

INFORMATION

Policy Name

Owner

Last Review/Update

Next Review/Update

Consultation

Parent Board

Operating Board

Subsidiary Boards

CGG

Resident Involvement

Equality Analysis

Confidentiality

DATE/DETAILS

Equality and Diversity

Robert Porter

17 December 2014

December 2016

Tung Sing – April 2015

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Section 1 - Introduction

Outlines the strategic direction of the organisation with regard to Equality and Diversity and how this is aligned to the Chartered Institute of Housing Charter

Section 2 - Policy Statement

Introduces the organisations reviewed equality and diversity policy statement.

Section 3 - National Performance requirements

Highlights the equality and diversity external performance requirements and pressures.

Section 4 – Principles of the Policy

Outlines the principles which will underpin the organisations strategic commitment to equality and diversity.

Section 5 - Priorities and implementing

Provides a clear outline of the equality and diversity priority implementation areas.

Section 6 – Monitoring Equality and Diversity

Provides detail of the process of monitoring that Your Housing Group is delivering against the strategic framework it has signed up to and the policies are achieving its principal aims and objectives.

1. Introduction

1.1 Why have an Equality and Diversity Strategy?

Your Housing Group recognises that embracing equality and diversity is good for business. The strategy will be delivered through annual action plans. The action plans will map practical steps that will assist us in ensuring that our commitments to equality and diversity are reflected in every area of our business.

The organisation has signed up to the HQN Ltd Equality Exchange and will have a Health Check carried out by HQN Ltd. This will also inform the action and outcome plan.

1.2 What does the Strategy cover?

This strategy has been developed to provide a framework for actions needed in the short and long term to develop services and implement equality and diversity in a way which not only meets current needs, but will be appropriate in the future.

This strategy has been developed alongside the organisation's reviewed equality and diversity policy statement which is within the body of this document. The strategy has been developed in line with the CIH Equality Charter and other internal and external performance requirements and pressures.

The CIH Charter has a framework that Your Housing Group has signed up and provides the Strategic direction for the organisation but also will inform all action and outcome plans.

The CIH Charter is in two sections:

- **Who we are: inclusive leadership and organisational culture**
- **Who we serve: involved and empowered customers in the communities where we work**

By signing up to the Charter Your Housing Group has committed to;

- 1 Equality and diversity being driven from the **top**
- 2 Equality and diversity informing **business planning**
- 3 Equality and diversity shaping organisational **culture**
- 4 Equality and diversity supporting staff through **training**, development and engagement
- 5 Knowing who **customers** are
- 6 Involving customers in shaping and **scrutinising** services
- 7 **Representing** the communities which Your Housing Group serves
- 8 **Supporting** the communities which Your Housing Group serves.

2 Policy Statement

Your Housing Group values equality and diversity and will ensure that we treat all individuals fairly, reasonably and flexibly.

We recognise the rights of all employees and customers and will develop services with this in mind.

We are committed to promoting and mainstreaming equality and diversity in everything we do. **We will:**

- Understand, value and welcome equality and diversity
- Ensure that all policies, processes and procedures reflect these commitments
- Continually improve our service to our customers
- Deliver excellent employment opportunities to our staff
- Make our boards and their members reflect the diversity of local communities
- Measure, impact assess and develop plans and report on outcomes in respect of equality and diversity
- Develop all staff to enable them to make a full contribution to meeting these objectives.

To achieve this we will:

- Ensure that equality and diversity is a high priority and an integral part of strategic and operational decisions
- Consider and adhere to all areas of legislation and performance requirements
- Raise standards of achievement and promote equality and diversity for all by equality analysis and monitoring our policies and processes
- Work in partnership with other agencies, and consult with the communities we serve to combat disadvantage, discrimination and exclusion and to promote equality and diversity
- Ensure that there is zero tolerance in cases of hate crime, harassment and violence/abuse
- Ensure that organisations contracted to deliver our services incorporate equality and diversity in their work practices and in a manner consistent with our policies and procedures.

3 National performance requirements

Achieving equality and diversity remains a main priority for all public organisations, including local authorities, ALMO's, housing associations and other social housing providers. The main commissioning bodies of the sector, legislative guidance and good practice requirements have been developed to guide and support organisations in their day to day activities. Even where guidance and performance requirements are not directly aimed at an organisation it is considered that non-compliance of legislation or guidance is evidence of poor performance.

This equality and diversity strategy has considered all of the legislation, guidance and performance requirements including the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (General) 2011
- Regulatory Framework of the Homes and Communities Agency
- The Homes and Communities Agency nine Equality Objectives and its 2012 Equality and Diversity Strategy 2012 – 2015.

The Equality Act 2010 has nine protected characteristics which are:

- Race (Caste to be included in 2015)
- Gender
- Gender Reassignment
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Age
- Marriage and Civil Marriage/Partnership and
- Pregnancy and Maternity explicitly.

