

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	
Internal consultation	• Colleague Led Networks (CLNs) • All Heads and Directors
External consultation	• Customers - Neighbourhood and Customer panel Members • Stonewall
Equality Assessment	Yes
Responsible officer	Head of Learning
Approved by	Governance and People Committee (GPC)
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1. Our policy is...

- 1.1 To promote fair treatment, dignity and respect for everyone. We strive to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) throughout Vico Homes and ensure everyone who has contact with us, including colleagues, customers and stakeholders, understands our commitment to this.
- 1.2 To keep our commitment to EDI at the heart of everything we do, in all areas of employment and business, encouraging colleagues to reach their full potential. We endeavour to provide inclusive services that reflect the communities we serve.
- 1.3 To comply with all legal and statutory requirements and to recognise the nine protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (listed below), supporting all people to achieve their potential and not be subject to prejudice and discrimination.
 - sex;
 - disability;
 - sexual orientation;
 - age;
 - gender reassignment;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - pregnancy and maternity; and
 - marriage and civil partnership.

Definitions...

We define key terms that relate to equality, diversity and inclusion as follows:

Equity:

- recognising that individuals and groups may have different needs and face different barriers; this also incorporates **‘intersectionality’ which is recognising that individuals may experience overlapping forms of disadvantage and discrimination based in multiple characteristics;**
- providing tailored resources, support, and opportunities to achieve fair outcomes for everyone;
- actively addressing inequalities by removing systemic obstacles and disadvantages;
- striving for equal treatment and fairness in results and access to services; and
- ensuring policies and practices are adaptable to meet diverse individual and community circumstances.

Equality:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination of any type through regular customer profiling and completion of equality assessments;
- treating people fairly, with dignity and respect;
- making decisions or judgements about people based on individual merit and without bias, prejudice, assumptions or stereotyping;
- creating an environment where everyone has fair and equal access to employment and promotion opportunities through inclusive policies and procedures;
- developing a working environment which is free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying; and
- ensuring our services are accessible to all, delivered to high standards and fit our customers’ needs by carrying out regular customer profiling.

Diversity:

- recognising and respecting differences;
- striving to achieve equality and equity for an increasingly diverse customer and colleague group;
- providing appropriate services that match differing needs and preferences; and
- providing training on and promoting good relations between people who have different backgrounds and experiences.

Inclusion:

- actively overcoming barriers that prevent people and communities from accessing rights, opportunities and resources;
- ensuring all customers have the right and access to the same high standards of provision and services;
- ensuring all colleagues and customers are treated with dignity and respect;
- ensuring no unlawful or unfair discrimination takes place against an individual or a group, directly or indirectly, because of their protected characteristics; and
- placing EDI at the core of all our business activities.

2. We'll...

Provide inclusive services by:

- 2.1 Ensuring the principles of respect, equity, equality, diversity and inclusion apply across all our business and employment activities and are an integral part of business planning and service delivery.
- 2.2 Challenging discrimination to remove barriers to equality and to support people in achieving their potential.
- 2.3 Responding to and investigating all reports of bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation or hate crime.
- 2.4 Ensuring any personal monitoring information collected is stored securely and confidentially and only shared with the relevant colleagues. We'll explain to individuals providing information, exactly who the information will be shared with and for what purpose. We'll periodically monitor demographic changes in all protected characteristics.
- 2.5 Remaining committed to creating and maintaining a workplace culture where all colleagues feel welcomed, supported and valued regardless of background or identity.
- 2.6 Implementing flexible working arrangements to accommodate diverse needs, including work life balance, caregiving responsibilities, disabilities, religious observances and health conditions.
- 2.7 Supporting and encouraging Colleague Led Networks (CLNs) to promote inclusion, provide colleague support and strengthen representation across diverse communities. CLNs help amplify underrepresented voices, inform our EDI strategy and initiatives and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable workplace. Participation is voluntary and open to all colleagues, including allies.
- 2.8 Actively seeking and responding to colleague feedback through surveys and forums to continually improve workplace inclusivity.
- 2.9 Providing ongoing training and development focused on unconscious bias, cultural competence, allyship and inclusive leadership to all colleagues.
- 2.10 Ensuring transparent career progression pathways and equitable access to mentoring and sponsorship programs.
- 2.11 Monitoring the protected characteristics of our colleagues to assess that they mirror the protected characteristics of our customers. Customer data will be based on demographics of the Wakefield District as measured by the latest census report. Appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be set in line with the census report. Where our colleagues do not represent our customers, we'll take 'reasonable' positive action as defined in our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan.

