

**Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**

HR4.2 Employment Policies

June 2024

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1. Introduction
   1. MHA is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) both in the provision of services to those using MHA services including Care Homes, Retirement Living, and MHA Communities, and as an employer where colleagues and volunteers can reach their full potential, contribute effectively, and share their unique ideas and insights. We see equality, diversity, and inclusion not only as part of our inclusive culture, but essential to our continued success.
2. Scope and Purpose
   1. This policy applies to everyone who interacts with MHA including those who use MHA services, visitors, board members, colleagues, applicants, volunteers, and contractors.
   2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that those who come into contact with MHA, will not be unlawfully discriminated against for a reason related to race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, disability, sex, marriage, or civil partnerships, pregnancy, and maternity.
3. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| **Diversity** | Diversity simply means “difference” and at MHA it includes appreciating and embracing those differences. |
| **EDI** | An acronym for ‘Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion.’ |
| **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** | An equality and diversity impact assessment are a thorough, systematic, and evidence-based analysis of a function, policy, or services to establish whether it is likely to have an adverse impact on groups or individuals in relation to one or more of the protected characteristics. |
| **Equality** | Equality means giving everyone an opportunity to realise their potential irrespective of their background (Protected Characteristics). |
| **Inclusion** | At MHA, inclusion means creating an environment where everyone feels that they are a part of it. |

1. Statement of Intent
   1. MHA will seek to continuously improve equality for everyone and will comply with current legislation (principally the Equality Act 2010 - see Specific Duties below). The Equality Act 2010 provides the legislative framework for which all listed public sector organisations are expected to comply with. Although MHA is a Charity, it is equally bound by the Equality Act 2010 because it provides Adult Social Care on behalf of a range of public sector organisations.
   2. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy confirms how MHA intends to meet its statutory obligations in relation to the public sector equality duty. It also includes the equality objectives for the specified period.
   3. To demonstrate improvements and measure the impact of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, MHA have created an EDI Governance structure. The Governance structure can be found on the MHA website under equality and diversity page.
   4. MHA has both a general duty and specific duties, aimed at eliminating unlawful discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity across all protected characteristics.
2. The General Duty
   1. The general equality duty requires all public sector bodies (that are subject to the Act) to have due regard to three general areas when exercising their functions. These are:
   * Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act (minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics).
   * Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people).
   * Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low).
   1. The general equality duty also applies to any organisation that undertakes functions on behalf of a relevant public authority. This includes private and voluntary organisations which have been engaged to conduct public functions on behalf of a public authority.
3. Specific Duties
   1. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 (the specific duties) requires all listed public sector organisations to:
   2. Publish equality objectives
   3. Publish equality information
   4. Publish information used for any analysis and decision making
   5. Publish information about engagement
   6. MHA will publish this information on its website so that it is accessible to all those who have an interest in how we are progressing EDI.
4. Protected Characteristics
   1. The Equality Act (2010) provides protection against unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment for the following nine protected characteristics (previously referred to as equality strands):
5. Age
6. Disability
7. Sex
8. Marriage and Civil Partnerships
9. Pregnancy and Maternity
10. Race
11. Religion or Belief
12. Sexual Orientation
13. Gender Reassignment (or trans status)
14. Equality in Service Provision
    1. As a service provider, operating in the social housing environment and providing care for those using MHA services (including Care Homes, MHA Communities, and Retirement Living), MHA has made the following commitments:
    * To abide by the current equality legislation and ensure that colleagues, relief workers and volunteers are fully aware of the implications and their responsibilities in promoting equality in service provision.
    * All those using MHA services are informed about this EDI policy and what they can expect.
    * MHA will strive to ensure that those using the services of MHA do not suffer harassment, bullying, victimisation, or discrimination in service provision.
    * MHA will endeavour to provide services that meet individual needs including access to religious, cultural, and other EDI related needs.
    * MHA will require organisations, companies, agencies, and contractors from whom services are contracted to support and comply with MHA’s EDI commitments.
    * MHA will ensure the quality standards are monitored on EDI practice as part of the programme of regular audits.
15. Equality in Employment
    1. MHA is fully aware of its legal and social responsibilities. MHA regularly reviews recruitment and selection procedures to ensure equality of opportunity for all existing and prospective colleagues, as well as policy and procedure relating to promotion, training, and other HR processes.
    2. MHA will strive to ensure that membership of the relevant committees / boards and the workforce reflect the composition of the areas in which they operate.
    3. MHA will use positive action where the workforce is underrepresented, and this will be implemented at a local level.
    4. All disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria or a vacancy will be offered an interview.
    5. Reasonable adjustments will be made to enable equality of opportunity for applicants who disadvantaged because of a disability. In addition, where practical, reasonable adjustments will be made to the work environment if this would enable applicants to accept a job and perform the duties of the role.
    6. Full details of the recruitment process are detailed in the Recruitment & Selection Policy.
    7. MHA will monitor the profile of applicants for promotions together with the profile for those promoted to ensure equality of opportunity.
    8. MHA will use positive action where groups of colleagues and volunteers are underrepresented in the promotion process and outcomes.
    9. EDI training will be part of the MHA induction programmes for colleagues, volunteers and at all levels.
    10. Additional EDI training will be available for specific roles and responsibilities, including the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and the Board of Trustees.
    11. The organisation is aware of difficulties in accessing training for night care colleagues and volunteers.
16. EDI Quality and Compliance
    1. MHA will ensure that we are delivering our commitments by:
       1. **Accountability**

