social disadvantage.

Notwithstanding the statutory and regulatory requirements that the organisation is expected to meet, it is beneficial for bpha as a business to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of equality and diversity. For example, by employing a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, we are more likely to offer services that are sensitive and flexible and meet the varying needs of our customers.

This policy aims to ensure that we treat each individual with dignity and respect. We recognise that some kinds of difference, discrimination or disadvantage are widely shared and experienced: where individuals have common needs, we also need strategies specific to particular groups of people.

bpha is committed to:

- Valuing our customers and involving them in the development of services
- Ensuring equality and valuing diversity being central to the culture of the business
- Fulfilling wholeheartedly our statutory, regulatory and corporate responsibilities.

- Ensuring an environment which promotes dignity and respect to all, where no form of intimidation, discrimination, harassment or bullying will be tolerated
- Recruiting a workforce and governance structure that generally reflects local populations
- Supporting and training employees to enable them to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity and anti-discrimination practices
- Treating breaches of equality and diversity as misconduct for employees that could lead to disciplinary action

B Policy statement

To achieve our aims, we will take action to address discrimination faced by particular groups, as well as action to promote and achieve diversity in our service and within employment. This will include actively working with other agencies and community organisations to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment.

1. Employment

bpha wants to have a workforce which reflects our local communities and to achieve this we will:

- Provide full and fair consideration to all job applications which meet the minimum requirements in order to recruit a representative workforce that can sensitively address the needs of all the communities we deliver services within
- Wherever possible, modify employment practices and procedures to reduce barriers experienced by members of disadvantaged groups in seeking and during employment
- Provide sufficient training and support to meet all our employees' needs in recognising and discharging their work responsibilities
- Assist all our employees to realise their full potential by ensuring they receive fair consideration of their training and career development needs and promotion opportunities
- Apply vigorous processes to promote a safe and open environment to prevent harassment or bullying and to promote dignity at work
- Promote a flexible working environment where work and home balance requirements, including carer requirements, are recognised and supported in all areas and levels
- Create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our employees are recognised and valued
- Strive to have a workforce at all levels that can sensitively address the needs of all communities
- Ensure all employees are entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all - bullying, intimidation or harassment will not be tolerated
- Regularly review and report on our recruitment, selection, training, promotion, redundancy selection and disciplinary procedures to ensure that they are fair and reflect current best practice – this will be completed across the seven equality strands

2. Race

bpha wishes to ensure no race bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Provide services relevant to people's needs, which respect their cultural and social identities
- Ensure that our services are accessible and available to all ethnic groups - majority and minority, recognising that different groups are likely to have different needs
- Promote an environment that is free from racial harassment and racist behaviour
- Strive to have a representative workforce that can sensitively address the needs of our communities

3. Religion/belief

bpha wishes to ensure no religion or belief bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Develop and deliver services in ways which recognise and respect religion and belief
- Strive to foster an environment which recognises and respects religion and belief and is free from unlawful discrimination or harassment
- Improve the understanding of religion and belief among employees so that they can sensitively address the needs of individuals and of different faith communities.

4. Gender

bpha wishes to ensure no gender bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Promote an environment which is free from harassment and sexist language and behaviour
- Endeavour to achieve a balanced gender mix at a senior level

6. Disability

bpha wishes to ensure no disability bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Strive to provide services which encourage independent living
- Make sure that all our services and documentation are accessible and available to people with a disability

7. Age

bpha wishes to ensure no age bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Not make assumptions about a person's ability due to age
- When allocating properties only use age as a selection criteria when this is objectively justifiable for the better performance of a service such as sheltered housing, extra care or where local lettings policies are used to create sustainable communities

8. Gender Reassignment/Transsexual

Gender reassignment/transsexual is where someone intends to change their gender or lives to a gender different to that of their birth

bpha wishes to ensure no gender reassignment or transsexual bias or discrimination in the design or delivery of its services, its employment practices or culture and to achieve our aims we will:

- Not treat people less favourably if they intend to or have undergone gender reassignment
- Treat customers and employees with dignity and will address them in the gender they choose to live
- Recognise transsexual people as of their new sex for all purposes

C Regulatory and legal considerations

bpha's commitments contained in this policy will include wholehearted compliance with the relevant current and forthcoming statutory duties, including Codes of Practice, Homes and Communities Agency regulations and Good Practice notes:

Legislation

- Equal Pay Act 1970 (Equal Value Amendment 1984)
- Race Relations Act 1976, Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equality Act 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 (Amendments 2003 and 2006)
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Racial and Religious Hatred 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

We will also be mindful of new legislation such as the Single Equality Bill.

D Monitoring, reviews and evaluation

Progress against the Equality & Diversity Policy will be reported to the Operations Board as appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed annually to take account of regulatory, legislative or organisational developments and a major and fundamental review of this policy will take place at least every three years.

E Associated documents and procedures

The following bpha policies are particularly relevant –

- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Child Safeguarding policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Fixed Term Tenancy Policy
- Neighbourhood Management Policy



- Bullying and Harassment
- Health & Safety
- Recruitment & Selection

Protected Characteristics

Characteristics which are protected by legislation are:

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

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Responsible	Head of Human Resources
Equality impact issues	
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