

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

Our Commitment

Argyll Community Housing Association Group is committed to provide equal opportunities across all services and to avoid discrimination. This policy is intended to assist Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) and Argyll Homes for All (AHFA) to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

This policy can be made available in other formats, for example in large print, audio-format or Braille: the document may also be available in other languages, in full or summary form, as appropriate.

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

| Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| Section 1 – Context | 3 |
| Section 2 – The law and good practice | 3 |
| Section 3 – Our policy objectives | 4 |
| Section 4 – Implementing our policy objectives | 4 |
| Section 5 – Performance management | 5 |
| Section 6 – Development and training | 5 |
| Section 7 – Our positive action initiatives | 5 |
| Section 8 – Dealing with complaints | 6 |
| Section 9 – Consultation and review procedures | 6 |
| Section 10 – Confidentiality and data protection guidance | 6 |

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

Section 1 – Context

Argyll Community Housing Association Group is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment.

This policy applies equally to all employees and prospective employees of the Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) and Argyll Homes for All (AHFA).

It is intended to assist to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

Section 2 - The law and good practice

The main legislation which pertains to this policy is covered under the following Acts:

- The Equality Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

2.1. Legal background and the Equality Act 2010

Before 2010 there were many separate equality laws that covered issues such as disability, race and sex or gender. The Equality Act 2010 is now the key Act concerning equality legal issues and was introduced to:

- harmonise previous law; and
- strengthen equality commitments.

The Equality Act 2010 applies across the United Kingdom and was enacted through Westminster. This Act is now referred to simply as “the Act” throughout this policy for ease of reference.

The Act specifies a number “protected characteristics” – formerly called grounds - in respect of which discrimination, harassment and victimisation is unlawful.

The law is concerned with unlawful discrimination on these characteristics. Our policy, it is stressed, covers – not only unlawful discrimination – but also discrimination that is unfair.

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

2.2 General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Information provided by job applicants for the purposes of recruitment and selection will be used only for that purpose, shall be stored confidentially and then disposed of confidentially after 3 months have elapsed.

Section 3 – Our policy objectives

3.1 Equal opportunities in employment

The Group will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

We cannot lawfully discriminate in the selection of employees for recruitment or promotion. We may use appropriate lawful methods, including lawful positive action, to address the under-representation of groups that we identify as being under-represented in particular types of job.

3.2 Harassment

The Group has a separate Harassment Policy. Employees should report any bullying or harassment to their manager who will take appropriate action.

Section 4 – Implementing our policy objectives

4.1 The Group's responsibilities

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job.

Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against these requirements, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

The Group will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the Group considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so.

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

We will comply with our obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. We will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

4.2 Employees responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the Group to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the Association for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences. Any offences will be dealt with under the Group's disciplinary procedures and could lead to dismissal.

Section 5 – Performance management

We will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion).

We will also monitor the number of people with disabilities within these groups. We will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

Section 6 – Development and training

We will provide training in equal opportunities to managers and others likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

We will provide training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

We will provide training to all employees to help them understand their rights and responsibilities.

Section 7 – Our positive action initiatives

We hold the disability symbol, made up of two ticks and the words 'positive about disabled people'. The symbol is displayed on job adverts and application forms.

People Policies

Group Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy

We actively engage with partners to provide work placements and experience for young people through local education centres, Community Jobs Scotland and Get Ready for Work schemes.

We offer Flexible Retirement opportunities to our existing employees in line with employment legislation and the rules of our pension scheme.

Section 8 – Dealing with complaints

Complaints relating to equal opportunities in employment are dealt with in line with our grievance procedure. In terms of this policy complaints can be made if we fail to apply this policy properly or don't meet our organisational standards.

Section 9 – Consultation and review procedures

This policy will be monitored by us to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law.

We will review our equal opportunities in employment policy in accordance with the results shown by our monitoring systems. If changes are required we will implement them.

Section 10 – Confidentiality and data protection guidance

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

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