



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

Equality Policy Framework

April 2026

INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BUILD **BETTER COMMUNITIES**

Document Information

Issue Date		01/04/2026
Version/Issue Number		1.0
Document Status		Final
Effective From Date		01/04/2026
Scope of Document	This document provides a framework for mainstreaming and culturally embedding BCH's equality objectives across our strategic aims, priorities and service delivery.	
Objective	To advance our equality objectives for workforce equality so that: "our workforce is more representative of the community we serve, and equality and diversity is embedded in our staff culture."	
Who needs to know?	All BCH Staff	
Documentation	Equality in Employment Policy Respecting People at Work Framework Recruitment and Selection Policy Recruitment and Selection Handbook 1-1 and Supervision Policy Managing Poor Performance Policy IPA Policy Probation Policy Grievance Procedure Whistleblowing Policy Training and Development Policy	
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Amendment Record

Date	Issue No.	Section/Page	Details of Change	Authorised By:
01/04/2026	1.0	All	Review and implementation of updated policy document to support all BCH's EDI aims, in conjunction with the new BCH EDI Strategy	Kirsten Kennedy

Amendment Notes

- Documents at draft status are to use letter designations to denote issue status: a, b, c etc.
- Documents at full issue status are to use number designations to denote issue status after full revision: 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.
- For an amendment to a full issue document you are to use number designation to denote issue status: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, etc.



- On full issue the draft amendment record should be deleted from the above table.
- Notification of the amendment must be sent to the person maintaining the Central Register

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to equality of opportunity and to positive action to tackle discrimination and promote cohesion. This framework will help to ensure that we deliver on our statutory responsibilities (see Appendix A for further information.)
- 1.2 As a medium-sized employer, we believe that a clear policy helps communicate our key aims and benefits employees, potential employees, partners, and customers. In turn, leading to a culture of dignity and respect for all, as well as contributing to providing the best possible services to all the communities we serve. This framework applies to all employees.

2.0 Policy Framework and Key Delivery Drivers



Key Delivery Drivers

NUMBER	DRIVER	DESCRIPTION
1	Respecting Others Policy framework	An overarching HR policy framework to ensure that all BCH employees are treated fairly. It includes different options that can be used to resolve workplace issues and disputes, such as the informal problem resolution procedure and formal employee complaints procedure.
2	Performance	The Individual Performance Appraisal is a fundamental part of BCH's performance management framework. It is an annual review that provides an opportunity for employees to have a two-way discussion with their managers. It is an opportunity for managers to promote Equality issues and to address any specific issues.
3	Recruitment	BCH is committed to recruiting people who can help achieve its priorities and will undertake recruitment in accordance with employment legislation and BCH's employment policies and

		procedures. BCH is committed to treating all applicants on merit with fairness and integrity, and to make reasonable adjustments to processes so to achieve a workforce that reflects the diverse communities it serves.
4	Flexible Working	Flexible working - an efficient way to deliver services, given the technology available, the needs of our customers and the diverse range of services we provide. It can also help staff achieve a balance between home and work. This policy aims to enable good practice and may include different options such as Flexible Working Hours, Hybrid Working, Compressed Hours and Part Time.
5	Training and Development	Helping to educate, skill and train the workforce to ensure a culture of equality and diversity in Blackpool.
6	Employee Engagement	BCH believes listening to employees on Equality issues is vital to attaining a culture embracing Dignity for All. We use a variety of methods which includes Trade Union consultation, Staff Consultation Groups, Manager and Employee Briefings and Annual staff Conferences.

3.0 Monitoring

- 3.1 It is only by monitoring and evaluating this policy that the Council is able to assess its effectiveness. Otherwise, we have no way of knowing whether there is systemic discrimination built into our processes. The Council will produce an annual Workforce Equality Report to equality monitor our workforce diversity and the main HR functions. Employees will be asked to provide some personal information in support of this. This Information will be treated in the strictest confidence in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

4.0 Responsibilities

- 4.1 BCH, Senior Management Team and all members of staff are personally and legally responsible for their actions regarding Equality and Diversity.

4.2 Human Resources (HR)

HR will ensure that a copy of the Workforce Equality Policy Framework is made available to all employees and will ensure equality is embedded in all HR Policies, procedures and processes.

4.3 Managers

Overall leadership for implementing this Framework rests with the Senior Management Team. They are responsible for implementing the Framework and for dealing with matters arising from it within their areas of responsibility.

4.4 Customers/Visitors to BCH

BCH's Service Standards have been developed to enable employees to provide a high standard of customer care to all customers and embody BCH's vision and core values. The standards include BCH's commitment to equality, through expected employee behaviours that will be displayed to all customers (working to promote equality of opportunity, combating discrimination and treating everyone fairly) ensure equality of access to BCH services.

5.0 A Diverse workforce

A key objective of BCH is to have a workforce which reflects the diversity of Blackpool's population. Presently our workforce is not representative of people with disabilities, staff from

minority race /ethnic background and sexual orientation. We will address this by measures such as positive action.

6.0 Complaints

Any member of staff who feels that they have not been treated equally under this Framework and particularly if they have been subject to acts of discrimination, has the right to complain. Please see our Respecting others Policy Framework, speak to your line manager, Human Resources, or your Trade Union representative.

7.0 Whistleblowing

The Whistleblowing Procedure aims to encourage and support staff to raise concerns about any serious malpractice including equal opportunities and institutional discrimination. Written into the policy is an assurance that there will be no risk to a person's position if actions are based on good faith.

8.0 Advice and support

Internal Contacts

Human Resources	01253 477230
Unison Branch Office Unison - Equalities Officer	01253 478492
Unite	01253 478422
GMB	01772 555879
AEP	01253 476723
Aspect	01253 476613

See Appendix B for further external sources of information.

9.0 Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured actively by completing regular monitoring, assessment and evaluation, and through observation and feedback, to ensure that we consistently operate appropriately and sensitively.

As a minimum, BCH will undertake a formal review of this procedure at least once every three years or following significant legislative changes or challenge.

Appendix A – The law on Equality

The Equality Act 2010

The Act brings together for the first time all the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors need to follow. It affects equality law at work and in delivering all sorts of services.

It replaces all the existing equality law including:

- The Equal Pay Act 1970
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Race Relations Act 1976
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Most of the new law is based on current legislation which has been streamlined, but there are some important differences, which are detailed in the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice in Employment.

Who does the law protect?

The Equality Act protects everyone at work or who uses services from discrimination on the grounds of personal characteristics.

There are nine protected characteristics employees might have, these are:

1. Disability
2. Marriage or civil partnership
3. Race
4. Sexual orientation
5. Age
6. Gender reassignment
7. Pregnancy and maternity
8. Religion or belief
9. Sex (gender)

As well as these characteristics, the law also protects people from being discriminated against:

- By someone who wrongly perceives them to have one of the protected characteristics.
- Because they are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic. This includes the parent of a disabled child or adult or someone else who is caring for a disabled person.

Appendix B: Further help and information

Links to Organisations

Organisation	Website
Age UK	Age UK The UK's leading charity helping every older person who needs us Age UK Let's change how we age
Young People in Blackpool	Children and young people
Disability	Disability First – The Official Site for Radar Key Company Gold Standard Keys
Gender Reassignment	Press For Change - The UK's Leading Experts in Transgender Law
Pregnancy and Maternity	Home - Maternity Action
Race	Preston & Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council - pwlrec - Preston and Western Lancashire Racial Equality Council Operation Black Vote Welcome to OBV Home - OBV
Religion or Belief	The Inter Faith Network (IFN)
Sex (Gender)	https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/ The Fawcett Society
Sexual Orientation (including Civil Partnership)	The leading charity supporting LGBTQ+ communities in... Stonewall UK LGBT Foundation – The UK's leading health and wellbeing charity
ACAS	Acas Making working life better for everyone in Britain
Equally Ours	Home - Equally Ours
Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Social Exclusion, poverty and place)	Home Joseph Rowntree Foundation

External Helplines

Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme is provided by Health Assured, an independent organisation offering a FREE CONFIDENTIAL telephone helpline for any of life's ups and downs. This includes access to counselling if appropriate as well as access to debt and legal advice.

This service is available for employees and their immediate families

* 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Contact can be made:

- By Phone: 0800 028 0199 (or add prefix 0044 to call from outside UK – stating they are a UK based employee, calls will be charged). Access to Mincom is arranged via scheduling a consultation using the email address or contact facility on the webpage.
- By App: Download the Health Assured Wisdom app via Google play or Apple store using the code MH A051861 – Here you can access “live chat” facility or request a call back

Please note:

- BCH issued mobile phones will have the App automatically downloaded
- Due to HRMC rules and regulations EAP is only offered to employees, partners of employees, retirees for up to three months after they have left the organisation and dependants who are between the ages of 16-24 years old in full education living at the same household address as the employee.

Key additional sources of guidance

- Mandatory Equality and Diversity Training via iPool Online, which includes a paper-based handbook which is available for those employees without access to I pool.
- Equality and Diversity Confidence for Managers
- Links to related HR Policies and arrangements available on the staff intranet such as Recruitment & Selection Handbook, Parental Handbook, Flexible Working, Respecting others Framework.