Employment

- 2.12 Based on how our colleagues represent our customers we'll set targets and adopt recruitment, support and retention practices to ensure this profile remains representative of local communities in the future.
- 2.13 Eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination in our recruitment and employment process. We'll take positive measures to encourage colleagues and potential colleagues, from underrepresented groups to engage in employment and promotion opportunities; this may include lawful positive action. Our recruitment policy is to employ the most suitable person for each position.
- 2.14 Ensuring all candidates who consider themselves to have a disability and meet the essential criteria for a post are selected for interview. We'll meet individual needs wherever possible.
- 2.15 Ensuring job applicants and colleagues are provided with suitable access to buildings and premises, complying with current legislation.

Learning and development

- 2.16 Providing mandatory EDI training to all colleagues in the first six months of employment as part of their induction and refresher e-learning to be carried out by all colleagues every three years.
- 2.17 Ensuring all colleagues have equal training opportunities, identified through Performance and Development Conversations, and receive appropriate support from their line manager, based on individual training needs / working arrangements. Our selection criteria and procedures for courses leading to qualifications ensures equality and diversity for all colleagues, through our Learning and Development Policy.
- 2.18 We're committed to creating an inclusive environment and will make necessary reasonable adjustments to accommodate the individual needs of colleagues, applicants and customers. Reasonable adjustments aim to ensure equal access, participation and opportunity for everyone, particularly those with disabilities or specific requirements.
- 2.19 Monitoring and evaluating all training programmes delivered, assessing the opportunities we provide and considering the protected characteristics.
- 2.20 We recognise the role of CLNs in supporting EDI learning and promoting inclusive professional development opportunities across the organisation.

Allocations

- 2.21 Working with local authorities to identify and address housing and related needs of local communities, through a range of options and initiatives, to provide affordable housing.
- 2.22 Allocating homes in a way that offers choice, considers individual needs and promotes the development of vibrant, sustainable, confident and inclusive communities.

- 2.23 Working with local authorities to ensure our Choice Based Lettings Policy and related procedures do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, unless measures taken are a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- 2.24 Ensuring our Local Lettings Strategies and the Health and Medical Rehousing Panel comply with this policy.

Resident involvement

- 2.25 In implementing our Resident Involvement and Scrutiny Policy, we'll:
- offer customers the opportunity to participate in developing and monitoring our corporate Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.
 - reflect the views and expectations of customers in our business planning and service review processes, in monitoring performance and improving services.
 - work with community groups who we recognise as part of our Resident Involvement Fund, including tenant's and resident's associations to ensure EDI values are integrated into their constitutions. We will not recognise any group deemed to be in breach of this policy.
 - develop and support structures that ensure groups related to the protected characteristics can be involved in our activities.
 - consult a diverse range of customers, considering all protected characteristics and underrepresentation, to influence our service delivery. We'll learn how our customers want to participate and be consulted, reducing barriers to meaningful involvement. This may include targeting our work to improve demographic representation.
 - provide support, for example translation and interpretation, to ensure we hear the voice of our customers, stakeholders and service users. These services will be publicised and promoted to all our colleagues.
 - monitor our performance against the personal characteristics of customers who take part in influential engagement, to ensure they reflect the characteristics of our customer population and ensure customer scrutiny of the results.
 - develop a wide range of communication and feedback channels to improve the range of meaningful choices for customers to get involved.

Contractors, consultants, partners and suppliers

- 2.26 We'll ensure contractors, consultants, partners and suppliers adhere to their own EDI Policy, in line with their company requirements.
- 2.27 Contractors, consultants, partners and suppliers we engage must meet equal opportunities legislation and eliminate all forms of discrimination as detailed in our Equality and Fairness in Contracts document.
- 2.28 We'll develop standard contract agreements with contractors, consultants, partners and suppliers that meet EDI principles. Further information is available in our Procurement Procedures and Guidance.

