

# KINGSTON FEDERATION OF RESIDENTS

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

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Kingston Federation of Residents Limited was incorporated in February 2013 as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It is an independent voluntary organisation committed to improving the quality of housing services provided to tenants and leaseholders in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. The Federation aims to ensure that these housing services are delivered in the most supportive, efficient and cost-effective way possible.

Before incorporation as a limited company in 2013 the Federation had been in existence for 25 years. Since its formation as a limited company the Federation continues to perform its role as the borough's primary voice for approximately 6,500 social (council) housing residents. It is currently seeking to expand its coverage to provide the same range of advisory, information and support services to the tenants in other social housing sectors, such as those who are housing association tenants. The Federation is committed to promoting the rights and aspirations of tenants and leaseholders throughout the borough and to facilitate their participation in their landlord's decision-making processes, whether this be the Council or other registered social landlords. The Federation is also committed to improving the communal and environmental amenities available to social housing residents in the borough (particularly on large housing estates) and to improving their quality of life.

### 2. THE FEDERATION'S AIMS

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1. To promote the rights and aspirations of all residents residing in social housing in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames ("the borough").
2. To promote the maintenance and improvement of housing conditions, local amenities and the general social housing environment in the borough.
3. To actively participate in and encourage the promotion of residents' representative groups in the borough, and to advise, support and assist the successful development of new residents' representative groups which, when fully established, become members of the Federation.
4. To represent, consult and negotiate, for the benefit of all Federation members.
5. To provide information, advice and support for all members of the Federation.
6. To provide expert assistance with the preparation and management of Annual General Meetings (and other meetings as necessary) called by Residents' Association members.
7. To increase the effectiveness of residents' associations in the borough, in particular through the promotion of combined and co-ordinated action on all matters of common interest and the free interchange of information, ideas and co-ordinated publicity.
8. To attain and maintain the full involvement of residents in the policy, planning and management of all housing estates and environmental services controlled by or managed for the borough.
9. To achieve the closest possible co-operation with other bodies having aims similar to or compatible with those of the Federation.

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## 3. THE FEDERATION'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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The Federation's equal opportunities policy is outlined in paragraphs 3.1 -3 .7 (below).

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### 3.1. COMPLIANCE WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES LEGISLATION

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This equal opportunities policy applies specifically to discrimination and equality of opportunity in respect of 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equalities Act 2010, namely:

- (a) Age
- (b) Disability
- (c) Race
- (d) Sex
- (e) Religion or cultural beliefs
- (f) Gender reassignment
- (g) Marital status and civil partnership
- (h) Sexual orientation
- (i) Pregnancy and maternity

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### 3.2. WHO THIS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY APPLIES TO

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This equal opportunities policy applies to the paid staff of the Federation and to all its volunteer members. It also applies to contractors employed by the Federation. The Federation will only employ contractors who act in accordance with this equal opportunities policy and with the Equalities Act 2010.

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### 3.3. IMPLEMENTATION

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This equal opportunities policy will be implemented across all the Federation's work, including:

- the appointment of members to its management committee
- the appointment of paid staff, their conditions of service and employment procedures
- all dealings with the public, the council and other stakeholders

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### 3.4. OPENNESS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE FEDERATION

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Membership of the Federation is open to all organisations or individuals who support its aims and objectives. However, no individual or organisation shall be admitted as a member if they pursue any policy or barring, preventing or discouraging whether, overtly or otherwise, membership on the grounds of nationality, colour, political or religious opinion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disablement.

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### 3.5. DISABLED ACCESS

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The Federation will endeavour to ensure, as far as is practicable, that all the premises it uses have disabled access. When considering new premises, every effort will be made to ensure such premises are fully accessible. The Federation's Board and management committee already comprises a number of disabled members, whose advice is routinely sought on all issues of access and resource provision.

### 3.6. USE OF LANGUAGE

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Volunteers and paid staff members should avoid and challenge the use of language which in any way belittles anyone. Where any language used has a negative personal impact on others, and it has been made clear to the person using the language that their use of such language is unwelcome or offensive, disciplinary action will be taken if that individual continues to use unwelcome or offensive language.

All materials used or developed by the Federation will be judged in the light of the promotion of equal opportunities, and those considered to be unfairly discriminatory will not be used.

### 3.7. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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No volunteer or paid member of staff should be subject to sexual harassment, which is taken to mean unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature including:

- verbal sexual abuse
- unwanted or inappropriate physical contact
- repeated remarks of a sexual nature which someone finds offensive

If it has been made clear to the person behaving in a way considered to be offensive that their behaviour is unwelcome, and they persist with their offensive behaviour, then the paid member of staff or volunteer who is the recipient of such behaviour will be entitled to make a formal complaint.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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All members of the Federation shall be actively encouraged to act in accordance with this equal opportunities policy and, in accordance with its spirit, to involve in their work all members of the communities which they serve.

The management committee of the Federation has overall responsibility for the effective implementation of, and compliance with this equal opportunities policy. However, all volunteers and paid members of staff have a duty to ensure that this policy works in practice. Those responsible for recruiting volunteers to work on Federation projects are responsible for ensuring that all volunteers are aware of this policy and that they adhere to it while working for or on behalf of the Federation.

The Federation will bring to the attention of all volunteers and paid members of staff the existence of this equal opportunities policy. It will also provide such training as is necessary to ensure that this policy is effective and that all Federation members and other stakeholders are aware of it.

If a paid member of staff or volunteer feels that they have been or are being discriminated against, they are entitled to pursue the matter with the management committee. All instances or complaints of discriminatory behaviour will be treated seriously by the management committee.

## 5. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

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The implementation of this policy will be regularly reviewed by the management committee to ensure that no member of the Federation is disadvantaged directly or indirectly. This review will apply to the practices of paid staff and volunteers, the member organisation, the composition of the management committee and contractors employed by the Federation. The Federation will review this policy annually.