



MossCare Housing Group

Equality and Diversity Strategy

2009-2011

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Welcoming difference as a strength

Foreword

This strategy has the support of the two main Boards in The Mosscafe Housing Group. Board members have commended it as being a clear and easy to read document. I recommend that you read it. I feel sure you will be encouraged by what you read. It really shows how we welcome difference as strength, respect communities and are fair to all. And, how you can contribute to strengthening and developing our approach.

Pam Schwarz, Chief Executive

Introduction

Mosscares Housing was established in 1967 to 'lend a hand to help the homeless' in Moss Side, Manchester by providing decent and affordable housing through an enabling and empowering housing delivery service. In 2008, the Mosscares Housing Group (MHG hereon) provides housing and related services to 4,400 households in Manchester, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford.

Four decades on, the quality of life for many is eroded by discrimination and disadvantage arising from socio economic factors such as ill health and poverty. In 2004-2005, 16% of the UK population lived in low income households. Children are disproportionately present in low income households. In 2004-2005, children in lone-parent families, children of couples where the parents work part time or are unemployed, those in families with three or more children, or with a mother under 25 were more at risk of low income than other groups of children.

Other groups of people with an above average risk of low income in 2004-2005 included workless families (those with no working age adults in work). Overall there were 3.06 million workless households in the three months to June 2008. This represented 15.8% of all working age households. The proportion of working-age people living in workless households was highest for the Chinese ethnic group, at 28.3%, and lowest for the Indian ethnic group, at 7.6%; while 10.7% of those in the White ethnic group lived in a workless household.

The Northwest is a diverse region. Of the 6.8 million population, over half a million people are of Black and/or Minority Ethnic (BME) heritage. BME communities make up 20% of the city of Manchester. About 20% of the population are disabled people. Estimates suggest up to half a million people in the region are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender with 35,000 living in Manchester. Up to 82% of people in the Northwest hold a particular faith. The majority are Christians, but some areas of the region see large proportions of the population made up of practicing Muslims, Hindu's, Jews, Sikhs or Buddhists. The Northwest has an ageing population. While 30% of the population were over 50 in 2001, the figure is expected to rise to 40% by 2021.

The UK overall has an ageing population. For the first time, people aged 60 and over form a larger part of the population than children under 16. The fastest growing age group are those aged 80 and over, constituting 4.5% of the total population. The proportion of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 22% by 2031. Many older people rely on social housing for their accommodation and support needs. A growing number of older people will mean a growth in the need for care and support for residents in all housing tenures with a likely increase in mobility and disability support.

The changing demographic make up of the population means that BME communities are an increasing proportion of the young and working age population. New migrant workers are increasingly important to the economy. And we are increasingly reliant on those who have not traditionally been economically active to (re)enter the labour force.

It is estimated that by 2010, only 20% of the workforce will fit the stereotype of being white, male, non disabled and below 45.

Equality is not a minority issue. It affects the majority of the population. The majority of our communities and the majority of our staff come from groups that have traditionally experienced discrimination and disadvantage.

In addition to the legal, public duty and regulation case there is the moral and business case for promoting sound practice on equality of opportunity and diversity.

Aziza Kapadia, Equality and Diversity Officer

Source: Office for National Statistics, the Chartered Institute for Housing and the Northwest Regional Development Agency

Strategy development

Our first Strategy of 2006, was developed in consultation with our customers (residents, partners, suppliers, contractors and consultants), our staff, Board and Committees at a series of focus group meetings. The consultation produced around forty characteristics that help to define our diversity or uniqueness. And also generated ideas on how the Strategy could be integrated at every level of service delivery, employment, procurement and governance to make it living document, a part of our every day activities. Given that our first Strategy was borne out of a grassroots process by the very people it seeks to serve, their voices and input will continue to echo and influence subsequent Strategies, including this Strategy, and will ensure a collective ownership.

Purpose of Strategy

The purpose of this Strategy is to outline:

- the key drivers
- our aims
- our principles
- our strategic scope

Key drivers

- The moral case-It is ethically wrong to treat any individual or group unfairly or to place them at a disadvantage
- The legal case - Under section 14 of the Equality Act 2006, Regional Social Landlord's are required to comply with Equality and Human Rights Commission codes of practice to ensure or facilitate anti-discrimination legislation on age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation
- The public duty case - Under section 42 (3) (a) of the Equality Act 2006, RSL's must continue to comply with codes of practice issued by the legacy commissions (Commission for Racial equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission) to promote race, disability and gender equality
- The regulation case - We will comply with the Tenant Services Authority codes of practice and continue to comply with the Housing Corporation Good Practice Note 8 and the Audit Commission's Key Line of Enquiry 31-Diversity
- The business case-by positioning diversity as integral to our business and by identifying and meeting the needs of diverse individuals and communities, we will attract more customers and a talented workforce

