



Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is our single equality and diversity scheme, which outlines how we meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the aspirations of our Equality and Diversity Policy forming a gap analysis to enable the policy's ongoing implementation.
- 1.2 This single equality scheme covers our responsibilities in relation to recruitment and employment; access to services; resident involvement; harassment, hate crime and domestic violence; procurement; governance; complaints; and asset management.
- 1.3 We will prioritise our efforts within the context of the communities we serve whilst also fulfilling our obligations under the requirements of relevant statute and codes of practice designed to promote equality of opportunity, diversity of thought and background and inclusivity of all.

2. Equality Impact Assessments

- 2.1 In the formulation of new, or the amendment of existing, policies on governance, employment, provision and procurement of services and relationships with other organisations, the Association will aim to ensure that no individual or group is treated less favourably on the grounds of any protected characteristic. This is achieved by carrying out equality impact assessments.
- 2.2 Where an adverse effect is identified which cannot be justified objectively, we will consider alternative action in order to promote equality of opportunity more effectively or lessen the adverse impact. Any actions required to address issues identified during Equality Impact Assessments will be incorporated into the Association's Corporate Action Plan.

3. The Association's Context

- 3.1 The Association's stock is spread over the 7 local authority areas which comprise the Durham Coalfield. The Office for National Statistics Census 2011 for the areas in which we have the most stock indicates that the average population of these communities was 98.1% White and 1.9% other ethnic groups; 51.3% female; 24.8% aged over 65 years; and 29.1% disabled (current disability or work-limiting disability).
- 3.2 By comparison the current profile (as measured in November 2021)

of the Association's Board, staff and residents shows: -

Characteristic	Population	Board	Staff	Residents
Other ethnic	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Female	51.3%	44.4%	79.0%	56.6%
Non-heterosexual	2.2%	No data	0.0%	No data
Over 65 years	24.8%	0.0%	10.5%	89.1%
Disabled	29.1%	No data	No data	See (3.3) below

- 3.3 While the census data covers the population at large and looks at employment-limiting disabilities, as our residents and applicants are primarily over retirement age and facing the natural challenges of declining health, more detailed analysis of our residents indicates that our residents face the following issues:

Issue	Proportion of households affected
Hearing impairment	57%
Visual impairment	35%
Mental health issues	19%
Physical mobility issues	87%
Wheel chair use	21%
Support services	19%

- 3.4 These represent 1,110 households or 64% of those who responded to our survey, which indicates that some degree of disability and living with others in the home with a disability is the norm, rather than the exception amongst our residents.

- 3.5 Although the minority ethnic populations in the areas in which the Association operates are very small, we still have a role in promoting equality, tackling racism, and achieving good relations between people of different racial groups.

- 3.6 In addition to awareness of protected characteristics, the localities in which the Association operates tend to be areas of high deprivation due to the legacy of heavy industry (primarily coal, steel and shipbuilding) and its demise.

3.7 Local area population census data is as follows:

Parental Occupation at age 14	Proportion of households affected
Professional	34%
Intermediate	24%
Routine/manual	42%

Free school meals	Proportion of households affected
Eligible	15%
Not eligible	85%

School attendance at age 11-16	Proportion of households affected
Attended independent school	7.5%
Did not attend independent school	92.5%

3.8 The 2016 STAR survey indicates the following about our residents

Deprivation measure	Proportion of residents affected
In receipt of housing benefit	56%
Household income less than £15.6k	83%

4 Recruitment and Employment

- 4.1 The Association's commitment to equal access for all is clearly stated in our Recruitment and Selection policy. We aim to have a workforce where each employee feels respected and able to give their best.
- 4.2 The Association has adopted a range of flexible working and leave policies to assist staff in balancing the needs of work and home commitments. Full details are included in the Staff Terms and Conditions.
- 4.3 The Association currently employs 30 staff and has a Board of 9 voluntary Trustees. Any proportions therefore below 3.3% for staff and 11.1% for the Board represent less than a single individual employee or Board member. This makes proportionate target-setting with reference to the data at 3.2 above for ethnicity (non-white 1.9%) and sexual orientation (non-heterosexual 2.2%) statistically

problematical. Consequently, no targets are in place in these areas. However as and when individuals from minority groups are apply for employment or housing, they will nevertheless be treated with respect and understanding.

- 4.4 It is however possible to set targets for employment and Board membership for gender balance, disability and socio-economic factors.

