

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date:	June 2023
Review Date:	June 2025

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Storyy Homes supports and works with children, young people, and adults as part of its activities. We encompass equality and diversity through all aspects of our operations and throughout the service we provide. This policy sets out our approach to equality diversity and inclusion for young people, employees and all other stakeholders and partners we work with.

1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all employees, contractors, volunteers, children, and young people in our services.

1.2 It applies to all aspects of employment from recruitment and selection through to termination of employment.

1.3 All of us at Storyy Homes are responsible for ensuring that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are actively implemented, and we should be aware of our personal responsibility to each other, our young people, contractors, visitors, and members of the public.

2. Vision

2.1 At Storyy Homes we want to create a genuinely inclusive environment, with a culture where colleagues, children and young people feel they belong and are valued and respected. We are committed to ensuring that our staff reflects the diverse young people which we provide services to, recognising that this enables us to better understand their unique and varied needs and priorities.

2.2 Inclusion is about engaging the uniqueness, talents, beliefs, backgrounds, abilities, and ways of working of all our colleagues and young people so that they fulfil their individual potential. Embracing diversity means that we will ensure our staff and young people are representative of the wider society.

2.3 Storyy Homes is committed to ensuring that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion runs through everything we do as a company. We will encourage and expect everyone to contribute to an environment in which everyone can feel comfortable expressing who they are, how they feel and what they need, knowing that they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

2.4 Storyy Homes is committed to developing an inclusive culture which is reflected in a diverse organisation; embracing those with protected characteristics; lived experience, diverse skill sets and encouraging cognitive diversity across working groups.

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2.5 This policy is intended to assist the organisation to put this vision into practice. Following the policy will help employees create an inclusive workplace that will benefit all.

3. Legislation

3.1 The Equality Act 2010 brought together previous legislation and strengthened equality laws, prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination due to the following nine protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Maternity and Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

3.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires Storyy Homes to meet certain statutory duties to tackle persistent and long-standing issues of disadvantage. As an organisation we will ensure that our employees, volunteers, children and young people are treated fairly and equally and receive equal services and opportunities. At Storyy Homes, when we talk about inclusivity, we are considering the following areas:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment status
- Gypsy or traveller heritage
- Medical status, including HIV/AIDS Status
- Race, ethnicity, or colour
- Physical abilities
- Refugee status
- Parental responsibility
- Physical appearance
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Employment
- Sexual orientation
- Social background
- Marriage, Civil partnership, or relationship status
- Pregnancy or maternity status

4. Definitions

4.1 Equality is about treating people fairly and without discrimination regardless of who they are. It is about recognising that inequality is often caused by circumstances not of an individual's own making and taking positive action to address this. Our commitment to

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equality ensures that policies, procedures, and practices do not discriminate against staff, young people, or other people we come into contact with.

4.2 Respecting diversity ensures that all people are valued as individuals and can maximise their potential and contribution to Storyy Homes and to their community. This means that we recognise that different people have unique needs that need to be met for them to experience equal opportunities and equal outcomes.

4.3 Inclusion refers to an individual's experience within the workplace and in a wider society, and the extent to which they feel valued and included. Direct Discrimination occurs when an individual is dealt with less favourably explicitly on the grounds of a characteristic for example their race, skin colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender reassignment status, relationship status, sexual orientation, age, physical, sensory or learning disability, mental health, religion and belief, medical status, employment status, physical appearance, SEN, unrelated criminal convictions, or for any other reason regarded as unjustifiable.

4.4 Indirect Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition, which although applying equally to people of all groups, is applied in such a way that at least a significant minority of a particular group are disadvantaged on this basis. For example, dress codes have sometimes been held to discriminate indirectly against people based on their gender or religious belief.

4.5 Associative Discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

4.6 Perceptive Discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess the characteristic.

4.7 Victimisation in the context of equality, diversity and inclusion occurs when an individual is treated less favourably because that person has asserted their rights under legislation, for example the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, or the Disability Discrimination Act, or acted as a whistle-blower on such activity.