Strategic aims

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- to promote equality so everyone recognises the benefits of a diverse community, workforce and decision making body
- to create an environment where everyone feels safe

Strategic principles

Our underlining principles to delivering on equality and diversity are:

- Commitment-legislation is not a springboard for change in organisational culture. We strive beyond compliance toward best practice, incorporating a respect for diversity as standard rather than exceptional.
- Training-to mainstream equalities, we deliver training to our staff, Board, Committee and Tenant Panel so that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.
- Mainstreaming-equality is integrated into the core of our everyday practice as an employer and in our business delivery.
- Monitoring and review -the Equality and Diversity Working Party monitors and reviews key performance indicators and reports progress to the Board.
- Sustainability-there are no short cuts or 'quick wins' in equality and diversity. For long term sustainability, we deliver ongoing equal opportunity and diversity initiatives.

Equal opportunity and diversity initiatives

Equal opportunity initiatives recognise that people have different privileges or opportunities available to them. Treating everyone the same is not fair and is not of equal benefit to everyone. These initiatives provide a level playing field. So, everyone has equal access to employment and services. The law plays an important role in ensuring the 'rules of the game' are fair.

Diversity initiatives recognise the visible and invisible differences that exist between people. Diversity at work and in communities forces us to experience outside the box of our own experience. It helps us to improve our understanding of others and eliminate prejudice, myths and stereotypes. Embracing diversity is about valuing and celebrating the uniqueness of people. And, a valued diverse workforce and resident base will empower people to help us deliver better on our business aims.

Strategic scope

To mainstream equality and diversity, our Strategy will cover:

- Access to information and advice
- Allocation
- Service delivery
- Resident involvement
- Harassment
- Employment
- Partnerships and procurement
- Development and regeneration
- Governance

Access to information and advice

We seek to ensure information on our housing related services is accessible, fair and equal. We develop appropriate methods to communicate with our diverse customers.

Allocation (including lettings and sales)

We seek to ensure our Housing Allocation Policy is accessible, fair and equal. We will implement positive action redress where required to remove any discrimination and disadvantage.

Service delivery (including adaptations)

We recognise the importance of ensuring our housing and related services meet the needs of diverse individuals and community groups. We seek to ensure our housing related services are accessible, fair and equal. We monitor our allocation take up so that we can provide services that are tailored to meet specific need. And ensure our offices and supported housing schemes are accessible and continue to meet any changing needs and requirements.

Resident involvement (including participation, satisfaction and complaints)

We consult and engage with current and potential service users to ensure our services continue to meet changing needs and requirements. Our Resident Involvement Policy seeks to ensure opportunities for involvement are accessible to all. We encourage resident involvement at every level of service delivery including Board, Committee and Tenant Panel membership.

Harassment (including hate crime and domestic violence)

MHG has a zero tolerance approach to harassment, bullying and intimidation in the workplace and in the communities we serve. We are committed to eliminating direct and indirect discrimination and have developed robust Policies to take action against perpetrators and to provide support to victims. In dealing with harassment, bullying or victimisation, it is the behaviour and its impact on the recipient and not the intention of the perpetrator that is the focus.

Employment (recruitment, staffing, retention, training and development)

Equality of opportunity is at the core of our employment processes. MHG will seek to ensure that job requirements are necessary and do not exclude any individual or group. We seek to ensure our jobs are advertised widely, are accessible to get hold of, understand, complete and return to encourage applications from diverse communities. We use a transparent and fair selection process to ensure consistency and openness. Our comprehensive induction process seeks to ensure we take a responsibility in making new staff feel welcome and valued. We offer flexible terms and conditions to encourage diversity. We offer career mentoring to staff under represented in the social housing sector. Opportunities for promotion are on merit and ability. We seek to ensure our workforce reflects the diverse communities that we serve by monitoring recruitment, staffing and promotion. We will take positive action as necessary.

Partnerships and procurement

It is often our partners who deliver our products and services. MHG seek to ensure we are consistent, fair and equal in our tendering processes with contractors, consultants and suppliers. All prospective partners are required to provide a copy of their Equality and Diversity Policy at tender stage. Successful tendering partners will be monitored to ensure they meet their obligations. And will be required to comply with our Equality and

Diversity Policy. To redress under representation, we will use our purchasing power to encourage small, local, BME and/or women contractors to tender for contracts. We will provide assistance on best practice in Equality and Diversity if required. Maintaining good relations with local businesses helps to develop community cohesion.

Development and regeneration

Improvements to homes and new development will be carried based on the needs of the existing and the new migrant communities. And in consultation with the community to ensure we develop community cohesion and sustainable communities.

Governance

MHG recognise the importance of strong leadership in the promotion of equal opportunity and diversity. The Board will take the lead in ensuring equal opportunity and diversity is at the heart of our employment and business. The Board will ensure our allocation, employment, procurement and governance paths are open and accessible to the diverse sectors of the community.

Ensuring we deliver

Accountability and responsibilities

We seek to ensure equality and diversity is woven into the fabric of our business and championed at the highest level. The Chief Executive and Directors of Service set the standard for equality and diversity. And work with management to lead their teams by example. But, it is the responsibility of everyone, staff (employee, agency and contract staff), Board, Committee and Tenant Panel members and customers (residents, partners and associates, contractors, consultants and suppliers and stakeholders) to be accountable for ensuring equality and diversity in their everyday work and interactions.

The following outlines each of our responsibilities.

Board Members

Board Members are ultimately responsible for ensuring the principle of equality and diversity is evident in all of our services, activities and opportunities and that the Strategy is effective.

The Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for ensuring:

- The Strategy is implemented in their operational areas
- Monitoring performance against target takes place
- The Strategy and Policy undergo equality impact assessment
- Customers, staff, Board and Committee are aware of our Strategy
- Action is taken against anyone who fails to comply with the Strategy

Our Managers are responsible for ensuring:

- The Strategy is applied within their service areas
- Performance against target is monitored and reported to Directors
- New staff receive a copy of the Strategy and receive training

- Discrimination, harassment and intimidation is not condoned and breaches are dealt with promptly and appropriately
- Regular supervision and reviews take place with team members

Staff (employee, agency and contract staff)

Every staff member at every level is required to uphold our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy. All staff must work in a non-discriminatory way and promote equality and diversity. All staff must respond to the diverse need of any individual or group to ensure equality of access.

Customers (including residents)

Customers are expected to uphold our Equality and Diversity Policy. Incidences of wilful discrimination, harassment and intimidation will be dealt with appropriately and could lead to the suspension of services.

Partners and Associates (including suppliers, contractors and consultants)

All partners and associates from the public, private or voluntary sector are expected to uphold the principles of our Equality and Diversity Policy to ensure that they do not discriminate or induce discrimination. Action will be taken for any wilful breaches or non compliance and could lead to the Contract being terminated.

Implementation

MHG is committed to ensuring the work as outlined in our Action Plan is implemented.

The Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board and the Board Champion for Equality and Diversity lead on equality and diversity.

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring the work outlined in the Strategy Action Plan is carried out and will do this through regular progress reports from the Equality and Diversity Working Party (EDWP).

The Chief Executive steers the EDWP. This comprises of the Board Champion for Equality and Diversity, a representative from every team, a Trade Union representative and a Tenant Panel Member.

Directors of services are responsible for implementing this Strategy in their area and monitoring performance of their operations against target as set out in the Action Plan.

The Action Plan should not be seen in isolation and is linked to planned projects in our business plan delivered with partners and associates.

Monitoring

To ensure consistency and equality and fairness across in all aspects of our work, profiling and monitoring for allocations, resident, recruitment, staff, Board, Committee and Tenant Panel will include all aspects of equality, age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The EDWP will set targets based on regionally benchmarked targets. Allocation and HR will supply regular monitoring and analysis reports to the EDWP. The EDWP will monitor performance against target quarterly and will review targets annually based on significant under or over achievement. We will take lawful positive action to redress any under representation in service delivery, employment and governance.

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for coordinating equality and diversity monitoring reporting to the Board.

Supportive framework

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Business Plan
- Complaints Policy
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Housing Allocation Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Resident Involvement Agreement

Review

The Board has overall responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of this Strategy based on regular progress reports from the EDWP.

The Strategy will be reviewed in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Equality and Diversity Strategy 2009-2011
Approved by HR: 4 November 2008
Approved by Union: 20 November 2008
Approved by Mossbank Homes Board: 27 January 2009
Approved by Mosscares Housing Board: 17 February 2009
Effective date: 3 March 2009
Review date: March 2011
Author: Aziza Kapadia, Equality and Diversity Officer

Appendix 1

Equality and Diversity Policy - Summary Statement

The Mosscares Housing Group values difference and treats all people with dignity and respect. The Association is committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promoting equality to create environments where everyone feels safe. We are committed to achieving high standards in service delivery, employment and decision making and fair and equal representation where every individual has equal access to housing, services, jobs, procurement and governance.

We believe in equality for all and will not tolerate the less favourable treatment of anyone. We will challenge direct and indirect discrimination, harassment (including bullying) and victimisation based on the following grounds (also known as personal characteristics), age, disability, gender or transgender identity, gender reassignment status, marital or civil partnership status, race, being a traveler or gypsy, religion or belief (including non observance) or sexual orientation and other factors such as employment status, housing circumstances, income, caring or dependant responsibilities, nationality, spent criminal conviction or trade union activities or any other reason, which cannot be shown to be justified. (This list is not exhaustive.)