Characteristic	Q4 2021 performance - staff	Q4 2021 performance - Board	2022/23 target staff	2022/23 target Board
Female	79.0%	44.4%	51.3%	44.4%

- 4.5 Once data has been collected on disability and social deprivation, appropriate targets for employment and Board membership will also be set in these areas for 2022/23.
- 4.6 The Association will value and respect the identities and cultures of all employees and, where practical, will endeavour to meet the needs of those employees who may have particular cultural and/or religious needs. This will include the provision of a prayer room, where possible.
- 4.7 The Association is committed to providing a workplace that is free from harassment, victimisation and discrimination by ensuring that all staff are fully aware of their rights, responsibilities and expectations with regard to their conduct and the principles of this policy. We aim to develop a workplace where harassment is known to be unacceptable, and individuals can feel confident enough to bring complaints without fearing prejudice.
- 4.8 The Association will ensure that employees are not subject to less favourable treatment due to their sexual orientation. Employees in same sex relationships will be treated equally and offered the same family-friendly policies as heterosexual couples.
- 4.9 The Association will: -
- Aim to eliminate unfair discrimination with regards to recruitment and selection procedures, employment, career development and training opportunities so that all employees are judged on merit and ability
 - Ensure that recruitment and employment policies and

procedures comply with national equality commission codes of practice

- Review the recruitment level of under-represented groups and take positive action to address any imbalance
- Endeavour, through appropriate training, to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions
- When recruiting staff, only request specific qualifications or experience where they are relevant to the job
- Adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach in the advertising of vacancies. Advertising will be carried out in such a way as to ensure the broadest range of applicants, and we will not confine our recruitment advertising to areas or media sources which provide only or mainly applicants of a particular group.
- Advertise all posts internally. All applicants who apply for jobs will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job
- Advertise all posts with specialist media and/or publications to encourage application from under-represented groups
- Carry out short listing and interviewing by more than one person
- Ensure that interview questions are related to the requirements of the job and are not of a discriminatory nature
- Give full and fair consideration to people with disabilities and interview any applicant with a disability who meets the essential criteria of the person specification for the post
- Make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled applicants to attend interviews
- Utilise and, where appropriate, retain registration and membership with positive action schemes
- Remove equal opportunities monitoring forms prior to short listing
- Value and respect the identities and cultures of our employees and encourage all employees to reach their full potential
- Ensure the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment; and act promptly in response to any complaints of such
- Make reasonable adjustments to provide a workplace that is accessible to disabled people and, where possible, retain in suitable employment employees who become disabled or ill
- Ensure that men and women are valued equally and that salaries, pensions and other financial rewards and benefits reflect parity and are free from any kind of bias

- Support employees undergoing gender reassignment through appropriate adjustments to the working environment and managerial support. The person will be addressed by, adopt the dress code and use the facilities of their acquired gender at a time agreed by the person and their manager
- Wherever possible, allow time away from work in order to pray or comply with other religious obligations
- Consider holiday requests in order to celebrate religious or belief festivals and ceremonies
- Provide training and guidance for employees to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.

5. Access to Services

- 5.1 The Association will ensure that in the provision of its services, no individual or group is disadvantaged in terms of selection for housing, quality of housing or the subsequent service they receive. The specific needs of minority groups will be taken into account in a manner that promotes equality and inclusiveness.
- 5.2 The Association will ensure that the lettings and other housing policies and procedures will not discriminate directly or indirectly in relation to the nine protected characteristics. All tenancies will be let in an open and accountable way that prevents discrimination and gives equal access to all groups of applicants. We will maintain effective monitoring and review systems to prevent discrimination.

Lettings	Performance Q3 2021/22	Target for 2022/23
Non-white	0.6%	1.0%

5.3 We will:-

- Offer a range of contact methods - letter, website, email, telephone (including text relay), text, face to face
- Survey all residents regarding their specific communication needs and use the IT system to 'flag' instant access to information for staff involved in service delivery
- Collect information on the profile of residents to help us to target information and services
- Ensure that the reception area to the office is fully accessible
- Make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure access for all service users

