

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

### **Statement of policy**

CHG was founded in 1969 with the objective of providing housing and associated amenities for people in greatest need, on a fair and equitable basis. CHG acknowledges that in society certain groups and individuals are unfairly discriminated against and it is committed to taking positive steps to help redress the effects of unfair disadvantage in order to ensure that equality of opportunity is an integral feature of all CHG's activities.

The purpose of this statement is to clarify CHG's commitment to eliminating unfair discrimination from all aspects of its employment practice; to outline policy priorities; and to give the mechanisms for co-ordinating and monitoring progress towards the achievement of those policy objectives.

CHG is also committed to providing equal opportunities in its housing provision. This commitment is outlined in a separate policy statement. This is available from the Director of Housing Services.

The objectives of the equal opportunities employment policy are :

- ◆ To provide equality of employment opportunity to all job applicants and prospective applications, by eliminating unfair discrimination from recruitment and selection procedures.
- ◆ To eliminate unfair discrimination from the employment opportunities offered to existing members of staff, by ensuring that all employees are promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities, and are given equal opportunities to progress within CHG.
- ◆ To eliminate unfair discrimination in the provision of training and development opportunities, so that all individuals can realise their full potential and contribute to the aims and objectives of CHG.
- ◆ To endeavour to ensure that no employee, job applicant or candidate for promotion receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, race, nationality, religion (or religious belief), disability, family commitments, age, gender (including gender reassignment), sexual orientation, marital status or actual or suspected infection with HIV/AIDS.

Accordingly, CHG will endeavour to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and receive treatment that is fair and on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

CHG recognises that the achievement of the above objectives will require changes to current practice and is committed to providing the training necessary to enable management and staff to understand and implement their responsibilities under the policy.

The relevant statutory requirements are contained in the Equality Act 2010 and the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment.

## **Discrimination**

1. Direct discrimination can be defined as putting someone at a disadvantage for a discriminatory reason in relation to his or her employment whether this be intentional or unintentional.
2. Indirect discrimination consists of applying a requirement or condition which whether intentionally or unintentionally adversely affects one groups considerably more than another and which cannot be justified.
3. Disability discrimination occurs where an individual is unjustifiably disadvantaged in employment/recruitment for a reason connected with his/her disability unless the discrimination cannot be avoided by making reasonable adjustments.
4. Victimisation consists of treating an individual is treated less favourably than colleagues, for instance because he/she has taken action to assert their statutory rights or assisted a colleague with information in that regard.

## **Policy priorities and organisation arrangements**

### **Organisation arrangements**

The Board of Management of CHG, having formally adopted the equal opportunities employment policy, accepts responsibility for its implementation and for monitoring its effectiveness. To this end it will initiate a head-count by ethnic origin and gender of its Board of Management and of all employees. The data collated will form the basis of CHG's employment equality targets and an employment action programme.

The equal opportunities employment programme will be based on the targets and specific goals which reflect the current staffing and service needs of individual departments within CHG.

Day to day responsibility for implementing the equal opportunities employment programme lies with the Group Chief Executive of CHG and its Departmental Directors/Managers.

### **Implementation**

Besides the statutory duty not to discriminate unfairly, all staff have a responsibility to ensure the positive application of the equal opportunities employment policy.

The success of any policy, depends, however, not only on the degree of commitment of all employees, but also on the extent to which the Group Chief Executive and the Departmental Heads are successful in channelling that commitment into action. Together with the Group Chief Executive, therefore, the Departmental Directors/Managers have a particular duty to ensure equality of employment opportunities in all areas of work under their control, and particularly in respect of the target groups prioritised in the policy. Breaches of this, as of all other CHG policies, may be the subject of grievance and disciplinary procedures.

CHG's grievance procedure is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been unfairly discriminated against. The harassment complaints procedure set out below is available to any employee who believes that he or she may have been bullied or harassed. Employees will not be victimised in anyway for making such a complaint in good faith. Complaints of this nature will be dealt with seriously, in confidence and as soon as possible.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination. Serious breaches of this policy and serious incidents of harassment will be treated as gross misconduct. Allegations of discrimination which are not made in good faith will also be considered as a disciplinary matter.

### **Monitoring the programme**

The Board of Management has responsibility for monitoring progress on the equal opportunities employment programme. Regular reviews are undertaken to monitor :

- ◆ performance against equality targets;
- ◆ progress with respect to agreed timetables; and
- ◆ feedback on how the policy is operating

### **Resources**

CHG will make appropriate resources available, whether in terms of money or staff, to ensure full and effective implementation of this policy.