



Memo Office, Reynolds House Courtyard
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Equal Opportunities Policy

The aims of Millbank Estate Management Organisation's (MEMO) Equal Opportunity policy are to ensure that no person receives less favourable treatment with regard to the provision of services to residents, the development of the tenant management organisation and to the employment and development of staff. In particular, MEMO has regard for the need to avoid direct, indirect and institutional discrimination on the grounds of:

- mental or physical disability
- sexual orientation
- gender
- age
- ethnicity, national origin or race
- culture
- colour
- class
- religion
- physical appearance
- lack of formal qualifications
- being HIV positive or having AIDS
- being an ex-offender
- doing shift or night work
- belonging to a trade union
- being homeless
- having a first language other than English
- having sole or shared responsibility for children or other dependants
- having mental or physical health problems or a history of them
- being unemployed or on a low income

MEMO will take positive action to redress discrimination on any ground and thereby promote good relations in the community by providing a non-discriminatory service.

Service Delivery

MEMO considers its equal opportunities policy in its office opening times and availability of staff. It has an answer machine service and staff will make appointments to see people outside office hours where appropriate. The staff are welcoming and non-threatening to all residents, visitors and contractors. The office is wheelchair accessible and is fitted with an audio loop system.

The circumstances of individuals will be taken into account by staff in considering whether a repair is urgent. Repairs occurring from harassment or domestic violence will be treated as an emergency.

Consideration will also be given to the circumstances of residents in cases of re-charging for repairs due to the negligence or abuse or undertaking repairs, which are the resident's responsibility.

MEMO will ensure that its equal opportunities policy operates in all aspects of its work. This will include the letting of vacant dwellings, the admission of members, complaints of racial harassment, tenancy disputes, and the appointment of contractors and consultants, who will be required to have an equal opportunities policy of their own.

Commitment to Consultation and Participation

MEMO shall ensure that it is representative, democratic and accountable through regular communication with all of its members through meetings, newsletters, its resident's handbook, questionnaires and other methods that the Management Committee finds appropriate.

MEMO seeks to encourage nominations to its Management Committee and sub-committees and will assist those who wish to be nominated. It will identify and provide appropriate training to participants in its organisation. It will ensure that all its members, representatives and employees understand, are committed to and abide by this Equal Opportunity Policy.

At its open meetings, General Meetings and Committee meetings MEMO will have regard to the needs of all its members, for example, in setting the times of meetings, the provision of interpretation, signing, child care facilities etc. MEMO will not tolerate any discriminatory remarks or messages and will provide no platform for such statements.

MEMO will ensure that all residents are consulted on proposed changes to the Management Agreement and have the opportunity to comment. To this end, meetings will be conducted in an orderly way so as to ensure that all have the opportunity to participate.

The Management Committee and sub-committees monitor the level of participation in decision-making activities. The need for corrective action will be considered if decision-making bodies do not adequately represent the full diversity of persons living on the estate.

MEMO shall make information about its decision making processes available to members, using tape, Braille, translations etc, where appropriate. Information may be withheld only when the Management Committee determines on the grounds that it concerns matters of staff discipline or possible legal action.

Membership of MEMO is open to any person aged 18 or over who is a lawful resident. New residents to the estate are invited to become members and MEMO will regularly remind residents of their right to be members.

Recruitment

MEMO is aware of equal opportunities in the advertising, selection and development of staff. It uses competencies and person specifications in the appointment of staff and will only make reference to experience and qualification where they are relevant to the post. All applicants meeting the key criteria will be interviewed by a panel representing the Management Committee.

MEMO counters discrimination against women in all its forms. It also recognises the demands of childcare and the care of other dependants. MEMO will also ensure that lesbians and gay men are given the same priority for all jobs as other applicants.

Disabled applicants will not be barred from selection on the grounds of disability, unless arrangements for working with or around the disability cannot reasonably be made. MEMO will provide and / or adapt premises and equipment where reasonable in order to meet this objective.

Consideration will be given to the potential of job sharing and flexible working hours. MEMO will advertise all vacant positions to reach the widest practical cross section of potential applicants.

How Breaches of Policies and Procedures will be handled

MEMO's Management Committee will appoint (and may remove members from) a Grievance Committee to which breaches of its equal opportunities policy can be referred. The Committee will consider cases and respond to them. Its response will be made in writing to all parties involved. It will report on its proceedings to the Management Committee and make available its full papers to the Secretary of the Management Committee.

Monitoring

MEMO will monitor its equal opportunities policy to ensure the aims and objectives are relevant and being fulfilled. MEMO will therefore monitor:

- the standard of service delivered to households
- the representativeness of the Management Committee and membership
- the needs of disadvantaged groups and the appropriateness of the policy.

Copies of this policy may be obtained from the MEMO Office in Reynolds House Courtyard.