- Ensure that the needs of our diverse communities are identified and taken into account in the planning and delivery of housing services
 - Present written information in plain English
 - Use methods other than written documents to present information as appropriate
 - Offer information in accessible formats including community languages, large print, Braille and audio
 - Offer assistance to complete forms
 - Provide an accessible service by removing or altering physical barriers to access
 - Deliver services without discriminating against, stigmatising or patronising people. Every customer will be treated in a professional manner with courtesy and respect.
 - Offer the service of a translator or interpreter via "Language Line", as required.
 - Provide same sex interviewers on request
 - Ensure the availability of hearing loop systems in our reception area and a portable loop for interviews elsewhere
 - Monitor access to, and satisfaction with, services to ensure everyone is being treated fairly.
- 5.4 As at 31st March 2022, disability profile information had been collected from 88% of our residents. 240 households failed to return the data collection forms after 3 requests. This data will continue to be collected from new residents on allocation, and will be updated annually using our "yellow forms" in compliance with GDPR requirements for accuracy and retention.

6 Resident Involvement

- 6.1 Through our Resident Participation Strategy 2021-24 which was produced in consultation with our residents, the Association offers a range of consultation and involvement techniques to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to participate. We currently consult and involve residents through home visits, our website (www.damha.org.uk), The Banner newsletter, satisfaction surveys, residents' area meetings, questionnaires, focus groups, Residents' Representatives' Forum and the Scrutiny Panel. Board membership is also open to residents but there are not currently any residents on the Board of Trustees.
- 6.2 Feedback from residents is used to improve and shape services. The information is analysed to help ensure that services are being

provided in appropriate ways and to the equal satisfaction of all groups.

- 6.3 The Resident Participation Strategy 2021-24 includes an Action Plan which is attached at Appendix 2. Performance against this Action Plan will be reported via Scrutiny Panel to the Board.
- 6.4 The 2019 STAR survey indicated that 87.3% (2016: 78.7%) of the Association's residents were "Satisfied their views were taken into account".

7 Procurement Services

- 7.1 In the procurement of goods and services, the Association recognises its responsibility to ensure that there is no discrimination in the allocation of work and to promote equality issues.
- 7.2 We will: -
- Ensure that our procedures on selection of contractors, consultants and suppliers, and on contract compliance do not adversely affect B&ME and other minority contractors
 - Ensure that our contractors, consultants and suppliers demonstrate a commitment to equality and diversity in both the provision of services and their employment practices. These will be used as criteria for award of contracts or work and as a condition for doing business
 - Remove contractors, consultants and suppliers from our Approved List if they fail to comply with these requirements and/or relevant equality legislation.
- 7.3 Complaints about our contractors, consultants and suppliers will be closely monitored. The Association will expect such organisations to take prompt and appropriate action against any member of their own workforce found to be in breach of equality and diversity requirements.

8 Governance

- 8.1 The Association's Board of Trustees will: -
- Aim to have a composition with a range of backgrounds, skills, experience and appropriate diversity
 - Have a recruitment policy for appointment to the Board that is fair, transparent and conforms to equality principles, including positive action where there is under- representation

- Include a positive statement regarding under-representation of minority groups on advertisements for Board members
 - Advertise vacancies in such a way as to ensure the broadest range of applicants; and will not confine recruitment advertising to areas or media sources which provide only or mainly applicants of a particular group
 - Have training and support programmes for new and existing Board members to assist them in leading the promotion of equality and diversity
 - Ensure that all working practices and business activities reflect the principles of equality and diversity.
- 8.2 The Board will maintain an up-to-date awareness of developments in equality and diversity issues to ensure actions and decisions are well informed.
- 8.3 All reports to the Board will include consideration of any equality and diversity implications.

9 Complaints

- 9.1 The Association is committed to providing a quality service, which meets the needs of our customers. However, sometimes things go wrong and when this happens, we need to know about it to help us to improve our service. We are committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and reasonably and aim to resolve complaints effectively and as quickly as possible.
- 9.2 The Association will ensure that our complaints procedure is accessible to all groups. Complaints will be monitored by ethnicity, gender and disability to ensure that these minority groups are not being treated unfairly.
- 9.3 The Association will: -
- Provide each resident with information about our complaints policy and procedure
 - Ensure that staff work within the agreed time-scales of the complaints procedure
 - Treat all complaints seriously and confidentially
 - Accept complaints made verbally or in writing from the complainant or someone acting on their behalf
 - Investigate every complaint (anonymous complaints will be investigated to determine whether the complaint is justified and should be investigated further)

- Keep complainants informed of progress and the outcome of any investigations
- Try to resolve the complaint at the initial point of contact with the customer or at the earliest possible stage of the complaints procedure
- Give careful consideration to complaints from minority groups to ensure that our policies and practices do not disadvantage or discriminate against them
- Consider claims for compensation from complainants who have suffered financial loss
- Co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Ombudsman.

