

Shelter

'PROMOTING EQUALITY, VALUING DIVERSITY'

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Introduction

Shelter strives to continue to be an organisation that values difference and inclusiveness. For Shelter, **Promoting Equality, Valuing Diversity** is about recognising that all staff, service users and stakeholders are important contributors to continuous development, learning and overall organisational success. We will ensure therefore, that we provide equality of opportunity for all, so that meaningful ways of participation and contribution can flourish.

We understand that providing equality of opportunity, means removing barriers to accessing our services and employment opportunities; taking positive steps to provide a voice and meet the needs of under-represented groups who are homeless or badly housed; challenging discrimination and championing social justice; ensuring a level playing field for all staff to work to their fullest potential and develop within the organisation.

As a workforce we strive to be:

Approachable

We aim to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion in how we engage and communicate with diverse clients, partners and audiences. The everyday behaviour of Shelter staff and volunteers should reflect that commitment.

Challenging

Shelter will challenge inequality and injustice in housing on behalf of our most vulnerable clients. We will advocate for equality and human rights in 'righting housing wrongs'

Enterprising

Shelter will develop creative ways of providing targeted support to those most at risk of disadvantage, and ensure that we make a difference in their lives with income generated

As an organisation that seeks to promote diversity across the organisation, we will strive to develop a culture that embraces and supports our values to be inclusive, by enabling all staff and volunteers to work to their fullest potential and all stakeholders to have meaningful ways to contribute to our work. We will draw on the diverse views and experiences within the organisation to enhance our awareness and understanding of the needs of our staff, volunteers, service users, supporters and professional partners.

Our commitment

Shelter is committed to Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity and will monitor the performance of the organisation by implementing its Equality Scheme through divisional and departmental Equality Action plans.

Our approach

Shelter believes that there are a variety of actions it can take to create and sustain diversity and inclusion.

Recruitment and selection of employees

We will:

- Pay attention to the style, content and language of our adverts and job specifications, to ensure we convey an approach of fairness and equality of opportunity.
- Use a variety of media to maximise the circulation of job opportunities to diverse audiences.
- Enable and encourage managers to circulate job adverts within their local communities, to attract a wider range of interest from under-represented groups.
- Seek to ensure that recruitment selection and interview panels consist of diverse staff to ensure fairness and equity.
- Ensure all staff and stakeholders involved in recruitment and selection, receive appropriate training and development that enables them to understand, promote and manage diversity in our recruitment and selection processes.
- Monitor, evaluate and review our policy and procedures to ensure consistency, fairness and good practice is maintained.

Supporting staff and volunteers

We will:

- Ensure that staff and volunteers have a clear understanding and awareness of our commitment to equality and diversity and their role in promoting it and addressing the related emerging issues.

- Afford Dignity at Work to all employees
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and volunteers in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Be aware of cultural or religious days of importance and recognise that individuals may need to observe these in a way they feel is appropriate.
- Seek to make provision for regular prayer and worship where possible and practical.
- Provide flexibility to staff in relation to hours, leave, location, travel and other work requirements that may significantly impact on their personal life and responsibilities.
- Seek to develop a broader range of work/life balance policies and practices.
- Ensure that we promote an understanding of dignity at work, by having a clear policy and definitions, standards of behaviour and safe and accessible ways for staff to report bullying, harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

Developing services

We will:

- We will seek to continuously update our knowledge and understanding of the profile of the communities we serve and the nature and level of housing need.
- We will seek to identify and represent the voice of the most disadvantaged and 'seldom heard' communities, to best assess what role Shelter could have in addressing any housing needs.
- We will seek to develop a variety of approaches to providing advice, support and advocacy services, to increase our responsiveness and scope to a broader range of clients.
- Provide diverse and inclusive ways to support and involve service users in developing and managing our organisation.
- We will monitor and review all equality and diversity issues in the development and delivery of our services and seek to take action to address issues of discrimination, accessibility, and exclusion. This will be mainly through our Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment process.
- Seek to highlight and challenge the inequality and disadvantage experienced by people who are homeless or in housing need.
- Seek to influence change in legislation, policy and practice that lead to exclusion of any group within our society and promote social justice, equity and fairness in our housing system..

External working

We will:

- Seek external expertise and where necessary, develop partnerships, to develop our own knowledge, understanding, and effectiveness in relation to the promotion and management of diversity.
- Respect and value the needs of different communities/groups/individuals (e.g. dietary, cultural and religious) when organising events, meetings.
- Ensure that all venues and events are accessible and have the necessary adaptations and equipment as required. We will also be mindful of geographical locations that may make it difficult for people to get to.
- Ensure that our literature and communications are available in different languages and formats and will seek to incorporate this into our events planning and external communications work, such as campaigns.
- Support and aim to take part in events and initiatives that encourage and promote diversity in the community and the sector as a whole.
- We will seek to develop partnerships and participate in multi- agency working at a local, regional and national level, to best meet the needs of diverse client groups.
- See to ensure that we are fair in procuring contracts externally and that our contractors adhere to our ethos, values and commitment around equality and diversity.

SHELTER EQUALITY SCHEME

Shelter has developed a Single Equality Scheme, which involves a commitment to monitor and review our practice and take steps to make additions or changes where necessary to ensure legal compliance and best practice. This Scheme is based on the principles of mutual respect, fairness, inclusion and a commitment to tackling inequality and promoting equality of opportunity. It extends to the planning and development of all our operations, practices and procedures and delivery of services. It also encompasses external partnerships and contracts we may enter in to help us achieve our organisational aims.

MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Monitoring of recruitment, selection, promotion and termination of employment, either voluntary or involuntary will be undertaken with all groups in mind [disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, religious belief/faith, sexual orientation]. Monitoring data collated will help identify impact on equality of opportunity in employment and under-representation of certain groups across the workforce, as well as enabling proactive action to tackle potential discrimination. The same standards of monitoring will apply to client monitoring and the impact on access, satisfaction levels and outcomes of any services provided. Information from this will provide a basis for campaigning

issues, policy advocacy on housing and social welfare issues affecting equality target groups.

USER INVOLVEMENT

User Involvement and diversity are central to Shelter's values and goals around being inclusive and providing continuous development and improvement of our services. They are an integral part of our performance management system. We will continue to implement our User Involvement strategy in a meaningful and practical way, to ensure that Shelter has a coherent and flexible approach of engaging with a diverse range of groups.