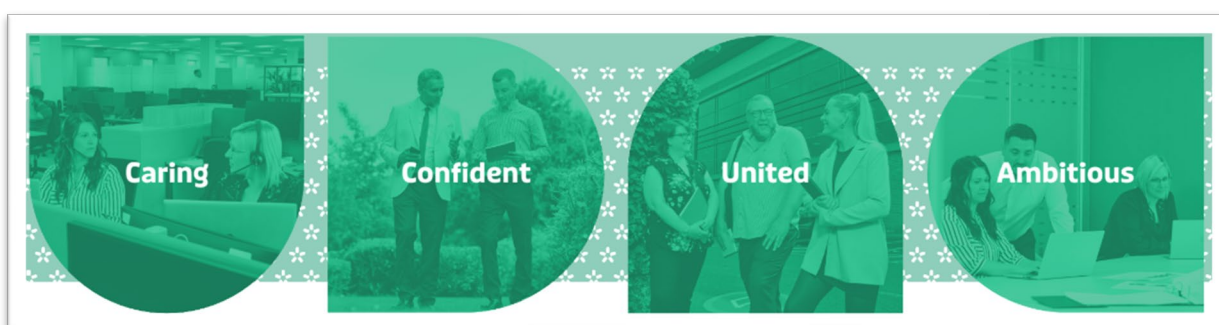
Communication

- 2.29 We'll involve customers, colleagues and stakeholders in setting standards, monitoring performance and evaluating, reviewing and developing our policies and services in a variety of ways, including our service review groups.
- 2.30 We'll ensure all information provided for service users is in Plain English and important information is available, on request, in a variety of different formats and languages including Braille, large print and audio CD. The Language Line and Text Relay Services are available and induction loops are provided at our hubs. Recite Me is available on our website to improve accessibility, through tools which include translation, text to speech and customisation of languages, fonts and colours. We'll promote awareness and encourage use of our accessibility tools.

Complaint and Reporting Procedures

- 2.31 We encourage all colleagues, customers and stakeholders to report discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have clear, confidential and accessible procedures for raising concerns. All reports will be investigated promptly and fairly. For further information refer to our Dignity at Work Guidance.

3. Our assurance...



Summary

- 3.1 This policy guides our organisation in creating an environment where equality, diversity, and inclusion thrive. Embedding these principles into all aspects of our work we aim to foster a culture of respect, fairness and belonging, where everyone feels valued and empowered. Guided by our values of being caring, confident, united and ambitious, we're committed to supporting one another, standing up for equity, working together and continuously striving for a more inclusive future.
- 3.2 At the heart of our organisation are the values that shape our culture and drive how we do things. Our values connect us back to our communities and our purpose. We will always be a value led organisation where every individual can thrive. To support effective implementation of policy, everyone in our organisation has a role to play as we believe embracing equality, diversity and inclusion is essential to living our values and achieving our goals. Colleagues and teams across the organisation are expected to take responsibility in the following ways:

Vico Executive Team and Board

- Champion a culture of inclusion by modelling respectful and inclusive behaviour.
- Provide visible and active leadership to promote and embed EDI principles and inclusive workforce practices across the organisation.
- Set strategic objectives, allocate resources, review progress against EDI targets and commitments and hold the organisation accountable for meeting its EDI commitments.
- Carry out periodic internal and external audits of our EDI Policy and supporting action plans, to ensure we meet regulatory requirements and adhere to best practice in the implementation and deployment of its EDI Policy.

People and Culture and EDI Team

- Develop, communicate and review EDI related policies, procedures and training programs.
- Monitor workforce diversity and inclusion metrics and report findings to leadership.
- Provide advice and support to managers and colleagues on EDI matters.
- Manage confidential complaints and investigations related to discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- Ensure recruitment, retention and development practices promote diversity and inclusion.

Managers and Team Leaders

- Implement EDI related policies and procedures in day-to-day management and operational decisions.
- Proactively address and resolve issues related to equity, equality, diversity and inclusion in a fair and timely manner to help build inclusive teams where diverse perspectives are respected, and discrimination or harassment is not tolerated.
- Ensure fair access to training, development and career progression opportunities for all team members.
- Consider reasonable adjustments and flexible working arrangements to meet individual needs, supporting them where reasonable.

All colleagues

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour, discrimination or bias. Report concerns related to equality, diversity, inclusion or harassment through the appropriate channels.
- Participate in EDI training and development opportunities and actively contribute to creating an inclusive and supportive working environment.
- Colleague-led Networks (CLNs) are responsible for supporting our EDI goals by fostering inclusive communities, amplifying underrepresented voices and promoting cultural awareness:
 - They serve as advisory and engagement partners, helping to identify barriers to inclusion and contributing to initiatives that advance equity and belonging.
 - CLNs are expected to operate in alignment with our values and policies, ensuring respectful, collaborative and constructive participation.

Legislation and regulations

3.3 We'll ensure this policy complies with all relevant legislation and regulation.

- Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Choice Based Lettings Policy
- Dignity at Work Guidance
- Equality and Fairness in Contracts
- Learning and Development Policy
- Procurement Procedures and Guidance
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures
- Recruitment Policy

Review

3.4 We'll review this policy at least three years or when changes in legislation, regulations or best practice prompt an early review.

Version Control			
Version number	Reason	Approved by	Approved date
2025.1	Full review	GPC	19 August 2025