



Equality and Fairness in Contracts

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Responsible Officer: Corporate Procurement Manager

Our Vision

Our Vision is to create confident people and confident communities.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of employment and business and to the provision of inclusive services, processes and procedures. Our employees are encouraged to reach their full potential and we recognise the protected characteristics and seven strands of equality: race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. We seek to reflect the community we serve and fulfil our legal and regulatory obligations.

This commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion applies to all of our services – whether we provide those services directly or procure them from elsewhere. We expect high standards from suppliers who provide goods, services and works to WDH. Our commitment is identified in our Customer Charter Standards where we have identified that one of the five key principles that we will deliver to our tenants is to:

“make sure that we, and our contractors we employ, deliver our services in a way that does not discriminate against any individual or group either directly or indirectly within the supply chain;”

All groups in our communities, whatever their background, have a right to expect that public money is spent on services which meet their needs – and that the money is spent in a way which promotes equality of opportunity for customers and fairness for those who make and supply those goods and services whilst delivering the expected high quality results. We also support supplier diversity to ensure equality of opportunity for big and small contractors alike. Supplier diversity means ensuring that our procurement processes provide equal opportunities for all suppliers to compete for contracts in the housing supply chain.

This document explains our twin expectations of suppliers regarding equality and fairness through the avoidance of exploitation and slavery and provides information about where suppliers can get further advice and information.

We welcome and support the Equality Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and aim to work to ensure that we meet our obligations under the acts as an employer, service provider and purchaser of goods and services ensuring that these obligations are understood and embraced by our external partners.

Delivering equality in service provision

The Equality Act 2010 has important implications for organisations like us who carry out a public function. The changes have involved an assessment of how services are delivered and therefore have implications for the procurement of services.

Equality Act 2010

Part of the Equality Act 2010 relates to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The general duty requires organisations that carry out a public function to 'have due regard' to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- foster good relations when exercising their functions.

The Equality Act 2010 contains a specific measure on procurement, making provision 'to enable duties to be imposed in relation to the exercise of public procurement functions.'

From a procurement perspective, the Equality Act 2010 requires us to consider:

- how our procurement approach can contribute to the delivery of our equality objectives;
- the use of equality-related contract award criteria where they relate to the subject matter of the contract and are proportionate; and
- incorporating equality-related contract conditions where they relate to the performance of the contract and are proportionate.

This will offer a major but worthy challenge and for these reasons we want to assist and encourage contractors and other partners working with us to achieve good practice in all equality of opportunity areas and to help us to deliver our responsibilities.

The best employers already know that they need to use the knowledge and skills of all sections of their workforce. These employers recognise, and can demonstrate, that a diverse workforce can give a competitive edge in meeting the demands of a broad customer base. The future challenge is to ensure that such diversity is considered when we deliver and supply goods and services to the end customer.

Equality in the tender process

In evaluating tenders, we will look for suppliers who can demonstrate that they understand and meet their responsibilities and operate with due regard to the legislation and can positively assist us in our obligations and aspirations.

We need to be sure that you have no history of discrimination (or if you have, that you have rectified this) and for relevant contracts we will need to make sure that you have the capacity to meet the equality standards required to deliver the contract.

For instance:

- You may be required to complete and submit answers to equality related questions as part of any appropriate tender process. The answers will be used to assess your compliance with statutory regulations and your approach to equality.
- If equality is a core requirement of the contract, you may be asked to give additional evidence to support your tender submission, such as information about the way that you approach equality issues in your supply chain or have adapted the provision of your service delivery to clients to recognise inclusion and equality matters. Your bids may be scored on the approach and evidence you provide.
- If the contract has direct equality implications, requirements will be built into the tender specification and contract conditions for the service which you will need to meet in order to be successful.
- If you are a main contractor who uses sub contractors to undertake certain elements of your work, then you will need to ensure that your subcontractors are aware of and are also meeting their obligations in exactly the same way that you would need to.
- You will need to be able to satisfy us that you can continuously monitor, gather data and provide us with information that will help us to be certain that our obligations towards equality are being met through the arrangements we may have with you. We need information to report progress to both our tenants and any other organisations that have a need to know.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

We fully support and commit to the intent of this legislation that aligns to our commitment and aspiration to be a business which is fair and who operates with a social conscience. We have a zero tolerance of economic or physical exploitation in any form including slavery or forced labour. Our suppliers and contractors are also expected to conform to this stance and also ensure compliance from their supply chain, through demonstrating appropriate knowledge and awareness of the issues and by exercising appropriate management and control of their suppliers and contractors within the wider supply chain.

Furthermore, our suppliers and contractors may be asked appropriate questions and for supporting information at relevant stages of our procurement processes to confirm conformance with this legislation and our duty to comply with it.

In conclusion, we aim to adopt procurement processes that demonstrate our commitment to equality and the avoidance of exploitation and slavery in the supply chain with all our suppliers and contractors. This will require us to demonstrate compliance by the questions we ask, in the advice we provide and by making sure that contractual arrangements we agree actively promote equality and seek to reduce the incidence of exploitation.

Further information - Equality Act 2010

A useful summary of the Equality Act 2010 can be found at the Home Office Equalities Website: <http://homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/>

Phone: 0161 829 8100

Or write to: Equality and Human Rights Commission
Arndale House
The Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ

The Equality Act Codes of Practice are especially useful as they indicate the duties applicable to us and our suppliers who may provide services to us or on our behalf.

Government Equalities Office

<http://www.equalities.gov.uk/>

Tel: 020 7211 6000

Or write to: Government Equalities Office
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Further information - Modern Slavery Act 2015

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 and its explanatory notes can be found on the Parliament website:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents/enacted>

Further guidance and information is available from the Government and other organisations on various websites such as the following.

UK Government

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-industry-factsheets>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/stopping-modern-slavery-in-business-video/stopping-modern-slavery-in-business-video>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transparency-in-supply-chains-a-practical-guide>

Other organisations

<http://stronger2gether.org/>

http://www.antislavery.org/english/slavery_today/default.aspx

<http://www.unseenuk.org/>

Further advice

If required, further advice and guidance on compliance with our equality and modern slavery standards can be obtained from our Corporate Procurement Team:

Phone: 01977 788679

Email: procurement@wdh.co.uk



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives