

# Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

accountability diversity  
better homes inclusion  
dignity better places  
better lives respect  
without discrimination equality



## Introduction

We aim to achieve our vision of better homes, better places, better lives by:

- providing affordable high quality services and homes
- supporting and developing our staff and managing our resources effectively
- including and involving our customers, partners and other stakeholders
- becoming a more environmentally responsible organisation.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and social inclusion underpins these aims, on the basis that:

- equality is rooted in the legal and regulatory rights and duties that address discrimination
- diversity acknowledges the benefits that people from different backgrounds and life experiences can bring to all areas of life, such as employment, service delivery and community involvement

- social inclusion enables people to participate in society, when otherwise they may be excluded because of issues such as poverty, low skill levels and poor housing.

Our work aims to cover the accepted 'six strands' of equality, diversity and inclusion, including

- age
- race
- disability
- religion/belief
- gender
- sexual orientation.

This policy applies across Devon & Cornwall Housing group, including Devon & Cornwall Housing Trust, Penwith Housing Association, Tor Homes, Devon & Cornwall Housing Association and all their subsidiaries.



# Equality, diversity and inclusion policy

(continued)

## Our commitments

Through effective governance and management we are committed to:

- promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion amongst our stakeholders, residents, customers, clients, staff, board and committee members and all those we work with
- challenging and eradicating discrimination wherever we encounter it on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief or sexual orientation
- treating everyone with dignity and respect at all times
- providing responsive and accessible services that meet individual needs
- working towards staff and governing body profiles which reflect the diverse communities we work in
- reviewing and auditing our equality, diversity and inclusion activities
- ensuring we keep our approach up to date with changes in society, legislation and regulation.

We take seriously our legal duty to provide all our services and employment opportunities fairly and without discrimination, and we keep to all relevant codes of practice. As a group of social housing landlords we recognise that we have a duty to challenge prejudice and discrimination whenever it is identified, and promote equality, diversity and social inclusion.

## How do we meet these commitments?

### Our services

We meet these commitments by:

- promoting an environment that gives all residents an equal chance to live free of discrimination and prejudice
- removing any barriers that limit access to services and where possible tailoring service delivery to meet individual needs
- providing accessible information and a variety of ways in which residents and other customers can have their say on all our services
- ensuring that organisations providing services on our behalf work in line with this policy
- carrying out equality impact assessments of new and existing policies and practices to make sure that they are fully inclusive
- comparing and benchmarking our services against those provided by similar organisations.



## Our governing bodies and staff

We meet these commitments by working towards:

- being an inclusive employer, with governing bodies and staff that reflect the diversity of local communities
- positively valuing the contribution of all board and committee members and staff
- challenging and eliminating all discrimination
- developing and promoting recruitment policies and practices that give everyone equal access to employment opportunities
- exercising zero tolerance of bullying and harassment, and ensuring that everyone knows about their rights of protection
- making sure that all board members and staff know and understand the purpose of this policy
- setting performance targets to measure our progress in these areas.

## Our procurement

We meet these commitments by:

- ensuring our procurement strategy and practices reflect our commitment to equality, diversity and social inclusion
- engaging with suppliers who share our values
- encouraging suppliers to employ staff in a way that reflects the diversity of local communities.

## Implementation and communication

We are implementing this policy through:

- the work of our equality & diversity executive group, a network of senior staff who share good practice and drive our action plans forward
- equality impact assessments that consider how we affect communities, and how we can respond to individual needs
- publishing outcomes from the impact assessments, and how we will change our services
- developing equality schemes for the six strands, with measurable targets and clear outcomes. Our schemes for disability and gender equality have already been published, with the remaining strands being developed
- detailed action plans, including those arising from our adoption of the race equality code of practice for housing associations.

We will communicate this policy statement to all our board and committee members, staff, recruitment candidates and contractors.

We will ensure that our group websites and intranet contain guidance and information on our approach and more general information on equality, diversity and inclusion.

(Continued overleaf)





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### Monitoring and review

- it is the responsibility of all board members and management teams to ensure that our equality, diversity and inclusion aims are kept under review and are implemented throughout the group
- the DCH group management team has a specific accountability for monitoring the implementation of this equality, diversity and inclusion policy. This is delivered through the equality & diversity executive group
- our equality action plans are reviewed quarterly, and the group and subsidiary boards and management teams receive annual reports on progress
- the policy is reviewed every two years, and earlier in the event of significant social, demographic, legal or regulatory changes. The next full review will be in spring 2011, and before this we will be considering adding a new strand on transgender issues.

Dave Chitty  
*Chair of the equality & diversity executive group*

Would you like this information in another format? Please contact John Bickford on 01392 814493

