

Single Equality Scheme 2009/12



Foreword from the Board & Executive Champion

Parkway Green Housing Trust is a social landlord managing around 6000 homes in the areas of Baguley, Royal Oak, Brooklands, Newall Green, Northenden and Northern Moor in West Wythenshawe.

The Trust recognises that they have a responsibility to create and build an environment in which all people are equally valued and treated with respect. In order to achieve this, the Trust has a range of policies, procedures and practices designed to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

The Trust seeks to promote opportunity for all in terms of employment, learning and development, and involvement in the local community, without discrimination on grounds of disability, race, gender, sexuality, religion/faith, age and socio economic status, maternity & pregnancy, marriage & civil partnerships.. We have a newly developed Single Equality Scheme which dictates the Trust's strategy, policy, Disability, Race and Gender Schemes with an extensive action plan which will be implemented by August 2010. This scheme was approved by our Board in 2009.

Our single equality scheme sets out Parkway Green's company priorities and commitments and explains how we will meet our legal and ethical duties. It outlines:

- Our commitment to race, gender, disabilities equalities
- What actions we already take towards this goal
- What actions we will take over the next year

The scheme has been developed with the involvement of our 'Resident Approval Panel' who represents and supports customers from BME, disability, gender/transgender groups. The scheme is an integral part of how the company will promote equality and diversity opportunities through the delivery of its services and through the employment of its people. Our aim is to make equality and diversity a integral part of the way we work. We have a role as a service provider, employer and purchaser of goods and services to work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. This scheme will help meet our vision of "putting tenants at the heart of everything we do".

This scheme includes an action plan, which will help us to deliver better outcomes for equality and diversity. We will promote equality and share best practice with our partners. We will consult residents for their opinions and experiences which can help shape our policies and the way we deliver services. We will monitor our services so that we can be sure that we are meeting all of our



Bernard Caine
Chair
Equality & Diversity
Group



Wyn Casey
Board Champion



Ian Gregg
Executive Champion

Specific duties under the ' Equality Bill' require Housing Trusts such as ours to:

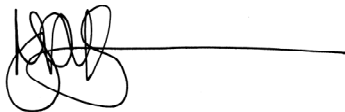
- provide a report in line with the Single Equality Duty
- ensure no discrimination is tolerated around the nine protected characteristics
- gather information on how their business affects ethnic groups;
- consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders;
- assess the different impact of policies and practices on ethnic groups, and use this information to inform how they change these policies and practices;
- identify priorities and set race, gender and disability equality objectives;
- Prevention of dual discrimination
- A clear law for women breast-feeding babies
- In the procurement of goods
- Equal pay and the sharing of salary bands
- Additional powers for employment tribunals

When carrying out the functions, the Trust will ensure it complies with the general duty as stated above. Functions will include policy-making, service provision, employment matters, statutory discretion and decision making.

Having a good understanding of the diversity of customers is crucial in developing high quality services to meet current and future need. We will promote efficiency by ensuring resources are targeted appropriately. We will also ensure that we recruit and retain best employees from the largest pool of applicants. Once employees come to work for the Trust they can feel included and comfortable and concentrate on their work free from negative influences knowing they are valued for whom they are and the skills they can bring to the post.

There is specific legislation and regulation to prevent and stop discrimination and encourage Housing Associations to promote equality. Being a fair and accessible employer and provider of services will help build and protect Parkway Green's reputation.

Nigel Wilson
Chief Executive



Our Strategy

Introduction

This document sets out the Boards Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2009, and incorporates our Equality and Diversity policy. This strategy covers all of the relevant nine protected equality & diversity characteristics and ensures that we are meeting our legal obligations. It will enable the Board to ensure the delivery of our equality and diversity work program in a planned and sustained way.

The strategy is part of Parkway Green Housing Trust's on-going commitment to equality and diversity. Equality is part of our core values as an organisation, and we are working towards achieving equality of opportunity for all our employees and customers. We have a key role in promoting equality and diversity amongst our stakeholders, customers and employees.

