

# HOUSING JUSTICE

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

### Introduction

Housing Justice recognises that people who are discriminated against can face homelessness or bad housing conditions as a result of this prejudice. In addition, many people are victims of discrimination because they are homeless.

Housing Justice is committed to confronting discrimination as a result of being homeless or facing homelessness or poor housing, and to the policy of equal treatment of all service users, employees, volunteers, and Board members, and requires them to abide by and adhere to this general principle.

Attention is drawn also to the Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality.

All employees must abide by the Race Relations Act 1976, Sex Discrimination Act 1986, and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

### HOUSING JUSTICE Statement of Intent

Housing Justice recognises that discrimination against different groups of people is widespread in our society. We are committed to implementing policies and practice that will combat discrimination in our areas of work, and aim to promote maximum accessibility of our services to all members of the community.

This policy is designed to ensure that no employee, volunteer, service user, Board member, or any person associated with Housing Justice is discriminated against on the grounds of ethnic or national origin, colour, race, religion, disability, HIV or AIDS status, chronic illness, gender, sexuality, marital status, responsibility for dependants, appearance or age, nor by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable within the context of this Equal Opportunity Policy.

In implementing this policy, Housing Justice may wish to target groups demonstrably under-represented within Housing Justice or among service users.

**Acceptance of this policy is a condition of employment or membership of the Board. Breach of this policy by staff is a disciplinary offence (See Contract of Employment).**

## **Recruitment at Housing Justice**

To ensure that the most appropriate persons are recruited to the staff team, the Board, or as volunteers, Housing Justice will implement recruitment procedures which include:

- Drawing up person specifications for each vacancy, identifying essential and desirable experience and skills required;
- Reviewing job descriptions and advertising prior to advertising each vacancy, ensuring that the following statement is included in the advertisement: "This recruitment is taking place under Housing Justice's Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures";
- Explaining the need for the equal opportunities monitoring to candidates;
- Ensuring a representative balance on the shortlisting/interview panel;
- Putting procedures in place to compare fairly interviewed candidates, and ensuring that these procedures are explained to all candidates;
- Assisting unsuccessful applicants in their job-seeking, giving candidates feedback and reasons why they were unsuccessful at the interview if requested.
- Ensuring that Board membership and recruitment procedures reflect the community served.

Housing Justice will take positive action in recruitment where this will promote equal opportunity within the organisation and where this is acceptable in law.

## **Equal Opportunities Training**

Willingness to participate in Equal Opportunities training is a condition of employment for staff, and a condition of membership of the Board.

## **Equal Opportunities Monitoring**

The Board is ultimately responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy and will ensure that everyone working at Housing Justice or associated with the service understands the policy and acts in accordance with it.

Monitoring is important in examining whether anyone in need has access to Housing Justice services. It also ensures that recruitment practices are fair, so that Housing Justice reflects the people it serves.

- Housing Justice will monitor advertising, applications, shortlisting and recruitment to build up a longer-term picture of how equality and diversity goals are being achieved.

The Board will receive regular reports on the implementation of this policy e.g. staff training, equal opportunities monitoring, and any problems which have arisen with staff or service users.

Staff will co-operate in the implementation and monitoring of this policy.

## **Challenging discrimination**

Housing Justice is committed to challenging discrimination throughout the whole of the organisation.

Staff will not discriminate against colleagues or service users. Harassment of an employee is regarded as discrimination.

Staff will be encouraged to challenge discrimination from other staff or service users, contacting their line manager or Housing Justice's Chair where necessary.

Any incidents of discrimination within the organisation will be dealt with as part of the disciplinary and grievance procedure, or through the complaints procedure, as appropriate.

*Last revised: March 2005*

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Registered charity 294666