MHA has put in place a governance structure and appropriate management for the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion agenda across MHA.

* + 1. **Plan and Embed**

MHA will annually review priorities and plans relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and ensure implementation is leading to positive impact.

* + 1. **Measure and Monitor**

MHA will collect and review data, including feedback from colleagues, volunteers and those who use MHA services, to understand what we can do more of, or differently, to further progress EDI across MHA.

* + 1. **Educate and Equip**

Provide training and information to ensure leaders, line managers colleagues and volunteers are aware of what we expect of them in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to act inclusively.

* + 1. **Engage and Communicate**

Keep the agenda visible by maintaining a regular two-way flow of communication and engagement. We will also maintain our expertise as an organisation, working with internal and external partners where necessary to keep our approach current to societal changes.

1. Complaints, Concerns, Compliments, and Feedback
   1. At MHA we acknowledge that everyone should have the opportunity to raise complaints, concerns, feedback, and compliments. We will accept these in any form, including in person, in writing or via the customers services manager (contact details below). All formal complaints, concerns, feedback, or compliments should be addressed to the Customer Services Manager using the contact details below:

**Customer Services Manager**

MHA

Epworth House

Stuart Street

Derby

DE1 2EQ

Email ([feedback@mha.org.uk](mailto:feedback@mha.org.uk))

Phone 01332 221896

* 1. For more information, please refer to MHA’s Complaints Policy and Procedure.
  2. **Internal Complaints Process**
     1. If you wish to raise a formal complaint, then please refer to the Bullying and Harassment policy or Grievance Policy.
     2. If you wish to share/report your experiences in relation to the protected characteristics anonymously/informally then, please submit this through our Slido (sli.do.com) platform using **#MHAEDI**
     3. Please be aware that MHA will not be able to investigate informal reports and the experiences shared via sli.do will be used in training to inform the nature of behaviours and their impact on others.
     4. You can also contact any of the EDI Networks or the EDI Manager using [edi@mha.org.uk](mailto:edi@mha.org.uk)

1. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)
   1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is an important process for finding out whether policies, strategies, or projects have an adverse impact on different groups of people.
   2. EIA’s when done properly will offer MHA an opportunity to promote equality and inclusion in service delivery and employment practices. They will help the organisation to deliver services which meet the different needs of colleagues, volunteers, residents, and members. In its simplest form the EIA process can be seen as a foundation tool for measuring the effect of policy and practice on people and should encourage greater openness about policy and decision making. Therefore, EIA’s should be part of the normal policy making process.
   3. Refer to the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Process and Guidance and Equality Impact Assessment Form for more information.
2. Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibilities |
| --- | --- |
| **MHA** | As an employer, MHA has made the following commitments:   * To plan, implement and monitor EDI and to ensure that it is understood by all. * To seek continuous improvement in the application and promoting of equality at MHA. * To provide information and guidance to everyone, particularly members of the board, directors, senior managers, and all colleagues, to ensure their duties and responsibilities are understood under the Equality Act 2010 and under this policy. * To review policies and procedures regularly and change them to eliminate or minimise discrimination (direct or indirect) and to promote equality. * To monitor current work force and job applicants where necessary, to ensure that the policy is helping MHA achieve its aim of a representative workforce, and to act where it is not. * To act where any act of unlawful discrimination is identified - this can include taking disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. * To investigate all formal allegations of bullying, harassment, and victimisation and this can lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. * To investigate areas of concern identified e.g., via surveys, exit interviews EDI Networks etc. |
| **Colleagues and Volunteers** | MHA accepts its responsibility for promoting equality and expects all colleagues, and volunteers to recognise their responsibilities in promoting EDI. Examples of this include (but are not limited to):   * Complying and promoting the EDI policy. * Promote equality of opportunity and avoid unlawful discrimination. * Not harass or intimidate, or victimise other colleagues, volunteers or people using MHA services including their relatives because of their race, religion, or belief, trans status, sexual orientation, age, disability, sex, marriage, or civil partnerships, pregnancy, or maternity. * Report any unlawful discrimination in line with this policy as detailed below. * Report any unacceptable behaviour in line with the Bullying and Harassment Policy. * Undertake relevant EDI training and study all relevant information which can improve knowledge on equality issues. * Seek guidance from line managers or HR Advisors or the EDI Manager where they are in doubt about the legality of procedures or actions. |
| **Visitors, Family and Friends, and Contractors** | At MHA, we know that everyone is unique, with different perspectives and insights. This is why we want to value everyone and make sure:   * That everyone treats everyone with dignity and respect whether they are visitors, family members, contractors, colleagues, or volunteers. * That all family members, visitors, and contractors have a responsibility to adhere to the principles as outlined in this policy. * That everyone will NOT harass, bully, or victimise colleagues, volunteers or people using our services and their relatives because of their race, religion, or belief, trans status, sexual orientation, age, disability, sex, marriage, or civil partnership, pregnancy, or maternity. * That everyone can report any unacceptable behaviours and/or unlawful discrimination in line with this policy (see section 12 below for details on making complaints). |

1. Communication and Dissemination
   1. This policy is disseminated and implemented within all MHA services through MHA’s channels of communication.
   2. Each colleague’s line manager must ensure that all teams are aware of their roles, responsibilities.
   3. This policy will be available to the people we support and their representatives in alternate formats, as required.
   4. Any review of this policy will include consultation with our colleagues, review of support planning, incident reports, quality audits and feedback from other agencies.
   5. Queries and issues relating to this policy should be referred to the Standards and Policy Team [policies@mha.org.uk](mailto:policies@mha.org.uk)
2. Resources
   1. **MHA policy documents, procedures, and guidance:**
   * [All MHA policies and procedures](https://intranet.mha.org.uk/Interact/Pages/Section/Default.aspx?Section=4203)
   * Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Process and Guidance [HR4.2a]
   * Equality Impact Assessment Form [HR4.2b]
   1. **External Resources**
   * [Equality Act at Equality Act 2010: guidance (GOV.UK)](https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010)
   * [Care Quality Commission (CQC)](https://www.cqc.org.uk/)
   * [Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)](https://www.careinspectorate.wales/)
   * [Find your Local Authority](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)
3. Version Control

| Version | Version Date | Revision Description / Summary of Changes | Author and Review Panel | Next Review Date |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | July 2023 | Previously named the Equal Opportunities policy, this policy has been reviewed in line with regular compliance and updated to reflect MHA’s current EDI strategy and EDI governance structure.  This policy has been reviewed and approved by MHA’s Equality Diversity and Inclusion group. | Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager  HR Business Partner  EDI Group  Standards & Policy Manager  Board of Trustees (Ratifier). | July 2025 |
| 5 | December 2023 | References list updated. | Standards & Policy Manager | July 2025 |
| 6 | May 2024 | Equality Impact Assessments section included, and resources updated. | Standards & Policy Manager | July 2025 |
| 7 | June 2024 | External resources list updated. | Standards & Policy Manager | July 2025 |