10 Asset Management

10.1 The Association will be sensitive to the needs of all communities. We will work in liaison with local authorities to ensure that new developments promote balanced and sustainable communities and that the location and design of homes will not adversely affect or discriminate against, directly or indirectly, the needs of any particular community or group.

10.2 The Association's Disabled Adaptations policy aims to provide an individualised solution to the problems of a person experiencing a disabling environment, by providing adaptations that are delivered sensitively, fit for the purpose identified by the disabled person and within a specified time scale.

10.3 The Association will: -

- Have an annual budget for funding adaptations and will actively seek partnership agreements with Local Authorities for joint funding
- Fit minor adaptations (grab rails and lever taps) during the refurbishment of sheltered accommodation
- Provide assisted bathing facilities within sheltered schemes wherever possible
- When carrying out programmed improvement works and where the construction and design of the building allows, offer a 'wet floor' shower facility instead of an over bath shower. The Association will also endeavour, wherever possible, to use a design which facilitates the installation of a bath on change of tenancy
- Seek to match adapted properties to the needs of applicants
- Maintain any existing adaptation or equipment (provided with our agreement) that is still needed to meet the needs of the disabled person for whom it was provided

- Remove on request equipment, such as stair lifts, that are no longer needed due to bereavement or a permanent change in the household
- Ensure that communal areas are made accessible, where reasonable.

11 Training

- 11.1 All employees, Board members, Residents' Representatives, members of the Scrutiny Panel and Focus Groups will receive training that relates to their role and responsibilities, helps them to recognise the diverse needs of people and ensures that they understand and implement all aspects of the Association's Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

12 Monitoring

- 12.1 The Equalities Action Plan will be included in the Association's Corporate Action Plan.

13 Review

- 13.1 This strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually, in consultation with residents.

Appendix 1 - Equalities Action Plan for 2022/23

No.	Recommendation	Lead	Target date
1	Provide disability awareness training for all staff and Scrutiny panel.	HRM	December 2022
2	Continue to analyse the results of customer satisfaction surveys to identify any equality related reasons for dissatisfaction	OM	December 2022
3	Collate data on disability and social disadvantage amongst the Board, staff and residents following STAR survey to be conducted in July/August 2022	OM(residents) HRM(staff) EO(Board)	November 2022
4	Set staffing and Board targets in relation to disability and social disadvantage	CEO	November 2022
EO – Executive Officer HRM – Human Resources Manager OM – Operations Manager CEO – Chief Executive			

Appendix 2 - Resident Participation Strategy 2021-22

No.	Recommendation	Lead	Narrative	Target completion date	Actual completion date	Comments
1	Channels of contact	OD	Review the appropriateness of ways in which residents can contact the Association to include 'self-service' option via the website	September 2023		To be carried out through surveys; focus group and residents' forum
2	Local Offers	OD	These were last reviewed in 2018 and require clarification that they are still relative and fit for purpose	October 2021		Consultation carried out with Focus Group in August 2021
3	Feedback	OM	Recommendation to publicize qualitative information when reporting on performance information	September 2022		Consultation with Scrutiny Panel on information presentation for next Annual Report
4	Survey Results	OM	Investigate possible changes to surveys to promote service improvements	December 2021		Research other providers' surveys
5	Gardening Club	OD	To include Gardening Club members in the tendering process of the Landscape Maintenance Contract	January 2023		Current contract awarded until March 2023 (Covid-19 restrictions prevented participation on this occasion)
6	Scrutiny Panel	OD	i) To amend performance data to include trend data; ii) improve quality of minutes of meetings to enable more detail and iii) investigate if the governance and scrutiny processes are fit for purpose	i) January 2022 ii) November 2021 iii) September 2022		i) Timescales to allow next quarter end info ii) Implementation at next Scrutiny Panel iii) Consultation with Scrutiny Panel & Focus Group
7	Equality & Diversity Policy	OD	The implementation of a stand-alone Equality and Diversity Policy	April 2022		Consultation with Focus Group
8	Vulnerability Data	OM	Ensure that vulnerability data / support requirements for customers is collected and acted upon	June 2022		Resident Information forms to be reviewed
OD - Operations Director		OM - Operations Manager				