



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1 Cynon Taf Community Housing Group (we) operate in some of the most deprived communities in Wales and is well placed to respond to the challenges that face individuals and the communities in which we have a stake-holding.
- 1.2 We recognise the issues that are prevalent and affect the people who we have a responsibility to as a landlord and a service provider in the communities in which we operate.
- 1.3 This document will set out the way in which we work and our approach to delivering services in the context of equality and diversity.
- 1.4 We work in County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf and primarily in the area known prior to 1996 as Taff Ely and Cynon Valley, although with a small stockholding to the North West of Pontypridd in the Rhondda Valley.
- 1.5 This approach although primarily considers the issues facing us as a housing provider, references will be made where there is a significant impact on the Care and Repair service.
- 1.6 As a major employer we will promote a culture of inclusiveness in the workplace recognising that staff from different backgrounds can bring valuable insight and enhance the way we work. We have extensive policies and procedures, including:
- Equality & Diversity Procedure
 - Equality & Diversity Strategy
 - Appointments Policy
 - Performance Appraisal and Staff Development Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Dignity at Work Policy
 - Grievance Policy
 - Training and Development Policy
 - Flexible Working Policy
 - Family Leave Policy
 - Leave of Absence Policy
 - Procurement Policy
 - Social Media Policy
 - Confidential Reporting - Whistle-blowing Policy

1.7 We are all different and unique but everyone who works for or volunteers for the organisation shares the same set of core values.

2.0 POPULATION:

2.1 For the purpose of this report the population figure used is that of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and was recorded in the 2011 census as 234,000.

2.2 Where there is statistical data that can be used to illustrate particular issues these will be highlighted

2.3 The Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) states that there are two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA), that feature in the top ten most deprived i.e. Tylorstown and Penywaun with Penrhiwceiber ranked 15th, having previously ranked 5th.

2.4 It is also a consideration that the RCT Single Integrated Plan (SIP) predicts that the overall population is likely to grow by 4% by 2023. It is however forecasted that there will be little increase in the 65s and under. We will ensure we have up to date and accurate information when available to be able to respond to the needs of the communities we work in.

3.0 LITERACY AND NUMERACY

3.1 WIMD records that more pupils in RCT are below average reading age than the Welsh average. Indeed the children in our area are ranked 4th, with higher percentages only in Merthyr, Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent.

3.2 The Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) records that there are similar rates for numeracy within RCT.

3.3 It should also be noted that there is a higher than average number of school leavers not in education, employment and training (NEETs) in RCT.

3.4 Our own experiences of working with tenants confirms that our tenant population feel that help and support to address these key skills is lacking within our communities, as is the need for further education and training.

4.0 DEALING WITH AN AGEING DEMOGRAPHIC

4.1 We have a significant stock of designated older persons property, including sheltered housing and flats. As the population of older people

risers we need to ensure we are able to respond by providing a service that responds to the need presenting.

- 4.2 It is accepted that many older tenants do not require any specialist provision but with being older it is a consequence that age related illness will become more prevalent.

5.0 EQUALITY ACT 2010 - PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

- 5.1 **Age:** The Act protects people of all ages. The age specific protections have not yet been fully implemented and age is still the only protected characteristic by which direct or indirect discrimination can be justified (if it can be argued that treating someone differently because of their age is meeting a legitimate aim).
- 5.2 **Disability:** The Act applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.
- 5.3 **Gender Reassignment:** The definition of gender reassignment has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.
- 5.4 **Pregnancy and Maternity (including breastfeeding mothers):** A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. Also, it is unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place.
- 5.5 **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.
- 5.6 **Race:** This includes colour, ethnic / national origin or nationality.
- 5.7 **Religion or belief:** The Act covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.
- 5.8 **Sex:** Previously referred to as gender. Applies to male or female.
- 5.9 **Sexual Orientation:** The Act protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.

6.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

- 6.1 We will apply our framework for EIAs for implementation or review of a service, policy or procedure.
- 6.2 The EIA will be considered by the Equality and Diversity Group before accompanying the Policy for consideration by the Board.

7.0 TAILORING OUR SERVICES: PROFILING

- 7.1 We will capture all relevant information to aid this approach and will clearly explain to our tenants and clients the reasons behind the collection of the data.
- 7.2 All staff involved in this aspect of work will be trained to ensure they have the confidence to carry out the task and ensure a consistency of approach.
- 7.3 Collecting the information is in some ways the easy part, it is the way in which we use it is the challenge. We must ensure that our systems highlight the different needs and requirements of our tenants and service users and this is in turn is embedded into working practices.