4.8 Harassment relates to repeated, unreciprocated, and unwelcome comments, looks, actions, suggestions, or physical contact which is found objectionable and offensive, and which might threaten an employee or young person or create an intimidating or uncomfortable environment. Harassment does not need to be based on the characteristics of an individual, but can be sexual, racial, directed against people with disabilities or indeed related to any characteristic exhibited by an individual or group of people. The Equality Act makes employers potentially liable for harassment of employees by people (third parties) who are not employees, such as the young people we support.

4.9 Positive Action refers to measures taken to assist participants and groups who have been under-represented in specific areas, to reach a level of confidence, knowledge and achievement that is comparable with their peers. These measures would normally take the form of additional training, positive recruitment amongst certain groups and making public a commitment to redressing any imbalance in participation and challenge historical barriers. An example might be explicitly welcoming applications from a particular group which are currently underrepresented in a particular area of work.

5. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Employment

5.1 Storyy Homes is committed to avoiding unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline, and selection for redundancy.

5.2 Job descriptions will only include requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements of the job, considering any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability.

5.3 Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

5.4 Storyy Homes will reflect on whether its standard working practices (e.g., number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked, and the location) have any possible indirectly discriminatory effects.

5.5 The organisation will also make workplace adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

5.6 Storyy Homes will monitor the protected characteristics of our existing workforce in our Organisation Profile and of applicants for jobs (including internal promotions), and the number of people with protected characteristics within these groups and will consider taking any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified because of the monitoring process.

5.7 Storyy Homes will not discriminate against former employees; for example, refusing to provide a reference relating to one of the protected characteristics. It is Storyy Homes's policy to always provide a factual reference for each former employee as standard when requested.

6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion for children and young people

6.1 Storyy Homes recognises the diversity of its children and young people and will ensure that it delivers accessible services and equitable outcomes across its services.

6.2 Storyy Homes is committed to drawing upon the lived experience from children, young people and staff and creating channels to ensure that everyone's voice is heard.

6.3 Storyy Homes recognises that without understanding the individual needs of our children we cannot tailor service delivery to meet the needs of our children and young people. As such, Storyy Homes will focus on improving the quality-of-service experience for all our residents.

6.4 Storyy Homes recognises that our children and young people face discrimination and disadvantage by virtue of having experienced a variety of challenges that could be unique to them. Staff should encourage children to understand their rights and be well informed in how to challenge discrimination.

Storyy Homes will actively tackle discrimination and reduce disadvantage by:

Supporting children and young people to develop their life skills and harness a caring environment.

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Providing positive environments which enable each individual to influence and take control of their lives.

Supporting young people to engage in the community and breakdown barriers.

Developing positive partnerships with schools and other agencies to increase positive pathways joined up work and improves health and Well-being.

Making reasonable adjustments to overcome social and physical disabilities.

The Home's managers and staff are expected to examine ways in which diversity can be valued and activities adapted to meet the individual child's needs including food preparation and menu choices.

Additional support is offered to staff and/or children who are finding difficulty in understanding diverse or complex situations.

7. Raising Concerns

7.1 If a child, young person, agency, family member or professional has a concern about how we act regarding our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion practice, they can raise it in one of the following ways:

- Speak with the registered manager.
- Email your concern to: hello@storyy.group
- Call the Head Office on 0800 001 6718.
- In writing to the Operations Manager, Suite 4, Oakmede Place, Terrace Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 4JF.

7.2 Staff – If you are a member of staff you can raise a concern in the following ways;

- With your line manager.
- Refer to the relevant sections of the Grievance or Harassment and Bullying policies.
- Refer to the Whistleblowing process.
- In writing to the Operations Manager, Suite 4, Oakmede Place, Terrace Road, Binfield, Bracknell, RG42 4JF.

If you wish to raise a formal complaint, details of this process can be found in our Complaints and feedback policy.

8. Aims and Responsibilities

8.1 Storyy Homes will aim to work in an inclusive and diverse way across all its activities by:

- Creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment for all staff.
- Attracting, developing, and retaining staff from the widest pool of talent.
- Ensure compliance with legal regulations and requirements relating to diversity and inclusion; and
- Deliver accessible services and equitable outcomes across our services

8.2 The Operations Manager have overall accountability for the implementation of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion practices.

8.3 All our staff and volunteers are responsible for understanding and applying our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion values, standards,