

Equality and Diversity

1. Aims of the policy

Onward Homes recognises its statutory and regulatory responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity and is committed to meeting them. More than that, we welcome the many positive outcomes that diversity both within our communities and our workforce brings and we aim to ensure fair access to all of our services. As one organisation, we will build upon our existing commitments to equality and diversity, to ensure it is considered in our business decisions and policies, and is evident in our customer service. Our purpose is to make a positive difference in the communities we serve, and this policy will help us to achieve that purpose.

The aims of this policy are:

- To set out our commitment to achieving Equality and Diversity in the range of services we offer our customers, the ways in which they are delivered and in our workplace
- To state our equality objectives

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all colleagues who work for Onward in either a paid or voluntary capacity, our partners including our contractors and our customers.

3. Onward's equality objectives

- **We will adapt and shape our service provision to meet the needs of our customers** – we will create opportunities for our customers to influence our services developing our approach to customer insight and engagement. We will carry out and act on Equality Impact Assessments to ensure we meet diverse needs
- **We will drive a colleague culture of diversity that is evident across Onward** – this will be done by open and fair recruitment processes, making reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers for colleagues with disabilities, treating colleagues fairly and ensuring their work environment is free from harassment, providing regular equality and diversity training and supporting colleagues to reach their potential through mentoring and personal development
- **We will support equality of opportunity within our communities** - this will be done by adopting a neighbourhood approach to our services, providing social investment funding for community projects, supporting our customers into employment or training, providing a financial inclusion service and continuing to work with partners to tackle domestic abuse and hate incidents

Onward is not a public authority as defined in the Equality Act 2010, but may in some circumstances be deemed to be carrying out certain public functions. Where this applies we will comply with the Act's specific requirements for advancing equality of opportunity.

4. Responsibility and monitoring

Onward's Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that we achieve our equality objectives, although it is expected that all colleagues will ensure that equality and diversity is at the heart of the services they deliver, and line managers are responsible for ensuring their teams are aware of Onward's equality objectives and play their part in achieving them.

Our Executive Team and Board will receive an annual report on how we have achieved against these objectives, and how we are assured that this policy is being applied consistently and effectively across Onward.

Linked documents:	Equality Impact Assessment form and process Onward Equality and Diversity Action Plan
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Policy lead:	Claire Wilde – External Affairs and Policy Manager
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