We comply with principle equality legislation to ensure we are fair and equal in employment and in the provision of goods, facilities and services to all:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and SDA (amendment) Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations Act 1976 and RRA (amendment) 2000 and RRA (amendment) Regulations 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and DDA (amendment) 2005
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Gender Recognition Act 2004
- Civil Partnership Act 2004
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

We comply with employment codes of practice to ensure fair and equal work practices. We ensure or facilitate anti discrimination legislation through the Equality and Human Rights Commission codes of practice. We promote race, disability and gender equality by complying with the codes of practice issued by the legacy commissions, the Commission for Racial equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. We will comply with the Tenant Services Authority code of practice and continue to comply with the Housing Corporation Good Practice Note 8 and the Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry 31. We will also observe best practice. And, will take lawful positive action to redress under representation in service delivery, employment and governance.

To drive forward this policy we seek to ensure:

- our allocation, employment, governance and procurement paths are accessible and welcoming to all sectors of the community
- our services meet the needs of residents
- our workforce reflects the diverse communities that we serve
- we encourage tenders from small, local businesses and Black and Minority Ethnic and women contractors
- we consider the needs of diverse communities and develop appropriate methods to communicate with staff and customers
- our offices and supported housing schemes are accessible
- we deliver training to staff, Board, Committee, Tenant Panel so they have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement the policy
- we take action to deal with non compliance with the policy
- we evaluate our policies, services and functions through consultation and rectify any adverse impact on any group
- we set equality targets in relation to employment, service delivery and governance and monitor and review performance against target

What to do if something goes wrong

Customers and visitors-If you feel that we have not provided you with a fair and equal service or feel you have not been treated fairly in accordance with this Policy; please raise this with the Continuous Improvement Manager. If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily, you can make a formal complaint using the Complaints Procedure.

Staff-If you feel that you have been not been treated fairly and in accordance with this Policy, please raise this with your Line Manager or Human Resource Manager in the first instance. If the situation is not resolved satisfactorily you can invoke the Bullying and Harassment Procedure or Grievance Procedure.

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من الممكن توفير هذه الوثيقة باللغة العربية أيضا. الرجاء الإتصال بموسكير هاوسينج (Mosscares Housing) على هاتف 0161 226 4211 إذا كنت بحاجة لهذه الخدمة.

এ দলিলটি বাংলা ভাষাতেও পাওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করা যেতে পারে। যদি আপনি এই সেবা পেতে চান তাহলে দয়া করে 0161 226 4211 এই নম্বরে মস্কেয়ার হাউজিংয়ের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন।

این مدارك همچنین به زبان فارسی موجود می باشند. در صورت نیاز به این خدمات لطفا با ماسکر هاوزینگ (Mosscares Housing) با تلفن: 0161 226 4211 تماس بگیرید.

આ દસ્તાવેજ ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં પણ ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે. જો આપને આ સેવા જોઈતી હોય તો પહેરબાની કરીને પોસ્ટર હાઉસિંગનો 0161 226 4211 નંબર પર સંપર્ક કરો.

GUJARATI

यह दस्तावेज़ हिंदी में भी उपलब्ध किया जा सकता है। यदि आपको यह चाहिए तो कृपया 'मौसकेअर हाउसिंग को नम्बर 0161 226 4211 पर सम्पर्क करें।

HINDI

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਮੋਸਕੇਅਰ ਹਾਉਸਿੰਗ' ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: 0161 226 4211

PUNJABI

یہ دستاویز اردو میں بھی فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔ اگر آپ کو یہ خدمت چاہیے تو براہ مہربانی موس کیر ہاؤسنگ سے 0161 226 4211 پر رابطہ کیجئے۔

URDU

這文件也提供中文版本。

CANTONESE

如你需要 MOSSCARE HOUSING 房屋服務，請致電 0161 226 4211 查詢。

Mbarakha izi hukhadirowa khfanyowa ka lugha la CHIMINI. Fanya ihsani biga simu ya Mosscares Housing. Nambari ni 0161 226 4211 ikiwa we takhusula kusaidowa ka jawabu iyi.

BRAVANESE

نه م دوکیومینته به زمانێ کوردیش هه یه، نه گه ر ده ته ویت نه مخزمه تگوزاری یه به کار بهینیت تکایه یه یوه ندی بکه به Mosscares Housing موسکیر هاوسینگ، به ژماره ته لیفۆنی 01612264211

KURDISH

Ce guide est également disponible en Français, pour l'obtenir veuillez contacter Mosscares Logement au 0161 226 4211.