We provide services to some of the most disadvantaged sections of the community. As an organisation, we can make a significant contribution to reducing the discriminations that people may experience by making our organisation and services more responsive and accessible to communities and individual needs.

Parkway Green has made visible progress towards embedding equality and diversity into all our policies and practices to ensure that we achieve success. We recognise that we still have work to be done, and this strategy will enable us to work within a coherent framework and action plan.

Parkway Green acknowledges the 'business case' in achieving equality and diversity. To be a successful business, we need to understand the needs of all of our customers and potential customers, and reflect these needs in the way we deliver our services. In addition to fulfilling our statutory and regulatory responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity in all our activities, we are committed to maintaining an organisational ethos and culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution each individual can make to our work.

Consultation

We are committed to working with all of Parkway Green's key stakeholders to ensure that our strategy and action plan are meeting their needs. We have consulted our Board, staff, Tenants Approval Panel, tenants groups and the staff trade union forum on the policy, action plan and targets, incorporating all relevant stakeholder feedback into the document.

Governance responsibilities

The Trust is governed by a Management Board, which is made up of fifteen volunteers. The Board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation, and responsible for ensuring that we meet our aims and objectives. The Board acknowledges and accepts that it has a corporate responsibility to ensure the aspirations of this scheme are implemented and that equality and diversity is embedded across the organisation as a whole.

The Board has responsibility for ensuring legal compliance as well as providing strategic



support for the organisation in fulfilling our equality and diversity aspirations. We will also endeavour to ensure that Board members are updated about all relevant emerging legislation and policies in order that they can fulfil their role effectively.

In 2008 we established an Equality and Diversity Champions Group (**terms of reference see appendix 2**). The Group membership comprises of a Board Equality Champion, Executive Champion and staff. It is the responsibility of this group to lead and advise Parkway Green on all matters relevant to equality and diversity. Minutes from this group will go to the Board for noting, as directed by the chair of the group and Board Champion.

Performance Management

This strategy incorporates our 2009 action plan and performance targets. The Trust's Board on a quarterly basis will formerly review progress and achievement against the targets.

The Executive Champion and Assistant Director of Resources will be responsible for ensuring that the Board receives regular updates about our equality and diversity achievements.

Strategic Context

Parkway Green's Single Equality Scheme will assist in achieving our overall vision, which is set out in our Strategic Plan 2008-2013," We will embrace the diversity of our surroundings ensuring that we fully understand the needs of our community, staff and stakeholders to ensure that the service and products we offer are what they require".

Community Cohesion

The concept of community cohesion emerged in 2001, it followed the disturbances in Burnley, Oldham and Bradford. A cause of disturbance is believed to be a lack of interaction between individuals of different cultural, religious and racial backgrounds.

The Home Office defines a cohesive community as one where there is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities. The diversity of peoples backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued. Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools within neighbourhoods.

The factors that affect community cohesion are:

- Equal of opportunity
- Education and Training
- Employment
- Financial issues
- Social issues (Housing)
- Health issues
- Facilities (amenities)
- Integration and separatism



Parkway Green demonstrates a strong commitment to making a wider positive long term impact within our area of operation than purely the improvement of transferred housing stock. We work closely with the local authority's regeneration team and play an active part in the steering group for the development of the West Wythenshawe local plan. We attend the Wythenshawe Refugee Integration Forum` meetings.

We have developed partners with:

- Wfm
- Libraries
- Surestart
- Barnados
- Age Concern
- Manchester College
- Healthy Living network
- CAB
- GM police
- Childrens services
- Willow Park
- Bolton Race Equality Council
- Manchester Community Health Team
- NHS / Rethink
- New Start Trust
- MCC University

We also chair Wythenshawe Community Cohesion Working Group to raise awareness and promote cultural tolerance & local services that would be of benefit to diverse ethnic groups. PGHT are also represented at events arranged by MARIM for the Refugee week every year. We have developed a community involvement strategy which will aim to offer learning and job opportunities for local schools. The board approved a financial inclusion strategy in 2007 and was successful in a joint bid with Willow Park Housing Trust to obtain government funding for the appointment of a financial inclusion manager.

