

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

1. Commitment

The Association recognises that there is significant evidence of continuing inequality, discrimination and disadvantage affecting women throughout the UK. In its roles as a service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services, the Association has a responsibility to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. The Association will strive to create an environment that is free from harassment, sexist language and behaviour.

The Association will also ensure that transgender/transsexual employees and residents are not discriminated against, in relation to employment or service provision, and will seek to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

2. The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1976 by placing a positive duty on all public bodies to –

- Eliminate unlawful sexual discrimination and harassment, including discrimination in pay; and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

The duty places the responsibility on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat men and women fairly.

3. Implementation

3.1 Service Delivery

The Association will monitor the take up of services and satisfaction levels by gender. This information will be used to ensure that our services are being delivered fairly and effectively and to identify appropriate actions necessary to address any inequalities that may be highlighted.

3.2 Employment

The Association has a duty as an employer to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity in employment. A fundamental part of this process involves reporting on the composition of our workforce, including by gender. The current staff profile shows that 72% are female and 100% of the senior management team are female.

The Association aims to ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, appraisal, training, promotion, redeployment, redundancy and retirement processes.

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

3.2 Employment

The Association will: -

- 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 form of bias.
- Produce a summary of applicants for all posts by gender and maintain records in recruitment, employment and training to identify areas of inequality.
- Analyse the profile of staffing by gender and identify appropriate actions to address any gender inequalities
- Remove equal opportunities information prior to short-listing applicants for interviews
- Provide a wide range of family-friendly policies, including flexible working, maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, adoption leave, and special (compassionate) leave
- Enforce codes of conduct and harassment policies, to ensure that the workplace is free from harassment

3.3 Governance

The current profile of the Association's Board shows that 30% are female. The Association will analyse this profile and identify appropriate actions to address any gender inequalities.

3.4 Harassment

The Association's Harassment policy and Domestic Violence policy states that any form of harassment, including that on the grounds of gender, will not be tolerated. The Association will: -

- Publicise these policies,
- Provide training for front-line staff on identifying and dealing with harassment, including domestic violence
- Set and monitor targets for the level of satisfaction that victims of harassment and domestic violence have with the Association's response

3.5 Resident Involvement

The Association will collect and analyse information on the gender of those residents involved in 'Resident Involvement' forums and set targets to ensure that the profile of these groups reflects the gender profile of our current residents

We will also analyse the STATUS (Satisfaction) survey by gender and recommend actions to address any inequalities identified.

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME

3.6 Procurement

The Association will require contractors, consultants and suppliers to provide evidence of their commitment to gender equality or to adopt the principles of the Association's Equality and Diversity policy.

4. Training

All staff will receive equality and diversity training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

5. Equality Impact Assessments

The Association will carry out equality impact assessments as a way of identifying whether an existing or proposed policy or service affects, or is likely to affect, different equality groups.

Where an adverse affect is identified that cannot be justified objectively, alternative actions will be considered in order to promote equality of opportunity more effectively or to lessen the adverse impact.

6. Equalities Action Plan

The Gender Equalities Scheme is supported by the Equalities Action Plan, which includes action points for all strands of equality. The rationale for taking this approach is to minimise duplication and overlap between equality documents and provide a single focus for equalities.

Performance against specific targets will be monitored bi-annually by the Board and the plan will be reviewed annually in consultation with staff and residents.

7. Responsibility

The Chief Executive and Senior Management team are responsible for the effective implementation of this scheme

8. Monitoring

Progress will be monitored against the Equalities Action Plan and will be reported bi-annually to the Board. The results will be publicised to residents.

9. Review

The Gender Equalities Scheme will be reviewed annually in consultation with residents and staff.

March 2009