**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

**Policy Statement**

The practice of equality at Silver Line Homes (SLH)-Purley: -

* extends to all matters relating to employment, including recruitment, performance appraisal reviews, training, assessment for promotion, disciplinary action, pay reviews, terms and conditions, grievances, provision of employment references etc.
* covers all employees, or potential employees, and embraces the principle that all people shall be treated equally, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (these are known as “protected characteristics”), or offending background unless unequal, or different treatment can be shown to be justified and is appropriate.

This clear unambiguous statement of intent will apply to all aspects of SLH-Purley’s operations and to the treatment of all children within the home, at all times, whilst, at the same time, taking account of the individual’s special needs with regard to their religion, culture, language etc.

All children receive personalised support that promotes all aspects of their individual identity and are treated as an individual rather than a member of a group. Children will be able to exercise choice in the food they eat and be able to prepare their own meals and snacks reflecting their cultural / religious background and personal taste.

As a matter of principle, equality in opportunity and treatment applies in equal measure to suppliers, customers and others directly associated with the conduct of business.

The United Kingdom is a true multi-cultural society, and it is inevitable that all children within SLH-Purley’s home will come from a variety of different backgrounds.

At SLH-Purley, it is our objective and policy to embrace all of the principles of “equality of opportunity” described above and to eliminate discrimination and encourage diversity amongst its workforce.

Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workplace will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation. SLH-Purley aims to create a workforce which is truly representative of local society, and an environment where everyone feels they will not be bullied or harassed, unfairly discriminated against, or unfairly treated, and one where they will be respected, able to give of their best and where they know that important employment decisions are based on merit.

All employees are required to operate within the framework of this policy, and any conduct, either on or near SLH-Purley, or at social functions organised by the Home, which is seen to be contrary to its aims will be investigated, and disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, may be taken.

**The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for implementation, review, monitoring, and ensuring corrective action where necessary.**

**Procedure**

**Education and Training**

Education and training are key elements in the placement’s objective to provide support on an equal, non-discriminatory basis. SLH-Purleywill ensure that all employees will be provided with a copy of this policy (together with other related policies) at the time of their arrival in the home, and as part of their induction training. SLH-Purleywill also provide additional training on Equality and Diversity on a regular basis, and in proportion to the number of children from different racial or cultural backgrounds. **Underpinning this training are the following principles of good practice:**

* acknowledging individual beliefs and identity;
* working in an anti-discriminatory way;
* supporting individual rights and choices;
* communicating effectively;
* providing and gathering important information;
* maintaining the confidence of those being cared for, including respecting their views and rights and confidentiality; and
* developing empathy.

SLH-Purley wishes to ensure that providing equal treatment is a positive “second nature” message. Employees will however be advised that any conduct on their part which contravenes the spirit and purpose of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and sanction, which may include dismissal from their employment.

**Forms of discrimination**

All employees of SLH-Purley need to be aware that there are seven major forms of discrimination outlined in the Equality Act 2010: -

1. Direct discrimination;

2. Associative discrimination;

3. Perceptive discrimination;

4. Indirect discrimination;

5. Harassment;

6. Third-party harassment; and

7. Victimisation.

**Direct discrimination**: Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic.

**Associative discrimination**: Associative discrimination is direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person who possesses a protected characteristic.

**Perceptive discrimination**: Perceptive discrimination is direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person does not actually possess that characteristic.

**Indirect discrimination**: Indirect discrimination can occur when you have a condition, rule, policy or even a practice within SLH-Purleyor the home that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

**Harassment**: Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual”.

**Third-party harassment**: - The Equality Act makes SLH-Purley potentially liable for harassment of its employees by people (third parties) who are not employees of the home, such as children or their families. SLH-Purleywill only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, and it is aware that it has taken place, and has not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

**Victimisation**: Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act; or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

**Language and Communication**

Language and communication are often the most notable barriers to getting information across for those whose first Is not English. SLH-Purleywill therefore provide important information to each child in writing in a language relevant to them.