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

We value the diversity of all communities and want our services, facilities and resources to be fully accessible by everyone. Equality is a common standard of fairness that we seek to achieve, and our focus on diversity recognises that we understand and respect the diverse needs of our customers.

We also recognise that our ability to meet these diverse needs is vastly improved by having a workforce, which generally reflects the diverse communities we serve and has the skills and understanding to achieve our objectives.



Therefore, we have made a commitment to be an organisation that:

- Strives to achieve diversity in all its activities;
- Work with others to eliminate discrimination and disadvantage;
- Aims to surpass all statutory and regulatory goals set for the Association;
- Has a membership that reflects the communities in which we serve;
- Provides a variety of innovative methods to hear the views our residents and the communities in which they reside and actively involve them in the development of services that recognise and value diversity;
- Pro-actively consults to ensure the services that we provide are responsive and reflect the diversity of needs;
- Provides all employees and Board members of the Trust with the training and development they need to enable them to reach their full potential;
- Maintains a supportive environment where all employees are able to work free from any form of disadvantage or discrimination;
- Enables others to embrace equality and diversity;
- Ensures our diversity values apply to external consultants, contractors and suppliers;
- Understands that everybody (residents, Board members, partners and other stakeholders) has an important part to play in making all of the above happen;
- Regularly review our actions and practices.

Our Policy

Equality of Access and Opportunity in Employment and Services

The Trust acknowledges that all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is damaging to the individual and to the society as a whole. As an employer and provider of social housing, we are committed to taking positive steps to tackle discrimination and promote good relations and equality of opportunity.

We are committed to ensuring equality of access and opportunity in all aspects of our work, and that equality and diversity is embedded into all our policies and practices. We will strive to remove any barriers to inclusion and participation. We will actively seek to ensure that our governing body, employees, customers and others with whom we have a direct influence receive equal treatment regardless of race, ethnic origin, disability, gender, sexuality, age, sexual orientation, religion and socio economic status. In addition, we will ensure that any other potentially disadvantaged groups, which may cause a person or group to be treated with injustice, will be treated fairly.

Services

We will regularly review our services and related policies to ensure that they give equal access to all members of the community. To ensure all our customers are able to access all our services we have developed 'Tailor Made Services' Policy. This will empower staff to amend or enhance services to reflect the needs of individual customers. We use equality impact assessments to measure the effectiveness and appropriateness of all our policies, services and functions. These are carried out when we introduce any new major policy or service, and have been carried out on all existing services. They are regularly monitored and reviewed. We will work with customers and



tenant groups to ensure that all applicants for housing are treated equally and fairly and are free to choose which area / scheme they wish to apply for or transfer to. All applications received will be assessed on fair and equitable objective criteria in accordance with a robust allocation policy.

Where consultants, contractors, partners, suppliers and others are to be employed by the Trust, we will ensure that they are aware that this statement also binds them while by making this part of their relationship with us.

Employment

At the Trust, we will not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against the needs of any particular individual, community or group. We will continually review the Trust's recruitment and selection policy / procedure to ensure that individuals are selected or promoted on the basis of their merits and abilities appropriate to the job. We will provide all employees with equality of opportunity and encouragement to progress and develop within the organisation.

Responsibilities of Employees

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is put into practice. We expect a personal commitment from everyone in making it effective and in setting an exemplary standard for others to follow.

The Trust's Values and Vision, as outlined in our document "Growing with You", are underpinned by behaviours that we expect employees to adhere to in order to deliver. Valuing diversity and giving customers a constantly excellent service are key foundations upon which we wish to drive our community business forward.

