Brockley Tenants Co-operative Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Scope and Aims

1.1 Brockley Tenants Co-operative (BTC) is committed to promoting equal opportunities both in the provision of services and in our employment practices. BTC serves diverse communities in Lewisham, South London. We value diversity and recognise the benefits of employing a diverse workforce in relation to our customer service and growth as an organisation.

1.2 Through our work in providing affordable housing, and as an employer, we will help ensure fair treatment for all members of the community, regardless of race, ethnic origin or nationality; gender; disability, whether mental or physical; religion/belief; marital or family status; sexuality or sexual orientation; HIV status; age; physical appearance; pregnancy/maternity or gender reassignment.

1.3 We recognise that because some groups of people experience prejudice and discrimination; to make opportunities available, we have to make an extra effort. We will strive to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by any conditions, requirements, provisions, criteria, procedures or practices that cannot be justified, or victimised for taking action against discrimination or harassment.

1.4 We will Ensure that our policies and practices are in keeping with the Equality Act 2010.

2. Meeting Housing Needs

2.1 We will ensure that new applicants meet the same housing needs criteria as London Borough of Lewisham uses in their assessment of needs.

2.2 In developing new homes, we will ensure wherever possible that we follow guidance for people with disabilities (e.g. RNIB guidance for people with visual impairments), that ground floor accommodation is accessible to people in wheelchairs and is developed to lifetime home standards.

3. Access to Housing

3.1 We will promote fair access to housing by monitoring the allocation of our homes, including the quality of accommodation, to ensure that discrimination does not occur.

3.2 We will ensure that our priority system for assessing the rehousing needs of our own residents reflects equality principles.

4. The Housing Service

4.1 We will ensure that we consult with members of BTC effectively, individually through surveys and through our general meetings to ensure the housing service meets their needs.
4.2 We promote involvement by members at our committee and general meetings that are open to all members, and we will challenge members voicing discriminatory views.
4.3 We will ensure that our complaints procedure is accessible to all, and feedback about the service given proper consideration.
4.4 We will not tolerate harassment of residents and will take the strongest possible action against perpetrators. We will be proactive in co-operating with other agencies in dealing with all forms of harassment.
4.5 We will provide appropriate means of communication such as provision of an interpreting service as required.
4.6 We will try to ensure that the housing service responds sensitively to the needs of vulnerable residents. Where financially possible, extra services will be provided in response to the needs of vulnerable residents.
4.7 We will maintain up to date information on the translation or other communication needs of all residents.

5. Employment and Training

5.1 BTC will actively seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all current and potential employees.
5.2 We will conduct and monitor our recruitment in an open and accountable way and according to equal opportunities practices and will regularly review the results of monitoring to ensure fairness is evident at all stages.
5.3 We will seek to deal with any under representation of particular groups among employees and make full use of positive action provisions permissible within legislation.
5.4 We will strive to prevent harassment of staff by other staff or residents and if and when it occurs take swift action to stop it.
5.5 We will seek to ensure that our training offer will meet the business needs of the organisation and that training opportunities are being offered fairly.
5.6 We will ensure that selection for employment, career development opportunities, access to benefits, facilities and services are fair and equitable.
5.7 We will make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with disabilities to perform their jobs in a way that minimises the impact of their disability.
5.8 We will train staff to ensure everyone has a basic awareness of equalities and diversity issues, as well as training to meet the specific needs of their post.

6. Contractors, consultants, and partner agencies

6.1 We will only use contractors and consultants who have equality and diversity policy which is broadly consistent with our own aims.
6.2 We will hold anybody representing BTC to account and ensure they adhere to our policy.
6.3 We will ensure that our selection of consultants and contractors is fair and non-discriminatory.
6.4 We will expect our contractors, consultants and partner agencies to pay their employees fairly.

7. BTC Committee Members

7.1 BTC will try to ensure that our committee is fully representative of the local community and provide any training to help members become involved.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 All staff have responsibility for ensuring that this Policy is put into practice. We expect a personal commitment from all employees in making it effective, and in setting an exemplary standard for others to follow.
8.2 Additional and specific responsibilities apply to those who manage staff and to those who are involved in recruitment, training and development.
8.3 All members of staff have a contractual responsibility to:

1. Ensure that they understand the values and benefits of equality and diversity.
2. Familiarise themselves with this Policy, follow it, and ensure that any staff for whom they are responsible do so as well.
3. Draw to the attention of their line manager any instances of apparent discrimination or harassment, or any perceived problem in relation to employment or to the provision or services.

8.4. The Management Committee have corporate responsibility for ensuring that this Policy underpins all aspects of BTCs work.
8.5. The Officer Group has responsibility for developing the organisational culture in which this Policy can operate effectively, and for ensuring that it is implemented.
8.6. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented in relation to employment and training.

9. Communication

9.1. A copy of this Policy will be available on BTC's website and on BTC shared drive.

9.2. The Policy will also be included with tender information and contracts for work undertaken for us by external organisations and individuals.
9.3. Training in the importance and use of this Policy will be part of an individual's induction to the organisation and regular refreshers will be available to all staff.

10. Monitoring and Review

10.1. Requirements, conditions, provisions, criteria and practices will be reviewed regularly in the light of the monitoring results, and revised, if they are found to actually or potentially discriminate against any particular groups.
10.2. This Policy is designed to encourage practical changes, and we expect to update it in the light of experience from applying it in practice and as a result of changes in legislation or our own internal procedures. As a minimum the Policy will be reviewed every two years.

11. Legal Framework

11.1. The Equality Act 2010

12. Related policies, strategies and procedures

12.1. Complaints Policy
12.2. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
12.3. Translation Policy

Policy/Procedure/Report:	BTC Equality and Diversity Policy 2024
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Brockley
Tenants Co-operative Ltd