

# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

November 2019

<b>Affected Business Area:</b>	Ongo Group
<b>Affected Teams</b>	All Teams
<b>Led by:</b>	Karen Cowan – Head of Corporate Services
<b>Written by:</b>	Erica Sanderson – Business Assurance Officer Updated by Rabul Ibrahim
<b>Agreed on:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
<b>Agreed by:</b>	HoST
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	September 2022

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## **1. Our policy is...**

- 1.1 In line with the Equality Act 2010 and the three specific aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (*see section 8, What we mean*), we take our duty to provide all our services and employment opportunities fairly and without discrimination very seriously.
- 1.2 At Ongo we believe in Equality and Diversity (E&D) and that everyone has the right to fair and equal treatment and recognise that people who use our services and those that work for us come from diverse backgrounds.
- 1.3 As a service provider and major employer, we recognise we have a moral and legal responsibility to promote equal opportunities. In addition, we recognise that it is essential to strive for equality of opportunity for a productive and professional working environment.
- 1.4 We keep to all relevant codes of practice and recognise we have a duty to challenge prejudice and discrimination whenever it is identified, and promote Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement (FREDIE).
- 1.5 We are committed to dealing with all areas of discrimination through our policies and procedures.

## **2. It applies to...**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all areas of the Ongo group including Ongo Roofing Ltd. (trading as Ashbridge Roofing Solutions) and Ongo Heating and Plumbing Ltd. (trading as Hales & Coultas).
- 2.2 This policy also applies to our Board Members, volunteers, tenants and potential tenants, committees, partners, customers, stakeholders and to any external organisation supported or engaged by us.
- 2.3 This policy will also be used to address discrimination through perception and association.

## **3. Because we want to...**

- 3.1 Our goal is equality of opportunity for everyone who we have contact with and we will deliver our services and employment practices accordingly.
- 3.2 In particular, we are committed to ensuring:
  - Equality, fairness and respect for all. No-one will receive more or less favourable treatment because of any of the nine protected characteristics (age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) or illness, employment status, career status, memberships of trade unions or political beliefs (unless these beliefs condone or influence extremism – see section 4.6);

- We promote FREDIE amongst everyone we work with and our workforce and the services we provide reflect and are appropriate to the needs of the diverse individuals and communities we serve;
- All staff and customers' needs are understood and all services we provide meet individual needs, including in relation to the protected characteristics and customers with additional support needs;
- We encourage staff, residents, and all other stakeholders to challenge and eradicate discrimination wherever it is encountered in respect of any of the protected characteristics;
- We keep up to date with changes in society, legislation and regulation and put actions in place to ensure we comply with the changes.

## **4. We will...**

### **4.1 Meet the general principles...**

4.1.1 We will occasionally ask customers for personal information – for example, in relation to the protected characteristics, employment status or income details. This information will be used for monitoring purposes only and will not be shared with any other agencies. Obtaining this information will enable us to deliver our services to maximum effect. This information will be collected and retained in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

### **4.2 Acknowledge EDI in the delivery of our services...**

4.2.1 We ensure that EDI is acknowledged and considered in policy, strategy and service development and review through effective Equality Impact Analysis to ensure consideration to discrimination against anyone in respect of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

4.2.2 All our services are designed to be inclusive and meet the needs of all our customers. We aim to remove or reduce barriers to accessing our services.

4.2.3 We will recognise and respond to the diverse needs of our customers by providing accessible information in their preferred format to make sure they receive the best from us.

### **4.3 Ensure Equality of Opportunity flows through our Recruitment & Retention Processes...**

4.3.1 We are a committed Equal Opportunities employer. We have been awarded the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) , [Mindful Employer](#) and [Disability Confident Badges](#). We seek to achieve a balanced workforce that reflects the community we serve and maximise the contribution and potential of all our employees.

4.3.2 We will provide employment opportunities fairly and without discrimination and will keep to all relevant codes of practice, legislation and regulation.

4.3.3 All staff will receive EDI training appropriate to their role at induction stage with refresher training provided at regular intervals.

4.3.4 Unfair treatment, discrimination or harassment of or by any of our employees will not be accepted. Accordingly, we are committed to developing and implementing effective Dignity at Work Policies and Procedures.

#### 4.4 **Make sure our contractors work in line with this policy...**

4.4.1 During the procurement process, we will request information from potential contractors on their Equality & Diversity Policy and/or guidance.

- We will ensure E&D questions are included in the procurement process.
- We will ensure E&D requirements are included in contract management reviews.

#### 4.5 **Do what we can to prevent racist incidents or instances of other hate crimes...**

4.5.1 We will ensure incidents are reported, that the victims and their families are supported and that action is taken against the perpetrators by:

- Encouraging the reporting of hate crime through the development of procedures and staff training;
- Continuing to promote the designated offices that are local centres for the reporting of hate crime.

#### 4.6 **Work hard to safeguard against terrorism and terrorist-related activities**

4.6.1 In line with the government's **Prevent Strategy**, we will work with the local authority, the police, statutory partners and the local community to safeguard children and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activities; recognising that early interventions may help to protect and divert them away from these risks.

### 5. **Making sure we do what we say...**

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team and Service Managers to ensure that:

- All staff are aware of this policy;
- All staff are provided with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training relative to their role;
- Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.

- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the Ongo EDI Steering Group to ensure that it:
- Provides feedback in relation to the review of this policy;
  - Promotes FREDIE through the organisation.
- 5.3 It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that:
- FREDIE is always considered when developing and delivering services to our customers;
- 5.4 Any actions that are witnessed to be inconsistent with this policy are brought to the relevant manager’s attention at the earliest opportunity.

## 6. Other things to bear in mind...

- 6.1 This policy links to all our policies, strategies and procedures.
- 6.2 The main pieces of legislation and regulation relevant to this policy include:
- Equality Act 2010;
  - Public Sector Equality Duty
  - Localism Act 2011;
  - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994;
  - Employment Act 2002;
  - Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Schedules 6 & 8) 2006;
  - Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013);
  - Human Rights Act 1998;
  - Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
  - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard of the Homes & Communities Agency’s (HCA’s) Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England; and
  - The Government’s Prevent Strategy

## 7. We’ll look at this again...

- 7.1 In 3 years time, if anything changes in that time, we will review earlier.

## 8. What we mean...

<p><b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b></p>	<p>There are 3 specific aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;</li> <li>2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and</li> <li>3. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected</li> </ol>
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	characteristic and those who do not.
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