

# Equality and Diversity Policy

## INFORMATION

**Policy Name:** Equality and Diversity  
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 Staff/stakeholders  
  
**Equality Analysis:** Yes  
**Approved By:** Your Tung Sing Board  
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**Responsible for Version Control** Jen Davidson  
**Overall Responsibility for Policy:** Anila Khalid, Head of Operational Support

### Version Control History - changes from previous issues of document (if applicable):

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Approved by

## 1. Statement of Objectives

1.1 This Equality and Diversity Policy builds on our reputation and achievements on practicing and promoting fairness and inclusion. In particular, it reinforces the achievements of Your Tung Sing (YTS) in the provision of homes and services to a diverse range of customers and communities.

1.2 YTS was set up in 1984 to meet the needs of disadvantaged Chinese groups in Manchester. A particular focus in the early days was to provide homes and services to Chinese elders, resulting in the opening of the first dedicated sheltered scheme in 1989 in the UK for Chinese elders, situated in Manchester's Chinatown. Today, YTS owns and manages nearly 650 properties across Greater Manchester, the majority of which are designated as 'general needs'. Nearly two-thirds of YTS residents are of Chinese background, of whom one-fifth have English language barriers. A dedicated team includes several staff with Chinese-speaking skills.

1.3 YTS works in partnership with local communities, and in particular, the Wai Yin Society that provides a range of support services for children, young adults and older people from diverse backgrounds. Close links with the Chinese Health Information Centre enhances the provision of culturally appropriate advice about health and well-being. Community cohesion is advanced via the Chinese Lion Club that connects residents with business owners in Chinatown.

1.4 The review of our approach on equality and diversity is timely as Your Housing Group (YHG) is undergoing transformation in the way we work. The transition requires a strong commercial mindset while keeping a social heart to realise our vision to 'lead the way as a new generation housing provider, working efficiently and effectively to build as many quality homes as possible'. In doing so, equality and diversity must remain integral to decision-making and be reflected in the new ways of working to ensure that we continue to meet customer needs and aspirations. The rich expertise, experience and skills of YTS Board, staff and residents has helped to shape this policy which extends to all 'protected characteristics' outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

1.5 We use the following terms:

**Equality:** Treating people fairly, in ways that are free from discrimination and providing the same opportunities for all. Taking positive action to create a fairer society where everyone has the same chance to fulfill their potential, have access to services to meet individual needs and participate in the community.

**Diversity:** Being inclusive. Understanding, respecting and valuing differences between individuals.

## 2. Compliance with Regulatory Standards and Legal Obligations

This policy operates within the context of regulatory legal frameworks as follows:

Equality Act 2010

Human Rights Act 1998

## 3. Corporate Fit

This policy is consistent (where relevant) with YHG's current policies, specifically:

- Safeguarding Policy
- CSR Strategy
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Group Absence Management Policy and Procedure
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Harassment and Bullying Procedure
- YHG Wellbeing Approach

#### 4. Policy Detail

- 4.1 At YHG, the principles of equality and diversity are underpinned by effective and authentic leadership to secure tangible outcomes for customers and reap business benefits. This means doing the right things, in the right way. Treating people fairly and valuing diversity are central to our values of **'passion, pride and creativity'**.
- 4.2 We recognise that everyone is different and should be treated as an individual. To achieve fairness, we pro-actively tackle disadvantage and discrimination and remove barriers to provide everyone an equal chance to access our homes, services, jobs and contracts. Actively promoting opportunities for all and eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimization, are structural to our work.
- 4.3 Fair treatment, inclusion and valuing diversity are paramount to reducing inequality due to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caste and other irrelevant factors such as background, size or appearance.
- 4.4 We do not tolerate any discriminatory or offensive behavior including harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- 4.5 This policy applies to everyone within YHG, including the Board, staff and temporary workers. Agents, sub-contractors, partners, customers and stakeholders are required to operate this policy. External parties commissioned to provide services are responsible for ensuring that their workers and sub-contractors work to this policy.
- 4.6 Reports of actual or apparent breaches are taken very seriously. Breaches will result in appropriate, reasonable and proportionate action being taken.

#### 5. Equality Objectives

- 5.1 The success of this policy will be measured against the following **strategic** outcomes:

##### Customer experience and influence

- Increase in number of customers accessing YHG's services via digital solutions.
- Availability of language translation service and provision of other communication tools.
- Well-informed scrutiny reports that consider outcomes for a diverse range of customers.
- Increase in diversity of customers taking part in influencing and shaping products and services through our customer involvement framework.

- e. Satisfaction with implementation of this policy as judged by the Tung Sing City-Wide Residents Forum.
- f. Evidence of demonstrable improvements from use of customer insight.

