**EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**POLICY**

1. The trustees of Dorchester Municipal Charities (DMC) are committed to promoting equality and diversity within our policies, practices and procedures. We recognise our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (See appendix). This applies to all aspects of DMC’s work and is promoted through the following values:
* Openness by encouraging and supporting new ideas that will improve the service that DMC provides
* Respect towards each other
* Honesty by working in an ethical way
* Caring with dignity and respect for the individual
* Support individuals to develop equality and diversity awareness and understanding.

2. This policy relates to all residents, trustees, staff, volunteers and visitors.

3. The trustees of DMC are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

4. DMC has designated the Management Team to take responsibility for equality and diversity.

5. The trustees will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind. Complaints of discrimination or harassment will be taken seriously and investigated.

**Restrictions**

The charity is restricted under its governing documents to provide homes for local people with a strong connection to Dorchester or Dorset who have evidence of housing need and financial need. Applicants are expected to live independently without close care in a balanced and harmonious community. Subject only to this restriction, the trustees do not discriminate regardless of age; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership status; pregnancy or maternity leave; disability; religion or belief; race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; sex; sexual orientation.

**People with disabilities**

DMC will take all reasonable measures to accommodate people with disabilities, subject to the limitations of the accommodation available.

**REPORTING PROCEDURE**

Any individual(s) who feel that they have suffered or witnessed any form of discrimination should follow the relevant DMC complaints procedure.

**Related policies and procedures**

This policy does not work in isolation. It connects and interlinks with the following policies, procedures and model documents:

* Letter of appointment
* Application & allocation policy & procedure
* Safeguarding policy & procedures
* Resident handbook
* Staff recruitment policy & procedure
* Trustee recruitment & induction policy & procedures
* Managing volunteers policy

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Almshouse Association, *Equality & Diversity Model Policy version 3*, September 2019

Charity Commission, *Scheme document for Chubb, Whetstone and Napper’s Almshouses*, 1980

Charity Commission, *Equality Act guidance for charities,* February 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance-for-charities/equality-act-guidance-for-charities>

Government Equalities Office, Equality Act 2010: Guidance, June 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

UK Government, *Discrimination: Your Rights*, 2019:

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UK government, *Equality Act 2010*, April 2010

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**Appendix**

The Equality Act 2010 includes an exception for charities. This allows charities under certain circumstances to restrict benefits to people with a particular protected characteristic (but not a group defined by colour) if the restriction already appears in the charity’s governing document.

**Equality Act 2010 – Definitions**

**Age:** An age group includes people of the same age and people of a particular range of ages. Where people fall in the same age group they share the protected characteristic of age.

**Disability:** A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment as a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Gender reassignment:** A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

**Marriage and civil partnership:** A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.

**Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin:** A person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular racial group; a racial group is a group of persons defined by reference to race; and a reference to a person's racial group is a reference to a racial group into which the person falls.

**Religion or belief:** Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion. A religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered to be a religion or belief, such as Protestants and Catholics within Christianity.