



Cohesion & Diversity Policy September 2009 to September 2010

OVERALL PURPOSE

West North West homes Leeds recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect. We also acknowledge that discrimination can take place at both a personal and institutional level.

The aim of this policy is to realise West North West homes Leeds commitment as a landlord, purchaser and provider of services and employer to provide equality of opportunity and diversity so that no person is treated less favourably than any other person on the grounds of sex, gender or marital status, on race grounds, or on the grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

INTRODUCTION

West North West homes Leeds demonstrates its overall commitment in this area by having as one of the Core Values:

“To embrace Cohesion & Diversity”

To develop this further the following principles are adopted in this policy:

- The promotion of equal opportunities, diversity, social inclusion and community cohesion amongst the communities we work in.
- The delivery of equality of opportunity, diversity and community cohesion in all areas of our service provision

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

West North West homes Leeds will monitor the implementation and delivery of services through this Policy by:

- Targets set within our Diversity Performance Management Framework
- Placing actions within our Social Housing Action Improvement Planning Management System called SHAIP, which will further support and embed this policy.
- West North West homes Leeds Diversity KLOE Board

Cohesion & Diversity Policy

1. Statement of Intent

- 1.1 West North West homes Leeds recognises that people who provide and use our services come from diverse backgrounds, with different experiences and needs. This policy aims to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment because of race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, cultural background, sex, sexuality, disability, domestic circumstances, illness, age, employment status, membership and non-membership of trade unions or political beliefs.
- 1.2 We will aim to eliminate barriers to service delivery or employment for whatever reason and strive to identify any institutional discrimination within our staff, contractors, partners, Board members and Area Panels. We will implement equality policies in relation to both our employment practices and our service delivery.
- 1.3 We will aim to ensure that all our employees and customers feel that they have been fairly treated. We accept our legal responsibilities and recognise the need for a comprehensive cohesion and diversity policy in order to safeguard the rights of individuals and groups, comply with relevant equality legislation and to ensure the achievement of our core values.
- 1.4 We recognise and value the importance of each individual within the whole community we serve. We are committed to consulting our customers and others on whom our services have an impact, in order to ensure that all services are relevant and accessible to all. We will make a particular effort to ensure effective consultation with groups likely to be disadvantaged in service delivery. We also recognise the relationship between our employment practices, the composition of our workforce and our ability to realise our cohesion and diversity goals. We view the promotion of fairness and equality as a mainstream activity and therefore as the responsibility of all our staff and Board members

2.0 Outline of Service

The promotion of equal opportunities and diversity and community cohesion with the communities we work with

- 2.1 All of West North West homes Leeds key strategic documents will take account of the principles of this policy and each will contain statements to reinforce the equality, diversity and community cohesion agenda and will support the work of our Cohesion and Diversity Strategy.
- 2.2 Policies and strategies will be regularly reviewed to reflect changes and equality impact assessed to ensure they do not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any group or individual.
- 2.3 We will maintain existing strategies, policies and procedures and develop new policies and procedures which deal with specific issues that are key to the

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delivery of this policy, for example; Vulnerability, Anti Social Behaviour, Sexuality, Religion, Faith & Belief, Bullying at Work, Age Diversity & Retirement, Domestic Violence, HIV, AIDS & Hepatitis B, Hate Crime, Access to Services Strategy and Communication and Marketing strategies.

- 2.4 We will, where feasible and considering value for money, make information available in alternative formats, for example, large print, community languages and on tape or CD.
- 2.5 We will encourage those we work with, such as contractors and consultants to have appropriate equal opportunities and diversity policies or to adopt West North West homes Leeds policy.
- 2.6 We will ensure our employment practices, including recruitment and conditions of employment are fair and not discriminatory against any group or individual.
- 2.7 We will ensure Board and Area Panel members, staff and key contractors receive training on equal opportunities and diversity and community cohesion which reflects the responsibilities of their position.
- 2.8 We will take part in relevant joint working and partnerships which promote West North West homes Leeds and/or the community's understanding of, and effectiveness in dealing with, equalities issues and the diversity and cohesion agenda.
- 2.9 We will identify and share good practice in equality, diversity and community cohesion

West North West homes Leeds delivery of equality of opportunity, diversity and cohesion in all areas of our service provision;

- 2.10 We will encourage and support active participation in our Governance Structure, Residents groups, Focus groups and Area Panels which reflects the composition of West North West homes Leeds communities
- 2.11 We will consult with customers and the wider community where relevant in the review of our policies, strategies and services
- 2.12 We will provide appropriate housing through the Decency Homes Standard and through regeneration development with our partners, consulting with the community and other partners or agencies
- 2.13 We will provide access to our service outlets to ensure that we are complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and our Disability Duty Scheme
- 2.14 We will gather equal opportunities and diversity statistics for applications for housing, our Board members and Area Panels and applicants for employment and staff members to help us monitor this policy. We will use this data to set targets within our Diversity Performance Management Framework and other areas of the business.

- 2.15 We will monitor performance against the specific targets set within the Diversity Performance Framework, benchmarking against comparable service providers where possible.

3.0 Specific Needs

- 3.1 West North West homes Leeds will take into account the specific needs, which may arise, of older and vulnerable groups, disabled groups, and Black and Minority Ethnic groups, the young, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transsexual/transgender groups and religious or faith groups in a manner that promotes equality, diversity and inclusiveness.
- 3.1 This policy also supports and works in accordance with West North West homes Leeds Vulnerability Policy and our Customer Care Policy.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 West North West homes Leeds will seek the views of customers on this policy at least annually in a variety of different ways through our Customer Involvement mechanisms. Consultation for this policy was undertaken by sending this to our Registered Tenants Groups and Community Organisations based in West North West of Leeds.

5.0 Implementation

- 5.1 West North West homes Leeds Board of Directors fully accepts responsibility for the implementation of this policy, with operational responsibilities delegated to the Chief Executive
- 5.2 All employees have a responsibility to apply this policy in their day to day work. All job descriptions have a statement which reinforces this requirement. Where posts have specific responsibilities these will also be clearly stated in the job description.
- 5.3 All our staff will be trained in equality, diversity and community cohesion at induction and at regular intervals to ensure they are aware of the requirements of this policy, our legal obligations and our commitment to the Cohesion and Diversity agenda.
- 5.3 In addition all staff has a duty to bring any discriminatory behaviour or attitudes that they become aware of to their line manager.

6.0 Monitoring

- 6.1 The Diversity KLOE Board will monitor this policy through reports and meetings on a regular basis and the effectiveness of the policy will also be measured against targets set in our Social Housing Action Improvement Planning Management System, (SHAIP) and our Diversity Performance Management Framework

7.0 Review

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- 7.1 In preparation for delivering this policy during 2009 West North West homes Leeds has reviewed and taken into account new or emerging government legislation and government and Council policies.
- 7.2 As a result this policy now fully reflects, and is inclusive of the issues arising from those policies and legislation and considers the impacts arising.
- 7.3 As part of good practice it will be reviewed annually along with our Cohesion & Diversity Strategy unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, or monitoring and reporting reveals that a change in policy is required sooner.

8.0 Legislation

- 8.1 New or emerging legislation and new policy for 2009 include:

Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Race Relation Act 1976
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Housing Act 1996 & 2004
Data Protection Act 1998
Human Rights Act 1998
Employment Equality (religion and belief) Regulation 2003
Employment (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2003
Equality Act 2006
New Equality Framework for Local Government

9.0 West North West homes Leeds Related Policies and Documents

All our Policies and Procedures
Business Plan
Cohesion and Diversity Strategy
Access to Service Strategy
Vulnerability Strategy