Employees have a duty and responsibility to:

- Make sure that they understand the values and benefits of equality and diversity
- Familiarise themselves with this policy, follow it and ensure that any employee, for whom they are responsible, do so as well;
- Respect all individuals and communities that we serve, and be inclusive and welcoming;
- Be sensitive to culture and equality needs in how we communicate and consult with our residents;
- Draw to the attention of their Line Manager any instances of apparent discrimination or any perceived problem in relation to employment or to the provision of services.

Managers have the responsibility of ensuring that the scheme is adhered, and its aims and aspirations are embedded throughout the organisation. Managers will be responsible for regularly identifying any individual and / or team performance, development or training issues through their use of the Trust's performance management system.

Action Planning and Setting Performance Standards

The Trust has produced a single equality scheme which incorporates the equality &



diversity action plan. The Scheme will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Equality & Diversity Champions Group with half yearly reports on progress to Board.

A copy of our 2009/10 action plan is attached as **Appendix 1** and our performance targets are listed below. The terms

Performance Targets

- To strive to achieve a BME workforce and Board representation at 8%
- To strive to achieve a disabled workforce and Board representation at 3%
- To strive to achieve Board female representation of 50%

Regulatory Framework and Key Statutory Legislation

Race Equality Code of Conduct

Published by the Race and Housing Enquiry, the Code develops the ideas set out in Race and Housing Enquiry Challenge Report and reflects the approach stated by the Housing Corporation in its new regulatory framework.

TSA

We will ensure that the Trust is compliant with the TSA's new regulatory framework for social housing in England.

Consultation, Monitoring and Review

Our policy has been consulted on with the Tenants and Resident Committee, Equality and Diversity Champions Group, Employee Liaison Group, the Trade Unions and the Executive Management Team..

The Assistant Director of Resources will monitor the progress of the scheme and action plan. The Equality and Diversity Champions Group will monitor equality and diversity at an organisation-wide level including the further development of policy, strategy, actions and the effectiveness of our internal procedures and systems.

Key Legislation

Equality Act 2010

This new act will tell public bodies what they need to do to make things fairer and more equal in the services they supply to customers and staff.

The act will make public bodies think about how they can do things in a fairer and more equal way. This act will also introduce the new equality duty which will be fully implemented by April 2011. This duty will require all public bodies to be open and transparent with regards to their workforce.

Equal Pay Act 1970

Made it unlawful to pay men and women differently for the same or like work or on work rated as equivalent. An equality clause is placed in a woman's employment contract so



that their contractual conditions are no less favourable than those a man who is engaged on like work or on work rated as equivalent

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Made it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of sex or marital status in the provision of employment, goods and services.

Made it unlawful to victimise a person for being involved in a sex discrimination case.

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was set up under the Act with power to issue codes of practice and monitor its implementation.

Race Relations Act 1976

Made it unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin in the provision of employment, goods and services.

Made it unlawful to victimise a person for being involved in a sex discrimination case.

It set up the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) whose duties are very similar to the EOC but in relation to race.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Made it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability (i.e. a person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out day-to-day activities).

Introduced a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to physical features or other arrangements that would place the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage.

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

If there is intention, behaviour that has the effect of causing harassment alarm or distress, including within the workplace, is a criminal offence under this act. This became known as the 'Stalking Act'.

The Human Rights Act 1998

This came into force in 2000 and applies to all public bodies, it will have an equalities impact under several of the articles. Article 14 specifically prohibits discrimination of any kind.



The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999 amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975

Prohibits direct discrimination in employment on the grounds that a person intends to/is currently/has undergone gender reassignment.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000

Made race discrimination unlawful in public authority functions not previously covered by the 1976 Act.

"Public authority" has been defined widely for this purpose. This means that law enforcement, whether by the police, local authorities or tax inspectors, are for the first time subject to race discrimination laws

Certain public appointments, and the termination and the terms and conditions of public appointments, are also subject for the first time to race discrimination laws - as is the implementation of Government policies and services across the board.