### Maximising value from assets, and our people and partners

- a. Robust evidence of customer insight supporting decision-making.
- b. Maximising value from adapted properties.
- c. Identifying emerging target markets to meet housing needs.
- d. Diversity of customers taking up various housing products.
- e. Robust explanation of pay gap and any required actions.
- f. Satisfaction with YHG as an employer as judged by staff.

**Corporate objective:** Provide homes to enable people to live independently

**Equality Objective:** Remove barriers to ensure equal access to suitable homes and services to contribute to tenancy sustainment and independent living.

#### Commitment

1. Address disadvantage in access to services and products by providing information about YHG's products and services in accessible ways, including use of plain language and a particular focus on customers who have language and other communication barriers.
2. Continue to meet any specific communication needs, such as translation and interpreting, to reduce barriers to YHG's products and services.
3. Explore methods of increased use of digital technology for disadvantaged groups.
4. Understand and deliver services in a way that takes into account, whenever possible, personal needs, preferences and cultural appropriateness.
5. Provide advice and support to older and disabled customers from minority groups who require property adaptations and other support to remain independent.
6. Consider the potential to develop 'Local Offers' for specific scheme types and to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups or locality, such as reduction in hate-related crime in partnership with relevant organisations.
7. Support diverse customers to engage in participation and scrutiny activities and influence service improvement.

**Corporate objective:** Enable people to get on and off the property ladder easily and effectively at different stages of their lives.

**Equality Objective:** Develop flexible products and services to meet the needs of diverse customers.

#### Commitment

1. Use customer insight to inform YHG's long term business plans and corporate priorities.
2. Publicise home-ownership opportunities to diverse customers.
3. Ensure that fairness and inclusion is driven from the top and the governance of the

organisation is responsive to the needs of diverse communities we serve.

4. Widely advertise YHG's products and services.
5. Identify partners for strategic alliances to provide a range of options for housing.
6. Consider the overall impact of strategic decisions on local communities.

**Corporate objective:** Be self-sufficient in terms of funding to stand on our own two feet.

**Equality Objective:** Develop flexible products and services to meet the needs of diverse customers.

**Commitment**

1. Whenever appropriate, use our Procurement power to invest in communities and demonstrate the impact made through social value.
2. Target resources in our investment areas through our Customer First programme to increase sustainability.
3. Continue to support the delivery of community projects via the Wai Yin Society.

**Corporate objective:** Transform the business through pioneering staff who are accountable and capable of leading change

**Equality Objective:** Be clear, transparent, reliable and innovative so that fairness and inclusion are structural to everything we do.

**Commitment**

1. Create a culture where fairness is promoted, diversity is valued and the workplace is free from discrimination, prejudice and unfair treatment.
2. Achieve diversity of employees by ensuring that all staff recruitment, selection and retention is based on merit and reflect fair and transparent criteria and methods.
3. Provide equal access for staff training and personal development opportunities on fair and transparent criteria.
4. Ensure that employees have equal access to work flexibly and in a way that meets business, customer and personal needs.
5. From April 2018 publish information each year, based upon a 'snapshot of pay' at 30 April in the previous year, to meet the Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations 2016 affecting employers with more than 250 employees.
6. Develop and co-ordinate a programme of Equality and Diversity training and awareness including understanding and implementation of this strategy.
7. Review strategic contracts with external contractors to include diversity-specific Code of Conduct where appropriate to ensure consistency of good service that reflects customer preferences.
8. Consider the overall impact of strategic decisions on our people.

**Corporate objective:** Play our part in solving the national housing crisis

**Equality Objective:** Reflect in growth plans needs and priorities of customers and communities.

**Commitment**

1. Examine commercial growth and business development opportunities to take into

account the needs of changing and new emerging communities and customers.

## **6. Training**

Equality and Diversity Training is mandatory for all YHG staff.

## **7. Performance Management/Monitoring and Reporting**

7.1 The YHG Board has the overall responsibility for the setting and delivery of this Policy. The Services Committee of the Group Board will monitor delivery of the Policy; agree action plans for delivery, as recommended by the Executive Director (Core Housing).

7.2 To support the monitoring of Your Tung Sing's legacy and brand, the main body for customer engagement, the City-Wide Residents Forum, will monitor progress annually and contribute to the review of this Policy.

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

On request, YHG will provide translations of all its documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats by contacting YHG.

YHG recognises that confidentiality is important to customers and will treat all information relevant to each customer in the strictest confidence, as will all contractors, under the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **9. Future Reviews**

YHG will review the Equality and Diversity policy every year or sooner if required by statutory, regulatory or best practice requirements or the need to update following reviews of other Group wide policies.