

## Purpose and scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are effectively incorporated into decision making and the management of business activities, and therefore will enable Guinness to achieve its strategic objectives for Diversity and Inclusion.

It also sets out the policy framework which forms the basis on which Guinness organises its activities so as to ensure that it meets the general duties of the Equality Act 2010, and, where it applies, the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in that Act.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out a general duty to avoid unlawful discrimination. In relation to services of a public nature where PSED may apply, there is a requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics, and those who do not.

## Definitions

Term	Description
Equality	Fairness in decision making and management of business activities in which everyone is provided with equal opportunity and protection from discrimination.
Diversity	Differences both within and between groups of people but also the characteristics that define them as individuals.
Inclusion	Designing and organising activities and processes in a way which values the diversity of our customers and our employees, and responds positively to that diversity.
Protected characteristic	These are the grounds specified in the Equality Act 2010, upon which discrimination is unlawful. The characteristics are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age</li> <li>• disability</li> <li>• gender reassignment</li> <li>• marriage and civil partnership</li> <li>• pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• religion or belief</li> <li>• sex, and</li> <li>• sexual orientation.</li> </ul>
Equality analysis	A method for considering the effect of policies, actions or services on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.
Direct discrimination	This means treating a person less favourably than others are, or would be treated on the grounds of a protected characteristic e.g. race, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sex, marriage and civil partnership.
Indirect discrimination	This occurs when an organisation applies to a person a provision, criterion or practice which appears to have nothing to do with the protected characteristics of that person, and applies it equally to everybody, but it:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• puts people with that person's characteristic at a particular disadvantage compared with those who do not have that characteristic</li> <li>• puts the person at that disadvantage, and</li> <li>• can't be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.</li> </ul>
Harassment	<p>This is when a person engages in unwanted conduct which is related to another person's protected characteristic/s, and which has the purpose or the effect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• violating the dignity of that person, or</li> <li>• creating for that person an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.</li> </ul>
Victimisation	<p>This occurs when someone is treated less favourably than they would otherwise have been, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have brought a complaint; or</li> <li>• it is known or suspected that they are contemplating bringing a complaint; or</li> <li>• they are, or may be, assisting someone else with information in relation to a complaint.</li> </ul>

## Policy statement

1. We will place diversity, inclusion and equality at the heart of the development of our strategy, policy and processes for service delivery. Our services include those which we provide to our customers, and those which relate to our responsibilities as an employer. We want these services to be organised so that we can demonstrate the practical ways in which we promote diversity and inclusion in a positive way, as well as our functional objective to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations.
2. We will collect, retain and manage information about our customers and employees such that we are able to monitor and analyse patterns of diversity, particularly in relation to protected characteristics, and improve our understanding of their needs, and how we meet them.
3. We will carry out equality analyses of policies, procedures and services so that we have systematically assessed the implications of how we carry out our business (or of planned changes to how we carry out our business) for customers and staff taking account of their diverse characteristics, so that we avoid or eliminate discriminatory practices, whether direct or indirect.
4. We will ensure that our policies and procedures provide an effective framework for tackling harassment and victimisation linked to the protected characteristics of our customers or staff, where it is relevant to do so.
5. We will ensure that our customer and staff engagement incorporates approaches which reflect their diversity, and enable and encourage diverse groups to engage and participate in the design, monitoring and review of our policies, procedures and services.
6. We will provide training and development to staff to ensure that they have the skills and understanding to make equality and diversity an integral approach to how they carry out their role, and how they serve our customers.
7. We will publish an annual report on our performance in achieving the objectives of our Equality and Diversity strategy, and this policy.

## Monitoring the policy

We monitor policies to ensure they deliver the expected outcomes. Service standards, key performance indicators, audits and customer satisfaction surveys are typical of the monitoring systems in use, but this will vary according to the policy.

## Period of review

Our review programme is driven by service improvement initiatives, changes to legislation, regulation, evolving good practice or feedback from customers and other key stakeholders. Typically we review policies on a three yearly cycle.

## Key legal and regulatory references

Equality Act 2010

Homes and Communities Agency – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

## Related policies

We must have due regard to the diversity, inclusion and equalities implications of our policies and procedures. This section does not seek to itemise them exhaustively. In particular, in relation to our responsibilities as an employer, our policies and procedures are designed to ensure that we meet our obligations under the Equality Act to eliminate discrimination including harassment and victimisation throughout our employees' relationship with us, starting with the recruitment and selection process.

The following policies relate to activities where diversity, inclusion and equalities considerations are particularly significant.

- Adaptations policy and procedure
- Allocations policy
- Anti social behaviour, hate incidents and hate crime policy and procedure
- Complaints and compensation policy and procedure
- Safeguarding adults, children and young people policy and procedure
- Income recovery policy and procedure
- Tenancy policy
- Customer safety alerts procedure
- Mobility scooter procedure
- Ground 8 procedure
- Housing applications procedure
- Pets procedure
- New tenancy – first year procedure
- Tenancies for minors procedure
- Customer support procedure
- Unacceptable customer conduct procedure

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