SLH-Purley(and in certain cases the employee) may be liable to prosecution and a fine if it is shown that unlawful discrimination in any of the above forms has taken place.

**Dealing with Abuse**

SLH-Purley is committed to preventing the abuse of all children in their care. It will strive to achieve this by recognising the fundamental rights of children to privacy, dignity, maintenance of self-esteem and fulfilment, choice, recognition of diversity, individuality and independence, together with the maintenance of their rights as citizens.

The Policy on dealing with abuse details the action to be taken if any kind of abuse is suspected, or happening, and must be read in conjunction with this policy statement.

**People with a disability**

SLH-Purley recognises that bringing about equality for disabled people may mean changing the way in which employment is structured, the removal of physical barriers and/or providing extra support. This is the duty to make reasonable adjustments and SLH-Purleyaccepts its positive and proactive duty to take steps, which include consultation with the disabled worker, to remove or reduce or prevent the obstacles a disabled worker or disabled job applicant faces at work.

**\***A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Positive Action**

Selection for employment or promotion is based solely on merit, having regard to the requirements of the job. However, should obvious inequalities become apparent, and some form of positive action be considered desirable, then such action will be taken.

**Grievances**

Any employee who feels that they have been a victim of unlawful discrimination, in any of the forms outlined above are requested, in the first instance, to raise the matter informally with their Line Manager, or Supervisor, or if this is not practical (perhaps because that person is the subject of the complaint) his/her Line Manager or Supervisor. If this informal approach does not resolve the situation, then the matter should be raised formally either through the SLH-Purley’s Grievance Procedure, in cases where bullying or harassment is alleged. Customers, suppliers, job applicants or other non-employees who feel that they have been the victim of unfair discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation are asked to use SLH-Purley’s Complaints Procedure.

**Review**

SLH-Purley will regularly review its practices, policies and procedures governing all aspects of employment, including recruitment, training, promotion, disciplinary action, etc. to ensure that there are no inherently discriminatory practices evident in any of the forms outlined above. Where such reviews throw certain practices into question or barriers to fulfilment of equal opportunities exist and where discrimination may be evident, albeit unintentional, then such barriers and/or practices will be removed and/or changed so as to remove any inappropriate discrimination or unfair or unequal treatment.

It is being suggested, therefore, by the Equality & Human Rights Commission [EHRC] that monitoring, i.e., collecting information about the protected characteristics of job applicants and employees is a good thing, for the reasons they have stated. SLH-Purley may also have clients who insist that they report on such information before they might consider awarding SLH-Purley a contract or including SLH-Purley in a list of suppliers.

**Monitoring**

SLH-Purley believes it is important that its stated aims and objectives regarding equality in employment are realised. To this end it will monitor the effectiveness of its policies, employment practices etc. It will do this by:

1. General discussion through staff forums, team meetings, briefings etc;
2. Incorporating specific questions about equality in employee satisfaction surveys;
3. Examining the composition of the workforce and assessing the number of employees who may be classified as coming from potentially disadvantaged groups. This may indicate, for example, an under (or over) representation which may be significant;
4. Reviewing complaints, bullying or harassment claims or grievances which relate to equality issues;
5. Collecting information about how many people with a particular protected characteristic apply for each vacancy within the placement. This information will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be used as part of the selection process.

**Useful Names and Addresses**:

**Equal Opportunities Commission**

**Head Office:** Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3EQ

Tel: 0161 833 9244

Website: [www.eoc.org.uk](http://www.eoc.org.uk)

**Commission for Race Equality**

**Head Office:** Elliot House, 10-12 Allington Street, London, SW1E 5EH

Tel: 020 7828 7022

Website: [www.cre.org.uk](http://www.cre.org.uk)

**Race Relations Employment Advisory Service**

Tel: 0121 452 5447/5448/5449

**Disability Discrimination Act Helpline**

DDA Help, Freepost MID 02164, Stratford Upon Avon, CV37 9BR

Tel: 08457 622 633

Website: [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk)

**Signed**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_