



staffordshire
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Equality & Diversity

1. Our Vision

We respect diversity and will work to help people realise their potential.

Our passion for equality and diversity is at the heart of our values, our policies, and the everyday practices of our workforce. It drives us to make our services inclusive and accessible to all.

We aim to be an organisation that demonstrates best practice in diversity and makes a positive difference to the communities in which we work.

We will ensure that we do not directly or indirectly discriminate.

2. The Meaning Behind the Words

Diversity

Diversity is recognising that each person is different from everyone else, these differences make us unique and we should accept, respect and value these differences which include gender, disability, sexuality, ethnicity, age, faith, and other protected characteristics.

These differences give each individual their own unique skills, experiences, perspectives, abilities and ways of working and communicating.

Protected characteristics

These are characteristics that are protected under discrimination legislation, they include the six main strands of diversity but also include characteristics such as economic status, marital status.

Inclusion

An inclusive environment is one where prejudice is removed. It is an environment where everyone has the opportunity to fully participate, and where everyone is valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, perspectives and abilities.

Equal Access

Equal access is about ensuring everyone can access our services with ease.

Everyone has their own unique needs which require a flexible and tailored response.

Customer Influence

Customers influence our work, shape our policies and monitor the services they receive.

3. Outcomes

To make our vision a reality, we aim to:

- provide services that are administered fairly and are accessible to all
- provide services that are influenced by customers from diverse communities
- have an equal and diverse workforce
- comply with all current legislation and actively promote best practice

- make all customers, stakeholders and partners are aware of our commitment to diversity
- actively promote equality and diversity with our customers, stakeholders and partners

4. Key Steps

We will take positive action to achieve the outcomes we desire:

To achieve accessible services, we will:

- actively engage with diverse communities
- positively promote images of diversity in our publications
- be an active member of PARINS (Partnership Approach to Racist Incidents in North Staffordshire) and work with similar organisations that promote the interests of minority and disadvantaged groups

To ensure customer influence, we will:

- collect and regularly update customer census information
- listen to and be influenced by the Blue Mountain Advisory Panel
- involve customers from diverse backgrounds in reviews of service provision and improvement
- provide relevant equality and diversity training for customers who are involved in areas of service review and development
- increase our knowledge and understanding of customer needs by targeting customers with specific needs

To achieve an equal and diverse workforce, we will:

- actively seek and apply best practice in our recruitment and selection process
- train managers and others in recruitment and selection best practice
- ensure recruitment practices support attracting a diverse workforce
- seek to take positive action initiatives to encourage under represented groups

- have terms and conditions that accommodate a diverse workforce
- provide awareness training for all staff in equality and diversity

To ensure we comply with the law and best practice, we will:

- ensure staff attend relevant training, seminars and events
- have a staff handbook which reflects current law and best practice
- regularly review equal pay law and ensure we comply
- comply with legislation and apply best practice in all our activities
- actively encourage people to challenge discrimination and where needed take action
- equality impact assess relevant strategies, policies and services

To maintain awareness of our commitment, we will:

- use our residents' magazine, website, customer handbooks and other literature to publicise our commitment to equality and diversity

To promote equality and diversity, we will:

- encourage and enable our partners to implement diversity practices in recruitment, selection and training
- support organisations that actively promote diversity in our region
- create a culture that encourages every member of staff to think about equality and diversity in everything they do
- actively participate in diverse activities by sponsoring or taking part in community events
- enable BMHA, Revival HIA and our regeneration team to access and support diverse communities

5. Risks

The following table identifies what would prevent us from achieving our outcomes, the 'risks' linked to not having the right policy; and the key things we will do avoid these risks occurring.

Outcome	Risk	Response
Accessibility	Customers are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will complete Equality Impact

	unable to access our services	<p>Assessments for all key policy and service reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will consult and involve a diverse range of customers to ensure accessibility
Customer influence	We lack a customer perspective and our policies fail to meet their objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve a range of people that reflect the diversity of our customers and communities • Regular equality impact assessments and policy reviews
Diverse workforce	Workforce doesn't reflect the communities we work in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seek and apply best practice to our recruitment and selection process • Set targets for a diverse workforce and monitor
Legislation and best practice	Non compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up to date on current legislation • Require legal review of all Human Resource policies and procedures • Ensure all other policies and procedures are compliant
Communication	There is a lack of awareness of our commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise our commitment to diversity • Staff and involved customers receive appropriate training
Promotion	Our promotion is ineffective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively support and participate in diversity activities • We will lead by example • We will require a shared commitment to best practice from partners

6. Performance Monitoring

We will set targets for all key areas of our services and for our recruitment and selection.

We will regularly measure our performance against our targets and our peers through the monthly and quarterly performance monitoring systems.

The board of management will take overall responsibility for monitoring our performance in achieving our equality and diversity outcomes. The executive team, SHARP (SHA Residents' Panel), audit committee, organisational development and remuneration team, and board of management will all have responsibility for monitoring our performance against our E & D targets.

7. Legislation, Policies and Practices

We will comply with all relevant equality & diversity legislation and other related legislation and good practice such as:

- The Human Rights Act
- The Code of Practice on Gender Equality Duty (Equal Opportunities Commission)
- Statutory Code of Practice on racial equality in Housing
- Tenant Services Authority (TSA) Regulatory Framework
- TSA Good Practice Notes 4 and 8

The above list is not exhaustive.

Equality & Diversity is built in to all of our policies. The following policies and strategies specifically support our diversity aims:

- Anti-Harassment Policy
- Business Plan
- Communications Policy
- Customer Involvement Strategy
- Customer Service Strategy
- Place Shaping Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Employment Policies including appraisal, grievance, disciplinary and Work/Life Balance Policies
- HIV/AIDS Policy Statement
- Recruitment & Selection strategy

