**Equality and Diversity Policy of Bradford Flower Homes Development Ltd**

**Introduction**

Bradford Flower Homes Development Ltd (BFHD) is committed to playing an active role in promoting equality, valuing diversity and challenging discrimination. As a provider of homes and housing maintenance, we aim to ensure all our residents are dealt with fairly and to promote a culture of tolerance and respect in our workplaces and communities.

Our commitment to equality and diversity encourages us to not only learn more about our residents and their needs in order to help us serve them better, but it also calls on us to create a working environment in which our people can thrive and achieve their full potential.

We aim to be an excellent employer by recruiting and retaining a high performing, loyal and happy staff team. A major aspect of this is recognising that our residents and staff are individuals and both protecting and promoting equality and diversity.

We will ensure that through both or Equality Diversity Policy and Strategy, we meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any other legal and regulatory requirements.

We expect all members of staff and anyone else we work with, such as suppliers, contractors, consultants and partner agencies, to adhere to this policy and uphold our values. We also expect our residents to support our commitment and we will promote this policy through the delivery of our services. We will take any contravention of this policy by any individual seriously and respond robustly, following the relevant policy and/or procedures.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the BFHD Equality Statement.

**Why Equality and Diversity Matters**

We are committed to the principles of equality and diversity and believe we have many responsibilities to uphold these values, including the following:

**Our moral responsibilities**

The principles of equality and diversity are about social justice and fairness and as a social landlord, we have a responsibility to uphold these.

**Our business responsibilities**

These can be summarised as follows:

* Customer service – equality and diversity is all about customer service; knowing our tenants and tailoring services to meet their diverse needs.
* Changing society – the world in which we live is changing and we must recognise and respond to these changes to remain successful.
* Recruitment and retention – a workplace embracing equality and diversity becomes an employer of choice and both attracts and retains the best talent.
* Competitive edge – having a diverse team can bring different talents and can recognise the diverse requirements of new tenants and new markets.
* Reputation – creating an inclusive work environment can encourage loyalty, teamwork and maximise performance.

Risk management – we recognise there are certain risks associated with non-compliance including financial and reputational.

**Our Legal Responsibilities**

The Equality Act 2010 brings together anti-discrimination and equality legislation to protect individuals across nine ‘protected characteristics’: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

As outlined in the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires housing providers to give ‘due regard’ for promoting equality which involves:

* Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
* Taking steps to meet the need of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

**Our Regulatory Responsibilities**

As a provider of social housing, we work in a regulated sector. Our Regulator specifies the requirements on housing associations through its Standards framework and under these standards, all housing associations must:

* Treat all tenants with fairness and respect
* Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the protected characteristics and tenants with additional support needs

**Our Residents**

We are committed to developing services that are accessible and relevant to our residents and the communities in which we work. This includes improving our understanding of our tenants and where possible, tailoring services more effectively to meet their needs. It also includes making a range of opportunities available for tenants to be involved in shaping and improving those services.

We will:

* Seek to know both our residents and communities.
* Ensure that anyone applying for housing will be dealt with fairly and without any form of discrimination.
* Ensure that the services we provide and the offices we use are accessible to all wherever possible.
* Communicate with our tenants in a way that is clear, accessible and easy to understand. We will make every reasonable adjustment in order to meet any communication needs amongst our residents.
* Adopt a robust approach for dealing with any incidents of hate crime or unlawful discrimination.
* Engage in regular consultation with residents and encourage them to be involved in our activities to ensure that services which are provided are responsive and reflect their diversity.
* Ensure that any resident group supported by BFHD is representative of our resident population, geography and tenure type.
* Consider the equality and diversity impact for all new policies, strategies or service improvement.

**Our People**

We recognise that our staff are at the heart of everything we do and are critical to our ongoing success. As an employer, equality and diversity is about respecting the differences of our staff and applicants and ensuring that all staff feel part of an organisation that values diversity, openness and respect.

At all times we will endeavour to fulfil our corporate objective of recruiting and retaining a high performing, loyal and happy staff team who uphold our vision, values and principles. In doing so, we will:

* Provide an open, honest and fair working environment where all staff are treated with dignity and respect.
* Adopt a zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying or harassment.
* Monitor our recruitment practices to ensure that they are accessible to all and all decisions are fair and based entirely on the merits and abilities of the candidates alone.
* Engage and involve all staff in the development of our equality and diversity strategy and objectives and promote our commitment to equality and diversity through our internal communications.

**Third Parties**

When working with other organisations, contractors or consultants, we will be mindful of our commitments to equality and diversity. We will work with those whose equality and diversity policies and practices comply with our own and we will ensure that our procurement and tendering processes are fair and non-discriminatory.

**Our Board**

As a key part of our organisation, we will ensure that our board, both in structure and membership, reflects and understands the communities we serve and our commitment to diversity. In doing so, we will:

* Ensure our board reports highlight any relevant equality and diversity issues
* Ensure the board highlight any relevant Equality and Diversity issues
  + Regularly review our performance and the performance of our partners regarding equality and diversity
  + Monitor staff and resident satisfaction and take action to address any concerns

**Our Homes**

**Development of New Homes**

When developing new homes, we will take into account the potential needs of the local community. We will endeavour to build homes that are adaptable to the changing needs of our residents.

**Aids and Adaptations**

We will consider all requests for aids and adaptations or alterations to existing homes which are designed to help our residents stay in their homes for longer.

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed in light of any changes to legislation, regulation or good practice.

Adopted………... Reviewed………………