



Equal Opportunities Guidelines for Tenant & Resident Associations

Introduction

Discrimination means that some individuals and communities don't have equal access to services or jobs. An Equal Opportunities policy is one method of ensuring that people are treated fairly and can help tenant and residents groups work towards the full involvement of all members of their community. To ensure full tenant participation, tenant and resident associations need to consider the needs of particular groups of people, including black and other ethnic minority people, women, lesbians, gay men, and disabled people.

To be recognised and funded by Parkway Green Housing Trust (PGHT), tenant and resident groups sign a constitution that includes a clause, which states that committee members will conduct themselves in accordance with PGHT's Equal Opportunities Policy. You can obtain a full copy of the above policy document on request.

Parkway Green's Equal Opportunities Policy notes that it has a legal duty to treat people fairly, under:

- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and other Acts concerning disabled people

and in carrying out its duties according to these Acts, Parkway Green believes:

- that the city benefits from having a varied and multi-racial population
- that discrimination against people or groups should not be tolerated
- that unequal treatment has reduced the quality of life for residents
- that all services should be delivered fairly and equally.

Tenant Groups

In order to maintain recognised status, compliance with the policy means that committee members and individuals in tenant groups should:

- Treat all people equally.
- Not treat anyone less favourably because of their colour, religion, disability, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, age, sex or for any other reason which can't be justified.
- Abide by the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy when working in partnership with other groups or organisations.
- Take responsibility for making this policy a reality within their group or association. Every member of the committee has a responsibility to take equality forward.

Benefits of Equal Opportunities

Being aware of the issues involved and actively working to an equal opportunities policy can help your association in the following ways:

- It makes it easier for you to challenge unacceptable behaviour and language
- It encourages people to come forward and join your association
- It makes your association stronger and more credible because it speaks for all your members.
- It makes your members think about involving everybody

Putting Policy Into Practice

Below are some practical ideas on how to incorporate equal opportunities into the way your group works and so increase the participation of your membership:

Meetings

Try and hold meetings at venues that have disabled access, avoid meeting in places where alcohol is being served as this may actively discourage involvement.

Expenses

Your association could pay for childcare costs or transport for disabled people, taxis for women or older people who do not feel confident to walk to a meeting at night, etc.

Publicity

You could place posters in places used by local groups such as youth clubs, community centres or the local mosque. Also consider a welcome message printed in languages used by ethnic groups in your area.

Challenging unacceptable behaviour:

Your members need to feel confident that they can challenge somebody about a racist or homophobic comment without being sneered at. You need to create an atmosphere where everyone feels they can discuss difficult issues.

Translators/Signers

You may be able to provide translators or signers for meetings, to enable non-English speaking people or hearing impaired people to get involved. Why not find out what help is available to do this?

Supporting victims of harassment

Dealing with instances of harassment can be a complex and difficult matter. However, your association can make a difference by speaking on behalf of victims of harassment, advising victims on who to contact for help or referring cases first to your local office. A little support from your association will mean that you will become better known and more people will be encouraged to get involved.