8.0 DEVELOPING NEW HOMES

- 8.1 We have a proven track record of responding to requests from the Local Authority for specific types of homes, particularly tenants or member of the tenant`s family with disabilities.
- 8.2 We are committed to continue to do so as we have gained considerable expertise in this area.
- 8.3 When we design new homes we will consider Equality and Diversity implications.

9.0 TRAINING:

- 9.1 Equality and Diversity will be a mandatory training requirement every three years, the specific course content will be agreed by the Board in conjunction with the Senior Management Team.
- 9.2 All new staff members undergo an extensive period of induction and our approach to equality is an essential part. The probationary period will specifically address the new employees adherence to the core values and principles of this strategy.
- 9.3 Board members also undergo extensive induction and this approach is also a key element of that process.

- 9.4 We will ensure all tenants involved in engagement activities understand the implications of this approach and their responsibilities within it.
- 9.5 Where a particular need is highlighted with an individual or group, arrangements will be made to address this as a priority.
- 9.6 All staff with line-management responsibilities will need to be skilled in supporting staff to address issues that present in matters of Equality and Diversity.

10.0 RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

- 10.1 We are committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive working environment.
- 10.2 We recognise a workplace where people can be themselves and are treated equally will encourage people to apply to and remain with us.
- 10.3 Staff involved in recruitment will be sufficiently trained in fair recruitment practices.
- 10.4 We have developed a range of policies which complement this strategy and ensure that the individual requirements of staff and Board members are considered.
- 10.5 On an annual basis collate information on pay and consider any issues relating to the gender pay-gap.
- 10.6 Our recruitment approach will be applied to staff and Board members.

11.0 MONITORING AND REPORTING:

- 11.1 Reports specifically relating to Equality and Diversity will be developed to allow for analysing performance in a number of service areas, which will include:
- Employment
 - Recruitment
 - Procurement
 - Lettings
 - Tenancy Ends
 - Repairs and Maintenance
 - Rent Arrears
 - Notice of Seeking Possession
 - Section 21 Notices
 - Evictions
 - Anti-Social Behaviour

- Complaints
- Physical Adaptation Grants
- Gender pay-gap

11.2 Reports will be presented to Board on an annual basis with additional reporting to the Governance Committee.

11.3 Our Annual Report will include details of the tenant population, staff and Board members.

12.0 COMMUNICATION

12.1 We will develop a Communication Plan which recognises:

- The way in which we will accommodate disabled applicants in the recruitment and other employment processes.
- The need for staff to be made aware and understand how initiatives to meet diverse needs are impacting on services.
- Promoting Campaigns which raise awareness of Equality and Diversity.
- The need for plain language in correspondence in whichever language or format we communicate
- National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) checklist for documents.
- Using the preferred method of communication of individuals.
- The information required for tenants to access support services.
- The need for high response rates across all characteristics.
- The variety of communication channels.
- The website is an important communication tool which must be accessible and up to date.
- Promoting of relevant policies and procedures to Board members, staff and tenants.

12.2 We take our responsibility to the Welsh Language seriously and will aspire to comply with all legislation.

12.2 Staff surveys will include questions relating to Equality and Diversity. The interpretation of results may require additional advice from specialist agencies.

13.0 AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

13.1 We will keep up to date with campaigns and other methods of raising awareness in the area. These may include religious festivals and events that address issues affecting those experiencing forms of discrimination.

13.2 We have committed to the Chartered Institute of Housing 10 by 20 Challenge and working towards this. The full details of this aspiration is included at Appendix I.

14.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STAFF GROUP

14.1 An internal staff group has been established to monitor the work of the organisation and to advise on issues of Equality and Diversity

14.2 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

14.3 A member will be identified with specific responsibilities for Championing Equality and Diversity.

15.0 TENANT INVOLVEMENT

15.1 There are several mechanisms for tenants to be involved and it our responsibility to ensure that those involved are fully aware of issues relating Equality and Diversity to allow them to fulfil their functions.

15.2 Where there is a constituted group e.g. Tenant Forum, the commitment to Equality and Diversity will be included in the constitution.

16.0 PROCUREMENT

16.1 We will include appropriate clauses relating to Equality and Diversity in tender documents.

16.2 Contractors will be required to sign the Code of Conduct which includes specific reference to our expectation of them in terms of Equality and Diversity.

16.3 Within the procurement process we will consider the benefits contracts will have to our communities (Community Benefit) and the wider context of supporting the `foundational economy` in the areas we work.