The Act also places a general duty on public authorities to work towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Age of Consent for Gay Men 2001

This was lowered to 16. However the "abuse of trust" law is attached to this measure. This criminalises any person who has sexual relations with someone they have a professional responsible relationship with.

Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

These regulations outlaw discrimination in employment and vocational training on the grounds of sexual orientation and religion or belief respectively.

Direct discrimination - treating people less favourably than others on grounds of sexual orientation or religion or belief;

Indirect discrimination - applying a provision, criterion or practice which disadvantages people of a particular sexual orientation or religion or belief and which is not justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim;

Harassment - unwanted conduct that violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;

Victimisation - treating people less favourably because of something they have done under or in connection with the regulations (e.g. made a formal complaint of discrimination or given evidence in a tribunal case).

Disability Discrimination Act 1995: extended in 2004, whereby service providers have a statutory obligation to take reasonable steps to remove physical barriers to disabled people or to provide services by other means.

Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (mainly to be implemented by Dec 2006)

This Act makes it unlawful for a public authority to discriminate against a disabled person when exercising its functions.

It requires public authorities to:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against and the harassment of disabled persons.
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons



- Tackle institutional discrimination through a duty to promote disability equality for the public sector.

Civil Partnership Act 2005

This Act entitles “same sex” couples to the same employment benefits as married employees and means they can make a legal commitment by forming a civil partnership.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 1st. October 2006

These regulations:

- Set a minimum default retirement age of 65 years.
- Ban direct and indirect age discrimination in recruitment, promotion and training in the work place.
- Extend Unfair dismissal and statutory redundancy rights to people who are 65 and over (unless they have reached the employers’ retirement age of 65 or over).

Place a number of duties on employers – including the need to:

- Consider an employee’s request to continue working beyond retirement.
- Give written notice to employees at least 6 months in advance of their intended retirement date.

Housing Act 2004 Gypsies and Travellers

This Act created a duty under the Race Relations Act to promote good community relations in regard to providing accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers.

Local authorities are required to include Gypsies and Travellers in the Accommodation Needs Assessment process, and to have a strategy in place which sets out how any identified need will be met, as part of their wider housing strategies.

The Gender Equality Duty

The **Equality Act 2010** is an amendment to the **Equality Act 2006** and **Sex Discrimination Act 1975**. The **Gender Equality Duty** came into force in April 2007. As a result, all public authorities must demonstrate that they are promoting equality for women and men and are eliminating sexual discrimination and harassment. The specific duties, in brief, are:

- **To prepare and publish a gender equality scheme**, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives.
- In formulating its overall objectives, **to consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap.**
- **To gather and use information** on how the public authority's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- **To consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others, including trade unions) and take account of relevant information** in order to determine its gender equality objectives.
- **To assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices** on gender equality.
- **To implement the actions set out in its scheme** within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so.



To report against the scheme every year and **review** the scheme at least every three years.

As explained in the main report, the TSA has made it a regular requirement for registered housing associations to comply with this duty.

Equalities Act: (2010)

The key features of this legislation are:

Part 1 - **establishes the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)** and sets out its duties, general powers and enforcement powers and the introduction of the new 'Single Equality Duty' and the nine protected characteristics.

Work & Families Act 2006: April 2007

This Act:

- Extends statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance and statutory adoption pay from 6 to 9 months;
- Creates a power to introduce new paternity leave for fathers, enabling them to benefit from leave and statutory pay if the mother returns to work before the end of her maternity leave period;
- Introduces 'keeping in touch' days, whereby women on maternity leave and staff on adoptive leave can, by agreement with their employer, return to work for a few days during their leave;
- Extends the period of notice for return from maternity leave to two months, enabling employers and employees to plan more effectively for return to work;
- Extends the right to request flexible working to carers



Introduction to' Parkway Green's' Single Equality Scheme

Mission Statement

We aim to provide excellent and efficient service working in partnerships with residents and the wider local community to create homes and neighbourhoods that meet the aspirations of the people of Wythenshawe.

