



BOARD DIVERSITY POLICY

Status: Approved

Policy Lead:	Executive Director Business Support
Owned By:	Executive Director Business Support
Date Approved:	February 2023
Approved By:	BHA Board
Review Date:	February 2026
Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References:	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Requirements requires RSLs to “pay due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and human rights, and foster good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.”</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, or those that exercise public functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
Other Documents to be read in conjunction with this policy:	Equal Opportunities Policy Code of Conduct

Policy Title:	Board Diversity Policy
Purpose / Aim of policy:	<p>The Scottish Housing Regulator’s Governance and Financial Management Standard requires that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an RSL encourages a diverse membership as is compatible with its constitution; and • the Board reviews the skills, knowledge, diversity, and objectivity it needs to provide capable leadership, control, and constructive challenge to achieve the RSL’s purpose, deliver good tenant outcomes, and manage its affairs. <p>This policy sets out BHA’s approach to support compliance with this aspect of the standard.</p>
Scope of Policy:	The Board Diversity Policy is applicable to the Board only but sits alongside BHA’s broader commitment to inclusion and diversity as set out in the Equal Opportunities Policy and Code of Conduct
Definitions:	<p>Equality - is making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way but recognises that their needs are met in different ways.</p> <p>Diversity - is the range of individual differences demonstrated amongst the population. By embracing diversity, we attach value to individuality, including background, culture, skills, attitudes, and experience as well as personal characteristics.</p> <p>Positive Action - lawful actions that can be taken to address representation imbalances or overcome disadvantages that people who share a protected characteristic have experienced</p> <p>Protected characteristics – as defined in the Equalities Act 2010 as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.</p>
Approval Source:	Executive Team
Equality Impact Assessment:	Anonymised equal opportunities data is periodically captured for the Board and considered alongside Board skills assessments. Where it is considered that Board diversity is out of alignment with the principals of this policy, this will be built into Board succession plans and Board recruitment.
Sustainability Assessment:	There are no major sustainability implications linked to the contents of this policy
Partnership Assessment:	BHA will work with other organisations to improve its approach to Board diversity and inclusion.
Risk Implications:	Lack of adherence to the principals of this policy could potentially result in non-compliance with the Scottish Housing Regulator’s Regulatory Requirements and, at worst, a breach of the Equality Act 2010. It could also result in poor Board decision making and negatively impact on BHA’s customers.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) recognises and embraces the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive Board in its broadest sense. A truly diverse Board will include, maximise and utilise differences in skills, experience, diversity of thought, and protected characteristics. A diverse Board will also be representative of the community it serves. A diverse Board with a range of views, insights, perspectives, and opinions will improve decision making for the benefit of our customers. These differences will be considered in determining the skills requirements of the Board and promote a good balance of diversity.
- 1.2. When reviewing Board composition, consideration will be given to the benefits of all aspects of diversity including, but not limited to, those described above to maintain an appropriate range and balance of skills, experience, and background on the Board.
- 1.3. The Board may determine to take positive action when recruiting to the Board, which means that BHA will ensure that the placement and wording of adverts will enable a better attraction rate from an under-represented group. Individuals elected to the Board will be made on merit against the objective criteria aligned with skills and experience that the Board requires to be effective. External search consultants that may be used for Board recruitment are expected to comply with this Board Diversity Policy.
- 1.4. Board Diversity will be considered as part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Board and Committees.
- 1.5. BHA will operate in the spirit of the FTSE Women Leaders Review (successor to the Lord Davies Review 2011 and Hampton-Alexander Review 2021) which sets aspirational goals for FTSE 350 Boards to improve gender-balance on Boards and Leadership Teams by the end of 2025 and the Parker Review for FTSE 100 Boards to improve their ethnic and cultural diversity. The Board may set its own objectives and targets in relation to Board Diversity in line with the wider organisational approach to diversity and inclusion.