

Equality and Diversity Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. As an organisation, Stoll values the variety of different views, outlooks and approaches that a diverse workforce brings. This assists us to provide improved services and increase our understanding of our service beneficiaries.
- 1.2. Stoll will do all it can to ensure no one will receive less favourable treatment or is to be disadvantaged by requirements or conditions, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- 1.3. As provider of homes and support to vulnerable and disabled ex-Service men and women, Stoll recognises and values people's differences and will assist them to use their talents to reach their full potential.

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1. This policy is designed to ensure that Stoll complies with its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, Human Rights legislation and the Homes England regulatory framework which requires us to understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants.
- 2.2. Stoll is unreservedly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (defined as Protected Characteristics).
- 2.3. Using fair and objective employment practices, the organisation aims to ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and with respect at all stages of their employment.
- 2.4. Stoll is committed to meeting the needs of beneficiaries, employees and the wider community in a fair and respectful manner. We believe that by putting diversity at the heart of everything that we do we will improve the overall effectiveness of the organisation.
 - All employees, volunteers and beneficiaries have the right to be free from harassment and bullying of any description, or any other form of unwanted behaviour. Such behaviour may come from other employees or by people (third parties) who are not employees of Stoll, such as customers or clients.
 - All employees, volunteers and beneficiaries have an equal chance to contribute and to achieve their potential, irrespective of any defining feature that may give rise to unfair discrimination.

- All employees, volunteers and beneficiaries have the right to be free from discrimination because they associate with another person who possesses a Protected Characteristic or because others perceive that they have a particular Protected Characteristic, even if they do not.

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all aspects of Stoll's work.

As a Landlord and Service Provider

We aim to identify the needs of disadvantaged groups and shape services to meet those needs. We want to ensure equality of access to our services for all groups of people who fit our application criteria.

- Tenants
- Tenants' dependants
- Veterans accessing outreach services
- Veterans accessing partner services

As an Employer

The policy applies to all stages of employment including recruitment and selection, promotion and training for:

- Job applicants
- Employees
- Agency temps
- Students on work experience or placements
- Volunteers (including trustees and members of committees)

4. Definitions

- 4.1. Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents, and believing that no one should have poorer life chances because of where, when or whom they were born, or because of other characteristics. Promoting equality is about behaving in a way that tackles inequalities, aiming to ensure that all staff and service users are treated fairly, and do not experience discrimination.
- 4.2. Promoting diversity is about recognising that everyone is different and creating a working environment that values each customer and employee ensuring that services are delivered that suit all sections of the community.
- 4.3. Inclusion is about positively striving to meet the needs of different people and taking deliberate action to create environments where everyone feels respected and able to achieve their full potential.
- 4.4. Direct discrimination is when an individual is treated less favourably than someone else because of their:
- sex
 - marriage or civil partnership

- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity leave
- sexual orientation
- disability
- race
- religion or belief
- age

and that there is no genuine requirement for it.

4.5. Indirect discrimination

This is where there is a working condition, practice or rule that disadvantages one group of people more than another. In other words it is more difficult for people from one group to comply with the requirement. Even if it is done accidentally indirect discrimination is unlawful. Indirect discrimination is only allowed if it is necessary for the way the business works, and there is no other way of achieving it.

4.6. Discrimination arising from disability

This is where a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability where it cannot be objectively justified. This only applies where the organisation knew or could reasonably be expected to know that the person was disabled.

4.7. Associative Discrimination

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because they are associated with someone with a protected characteristic.

4.8. Perceptive Discrimination

This is where someone is treated worse than someone else because there has been an incorrect assumption that they have a protected characteristic. This applies even if the person does not possess the characteristic.

4.9. Third Party Harassment

This is where an employee is harassed by a third party who is not an employee eg volunteers or beneficiaries.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. The Board, sub-committees and Senior Management Team are accountable for the embedding of this policy in all aspects of its organisation arrangements and service provision.
- 5.2. The Senior Management Team will promote this policy and embed best practice.
- 5.3. Employees and volunteers of Stoll have a duty to act within this policy, ensure it is followed and to draw attention to any suspected discriminatory acts or practices.
- 5.4. Breaches of the Equality and Diversity Policy by employees and volunteers will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.

- 5.5. Employees and volunteers are also personally liable under equality legislation for any act of unlawful discrimination.

6. Equality and Diversity in Practice

6.1. In carrying out the policy, Stoll will:

- Use selection criteria that does not unlawfully discriminate in recruitment and promotion procedures; ensuring that every individual is assessed according to his or her personal capability to carry out a given job/role
- Ensure that all employees are given equal treatment with regard to terms and conditions of employment, including flexible working arrangements, provided they do the same or broadly similar work, or work of equal value
- Ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the operation of all policy and procedures.
- Ensure that all relevant requirements of the Equality Act in relation to disability are met and adhered to. This will include making reasonable adjustments to ensure access to employment or volunteering tasks and opportunities; recognising that disability includes mental health and that not all disabilities are visible.
- Ensure that all board members, staff and volunteers receive regular, relevant and up to date training and support to enable them to champion and meet the organisation's policy objectives.
- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion informs every aspect of our approach to customer care.
- Ensure that through our procurement processes we appoint partners and suppliers with a robust and compliant approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Collect, review, and measure data, as appropriate, so that it informs us of our performance in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Monitoring reports and or Equality Impact Assessments, as appropriate, may be presented to the Senior Management Team as necessary to form part of an Equality review.
- Actively encourage people from protected groups to participate in activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- Make a clear commitment to stakeholders on how we meet their particular service requirements, for example when information is requested in different languages or formats.
- Support effective communication by providing a range of contact methods, shaped to customers' requirements, including effective use of digital services.
- Ensure that no current or potential customer is discriminated against by letting a property or accessing a service on less favourable terms due to a protected characteristic.
- Have up to date and recognised procedures for the management of incidences of, domestic abuse, hate crime and other forms of abuse and discrimination.
- Involve customers in shaping and scrutinising services.

- Have procedures in place to ensure our properties comply with our legal obligations to meet requirements arising from disability and other protected characteristics including Aids and Adaptations procedures for tenants.
- Ensure our services are offered and provided fairly to our customers, many of whom face discrimination in society due to characteristics or traits that are NOT protected by law i.e. appearance, demeanour or addiction.

7. Policy Review Form

The form below is designed to ensure that all of Stoll's policies remain 'live' and also conform to the high levels expected of Stoll around areas such as equal opportunities, user involvement and continuous improvement.

The lead on each policy should retain this form and keep it updated continuously in order to feed into the ongoing review process of all policies. When presenting a new or existing policy for sign off by the SMT or the Trustee Board the completed policy review form must be presented.

Policy:	<u>Equality & Diversity Policy</u>
Date of last review:	Date: September 2018
Date of next review:	Date: September 2021
Approval by residents obtained on:	Signed: N/A Date:
Approved by SMT on:	Date: November 2018
Staff comments feeding into review:	
Approval by Trustee Sub-committee on:	Date: March 2019