17.0 GOVERNANCE

17.1 A Board member will be identified as a Champion of Equality and Diversity.

17.2 The Governance Committee will receive reports and information to monitor our performance.

18.0 ANY CONCERNS?

18.1 Should anyone feel the strategy has been compromised or breached in any way, reference should be made to the steps to be taken in line with the Section 3 of the Group`s Equality Diversity Procedure

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING

10 BY 20 CAMPAIGN

1. Know the make-up of your communities and annually consider how you can improve the diversity of your board, leadership and staff teams.
2. Compile diversity-related data on the composition of your (1) board (2) executive team and (3) total workforce and publish it in an accessible format in your annual report.
3. Challenge all staff (and external agencies) responsible for recruitment to ensure that all shortlists include appropriate candidates from under-represented groups.
4. Ensure staff members involved in recruitment have completed mandatory training to ensure fair recruitment processes.
5. Set an aspirational target for board/committee recruitment from under-represented groups to ensure that your governance structure is representative of the wider communities you work in.
6. Have in place succession and talent management strategies which reflect the principles of inclusion and diversity, so that all staff can succeed and progress, if they have the right skills and values.
7. Identify and provide appropriate mentoring and coaching opportunities for staff and board members – within your own organisation and/or with external agencies.
8. Make diversity training mandatory for all staff and use your corporate communications and culture strategies to ensure diversity is embedded within the organisational values.
9. Champion the business case for a diverse workforce and leadership – encourage your colleagues, peers and partners to sign up to the challenges.
10. Sign up and work towards the CIH Charter for Equality and Diversity.

Appendix II

Action	Reference	Responsible Persons/Leads	Target Date	Progress/Completion
Produce Equality Impact Assessments when reviewing and implementing new services or policies	6.0	Service Director	Process underway	EIA`s carried out on some policies.
Tailoring our Services – Tenant Profiling to be completed on all new tenants	7.1	Housing Manager/Senior Engagement Officer		Completed
Profiling of all existing tenants	7.1	Housing Manager	Commence September 2019 with completion in 12 months	
Explore the capabilities of our software to capture profiling information	7.3	Infrastructure Manager	December 2019	

Design of homes will consider E&D.	8.3	Development Management/Housing Manager	At next sign-off of development proposal – EIA will be available for Board consideration	
Programme of E&D training to be programmed in for existing and new staff	9.0	Resources Manager	Identification- Dec 2019 in Appraisal processes. To be included in budget for 2020/21	
Programme of E&D training to be programmed in for existing and new Board members	9.0	Resources Manager	Identification in appraisal processes – Dec 2019 To be included in budget for 2020/21	
Train staff with line-management duties how to support the Group`s commitment to E&D	9.0	Resources Manager	Include in Training Plan and budget for 2020/21	
Training in fair recruitment practices be delivered to staff involve in appointments	9.0	Resources Manager	Identification through appraisal process. Include in training plan and budget for 2020/21	

Produce a Board report which highlights the Group's position in terms of the `gender-pay gap`	9.0	Chief Executive	Annually, with the first report being September 2020	
Produce reports on annual basis reports which allow for the review of performance in areas highlighted in Section 11 of the strategy.	11.1 and 11.2	Service Directors/Chief Executive	June 2020	
Annual Report includes details of tenant population, staff and Board members	11.3	Chief Executive	September 2020	
Embed all aspects of the Communication Plan (see Section 12 above)	12.1	OMT/SMT	September 2020	
Include E&D information in staff survey	12.2	Resources Manager	Next survey	
Identify campaigns we wish to participate	13.1	OMT/SMT	December 2019 for participation through 2020	
Comply with the 10 by 20 CIH commitment to E&D	13.2	SMT	December 2020	

Annually review the Terms and Conditions of the E&D staff group	14.2	Resources Manager	September 2020	
Identify E&D staff `champion`	14.3	Staff forum	September 2020	
Tenant Forum constitution to include commitment E&D	15.2	Senior Engagement Officer	Included in brief for Consultant who is reviewing involvement structures. – November 2020	
Statement to be included in tender documents to reflect our requirements of contractors in respect of E&D	16.1	Development Manager/Asset and Compliance Manager	October 2019	Included in bathroom contract
Code of Conduct for contractors to reflect our requirements in respect of E&D	16.2	Development Manager/Asset and Compliance Manager	October 2019	Drafted and ready for sign-off
Prior to the tendering of contracts consider the community benefits which we are looking to achieve.	16.3	SMT	Commencing with next contract.	
Identify E&D Board member `champion`	17.1	Resources Manager	Achieved	Completed June 2019
Develop reports for Governance Committee to allow scrutiny of performance	17.2	SMT	April 2020	