Public Sector Equality Duty (General) 2011 (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) applies across Great Britain to public bodies, and to other organisations when they are carrying out public functions.

The general duty requires organisations to give due regard to equality in the way it go about its business. In doing this Your Housing Group must take steps to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people
- Foster good relations between people.

The Homes and Communities Agency is committed to nine equality objectives in 2012 - 2015 and these related to their role and remit and focus on what they consider to be the **most pressing equality issues** for the HCA and the **housing sector more generally**. Its 2012 strategy was developed to fulfil the nine objectives.

4 Principles of the Policy

The following draws together the principles which will underpin Your Housing Group's commitment to equality and diversity

- Your Housing Group will promote equality and diversity in employment and access to services which provide people with the support they need
- We will actively engage and empower the full diverse range of customers to contribute to decisions about the delivery of services to ensure these meet their requirements
- We will support and enable all employees of Your Housing Group to achieve their full potential and fulfil their duties in a fair, reasonable and flexible manner.

Develop services which support the individual and create a fair and flexible service for all

- We recognise the need to provide high quality services which meet individual and community needs

- We will ensure customers are offered services appropriate to their needs and will refer customers requiring specialist support to service providers with particular expertise in this area, where these exist
- We are committed to improving support services and becoming a leading performer in all areas of equality and diversity.

Policies & Procedures

- We are committed to ensuring that equality and diversity is a fundamental principle in all policies and procedures. We will ensure that all policies and procedures are Equality Analysed and effectively promoted.

Setting standards of behaviour for its board, staff, contractors, customers and visitors

- We are committed to ensuring that board, staff, contractors, customers and visitors understand and follow the standards of behaviour that are necessary for the proper management of equality and diversity.

5 Priorities and implementation

Service Delivery

Access to services

- We will continue to develop services that meet the needs and aspirations of local communities
- We will use a consultation processes to assess existing need and needs in emerging communities.

Customer involvement and consultation

- We will ensure that the involvement processes enables all customer/residents groups to be fairly represented in participation, communication and decision making
- We will also review and monitor the diversity of all consultation groups and where there is under-representation develop a drive for diversity or undertake "one off" minority consultation meetings.

Communication and Access to information

We will recognise that access to information is essential in achieving equality and diversity. We will do everything in our power to make all communication fully accessible to all customers and communities we work with. Including **developing** an equality and diversity communications process which sets out guidelines on the:

- Provision of translated material
- Provision of information in alternative formats
- Diversity of image in all publications and communication.

Partnership working

- We are committed to supporting and promoting equality and diversity with all suppliers, contractors and partners and will review this commitment annually
- We expect all contractors/suppliers to work within a commitment to equality and diversity. We will have a code of conduct, which they will be required to comply with.

Employment

We have clear policies and procedures which ensure that staff are recruited, developed and protected whilst employed at Your Housing Group.

Harassment, Victimisation & Discrimination

- We are committed to ensuring that the workplace is free from harassment, victimisation and discrimination by ensuring that all staff is fully aware of their rights, responsibilities and expectations with regard to equality and diversity. It will be made clear to all staff that direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation and instances of harassment or abuse, which are in contravention of policies and/or the law will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- We are committed through profiling of our staff and board members to ensure that no one is disadvantaged due to their particular protected characteristic with regard to pay, contractual terms and other conditions.

Recruitment and selection

- We are committed to ensuring equality and diversity for all candidates and have a Recruitment and Selection Policy, which sets down the processes and standards required for all recruitment
- All applicants will be selected against objective, non discriminatory criteria in the form of written person specifications. Consideration will always be given to abilities, merits and qualifications and staff involved in recruitment will be trained appropriately.

Training and Staff development

- We will aim to ensure that all employees are supported in developing the skills and abilities they require to carry out their role in the organisation.
- We will ensure that appropriate training is in place for staff to achieve the delivery of this strategy.

6 Monitoring Equality and Diversity

Implementation

- All Directors have the responsibility for ensuring equality and diversity is embedded, and will therefore be responsible by implementing the equality and diversity departmental or local action and outcome plan as relevant.

The Board

- The Board must have the appropriate skills with support from its Champion to support this strategy and assess equality analysis as appropriate.

Monitoring

- Tung Sing Board has been designated to monitor Equality and Diversity on behalf of Your Housing Group.
- Regular update reports on the delivery of the equality and diversity action and outcome plan will be reported to the Tung Sing board and Equality and Diversity Steering Group to ensure that they are able to carry out this role.
- The action plan is an annual document that will be kept updated by the E & D team
- All appropriate board reports will be Equality Analysed and the E & D team will monitor that this is being carried out.

Review

- This strategy will be subject to a review every year.

Appendix A

The attached Action Plan template Appendix A has been developed in line with the CIH Equality Charter.