

Title:	Equality & Diversity
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1. Scope

Moat's Equality & Diversity policy applies to everyone who receives services from us and to everyone who works for us.

It applies specifically to discrimination, equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity and good community and customer relations in respect of the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- race (including ethnicity, colour and national origin)
- sex
- sexual orientation

and to all aspects of Moat's work including:

- service delivery
- lettings
- access to information and advice
- resident involvement
- resident satisfaction
- dealing with incidents
- procurement of goods and services
- recruitment, employment, training and staff development
- governance

The policy applies at all levels of Moat's activities including corporate, functional / departmental, team and individual. Every opportunity will be taken to promote the policy internally and externally to raise awareness.

2. Aims and objectives

Moat values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, and to tackling all forms of discrimination through its role both as a service provider and an employer.

This policy sets out Moat's commitments. The statements within the policy will be implemented through Moat's equality and diversity strategy.

3. Statutory / regulatory issues

This policy complies with the requirements set out within the Equality Act 2010.

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly because of the protected characteristics (mentioned in '1' above) in either employment or service provision.

4. Policy statement

Service Provision

Moat will always strive to ensure that our services meet the needs of individuals and the communities where Moat works. Moat will:

- Ensure that equality and diversity considerations are integrated into all relevant areas of corporate and business planning, budgeting, management and delivery.
- Seek to ensure that our service provision is representative of the local community breakdown.
- Improve Moat's awareness and understanding of the needs of different resident groups and other customers through effective resident and community profiling, consultation, liaison and involvement.
- Ensure that Moat's services are accessible, and are delivered appropriately and sensitively in order to facilitate equality of treatment.
- Ensure that information about our services is offered in appropriate formats and languages to help break down barriers to effective communication.
- Tackle all forms of anti-social behaviour and harassment and promote safety and security.
- Provide homes that reflect the needs of the local community and pay particular attention to where Moat builds new homes and their design.
- Continually review our existing services to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy.

- Carry out resident and service user profiling and monitor lettings, evictions and complaints data.
- Train staff to ensure that they are aware of the policy and are able to apply it to their own area of work.

Employment

Moat will:-

- Seek to ensure that Moat's workforce is diverse and representative of the local working-age population.
- Ensure that Moat's jobs are accessible to people from all sections of the community.
- Ensure that our recruitment decisions are based on the actual demands of the job, and use clear and objective methods of assessment.
- Ensure that employees are treated equitably in all areas of employment including career development, pay, and training.
- Tackle any discrimination, victimisation, harassment and bullying in the workplace arising from either staff or service users, suppliers, contractors, visitors etc.
- Carry out regular workforce profiling and monitor recruitment, promotion, training attendance, grievances, disciplinary procedures and exit interview data.
- Continually review human resource policies to assess their impact on the groups covered by the policy.
- Embed equalities and diversity awareness within all relevant training, including induction, management training and customer service training.

Governance, partnership and resident involvement

Moat will:-

- Ensure that contractors, consultants, suppliers and partners mirror our commitment to equality and diversity; value the different backgrounds of our communities and show sensitivity to different cultural needs when they are carrying out their business. Moat will do this by requiring contractors to sign-up to our policy commitments as a condition of their contract with Moat.
- Encourage people from different backgrounds to become members of boards, committees, residents' associations and working groups and try to make sure these groups reflect the communities they serve.
- Positively support and develop links with organisations that represent communities where Moat provides services.

5. Implementation

Moat will produce an equality & diversity strategy and action plan, which will set out the actions, targets, timescales and resources required to meet the objectives in the policy.

Equality impact assessments will be carried out for all new policies or policies for which significant changes are proposed.

Moat's employee forum will consider equality and diversity as a standard agenda item at its meetings, the forum's terms of reference for equality and diversity are:

- To champion equality and diversity issues with teams across all parts of Moat to keep awareness high.
- To review Moat's policy, strategy, actions plans and training periodically to check they make sense, and to help influence the progress Moat is making.
- To discuss best practice and provide a 'think tank' using the staff they represent to help Moat develop new thinking, innovative approaches and respond to changing legislation.

Ownership and responsibility for the delivery of Moat's equality and diversity targets and plans rests firmly with management teams who are required to consider equality issues and any necessary action arising from the equality and diversity strategy and action plan as part of the annual business planning process.

6. Responsibilities

The Moat Board will receive reports on a regular basis from the Chief Executive on the implementation of the equality and diversity policy, strategy and action plan. The Board has responsibility to review the equality and diversity activities within Moat, and ensure an appropriate framework of accountability and responsibility.

The Executive Team (ET) has overall responsibility for the policy and ensuring that adequate resources are provided for its implementation. ET will receive regular reports from the Executive Director: Housing & Customer Services /Director of HR & Business Support and will review progress against the strategy and action plan.

The Equality & Diversity Project group, delegated by the Chief Executive to ensure effective implementation of the Equality and diversity policy, will keep the policy under regular review, and ensure that the equality and diversity strategy and action plan are formally reviewed annually.

Management team members within all Moat directorates have responsibility for implementing the policy, ensuring all actions within the strategy and action

plan are delivered, and for monitoring and reporting progress to the Equality & Diversity Project group.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that all aspects of their services comply with the policy.

All staff should help to promote the policy in the workplace and in all aspects of service delivery in order to encourage diversity and eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment.

It is the responsibility of everyone to:

- Treat colleagues, service users and other members of the community fairly and with respect.
- Co-operate in all measures introduced to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
- Report discriminatory or other unwelcome behaviour to line management.

7. Complaints

Anyone who is not employed by Moat and who has a complaint under this policy or thinks they have been discriminated against should write to the Chief Executive, Moat, Mariner House, Galleon Boulevard, Crossways, Dartford, Kent DA2 6QE. This will be dealt with under Moat's published Complaints Procedure.

Members of staff who have a complaint under this policy or think they have been discriminated against should raise their complaint with their line manager or a more senior manager where appropriate. This may be formal or informal, and may include raising a grievance under the Grievance Procedure.

8. Equality and diversity impact assessment

Moat values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that people are treated fairly. It is Moat's policy to ensure fairness, accessibility and transparency in every aspect of its work. Moat will actively seek to involve people who have an interest in the way Moat carries out its functions, and in monitoring the implementation of its policies and procedures. This may include service users, staff and the wider community, all of whom are encouraged to come forward with suggestions and feedback to help the delivery of improvements across the full range of activities.

Moat will offer all of its printed publications in a range of different formats. These include large text, audio tape, languages other than English, and electronic format. Staff should refer all such requests to the PR/Communications team.

Moat uses Language Line, which is a telephone interpreter service that Moat

staff can use to access an interpreter to assist when communicating with a customer whose first language is not English. Staff can access the service by telephone on 0845 310 9900 (24 hours, local rate number) quoting I.D. code L29236. Language Line leaflets, posters and stickers are all available to staff. Additional information is available at www.languageline.co.uk.

9. Record of changes

Date of change	Details of change
September 2010	Policy reviewed following change in legislation