Vision and Values

To be a world class community business, creating partnerships to deliver:

- Quality homes and housing services
- Safer neighbourhoods
- A brighter future

To be sure that we will:

- put tenants at the heart of everything we do
- value and develop our colleagues and our business
- be open, honest and transparent

What is Equality and Diversity about?

Equality is about making sure people are treated fairly and given fair chances. Equality is not about treating everyone in the same way, but it recognizes that their needs need to be met in different ways.

Equality focuses on those areas covered by the law, namely the key areas of gender, religion, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio economic status. In addition to the legislation which seeks to prevent discrimination in all these areas, we have a public duty to promote equality and remove discrimination in race, gender and disability schemes.

People must not be unfairly discriminated against because of these factors and we must all contribute to creating a positive workplace and environment where discriminatory practices and discrimination no longer happens.

Diversity is about valuing individual difference. So 'diversity' is much more than just a new word for equality. A diversity approach aims to recognise, value and manage difference to enable all to contribute and realise their full potential. Diversity challenges us to recognise and value all sorts of differences in order to make our communities a better place to live and Parkway Green a better place to work.



Our Single Equality Scheme

The Single Equality Scheme (SES) describes both the commitment and how Parkway Green intends to meet the duties placed on it by equality and human rights legislation. The SES is relevant to all the functions and operations across Parkway Green. The SES sets out the Trust's public commitment and plan for action across the nine protected characteristics of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. This scheme will cover the period 2009 – 2012 and is aligned with the Parkway Green's Strategic Plan.

Equality and Diversity in housing

There are challenges for the housing sector as a whole in meeting its equality and diversity-related duties around the nine protected characteristics

Gender

- Focus on removing barriers and setting targets for achieving equality in representation in management and governance structures.
- Ensure that adequate provision is made for the victims of domestic violence. This includes advice and support that recognises the particular barriers to communication with the victims of domestic violence.

Race

- Focus on understanding the communities that we serve, working in a range of partnerships to ensure appropriate service delivery.
- Focus on meeting the needs of ever more diverse black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, particularly hidden or emerging migrant communities where this is appropriate.
- Increased emphasis on resident involvement and consultation to assist in understanding the needs of local communities.

Disability

- Focus on promoting attitudes towards people with disabilities, encouraging participation by people with disabilities.
- Ensure that all services and documentation are accessible to people with a disability, including physical access where appropriate.
- Maintain an accurate register of adapted properties to inform allocation decisions and promote the best possible use of resources.
- Focus on ensuring staff understands the support needs for a variety of impairments in order to deliver effective services.

Age

- Avoid perpetuating stereotypes of people based on age.
- Validate satisfaction levels alongside performance indicators such as quality of home and service standards.
- Ensure services are not being unfairly allocated on the basis of age



Sexual orientation

- Ensure that our all policies recognise the rights of same- sex partner relationships, such as equality in tenure rights.
- Adopt procedures that ensure a rapid and comprehensive response to allegations of harassment. Options should be available for the victims of harassment on the grounds of sexuality.

Religion and belief

- Consider how we can work with local religious agencies and other community organisations to promote understanding and mutual respect between religious groups.
- Adopt procedures that ensure a rapid and comprehensive response to allegations of harassment on the basis of religious belief.
- Provide guidance and information to staff to ensure that they are aware of any sensitivities that may arise and to give a better understanding of individuals and the communities they serve, e.g. avoidance of particular days of religious significance when calling meetings, carrying out works in residents homes and ensuring that employee dress codes and dietary provisions are sensitive to individual and group customs.

Pregnancy & Maternity

- The Trust will ensure that neither customer nor colleagues will be discriminated or treated less favourably on grounds of pregnancy, birth and breast feeding.

Marriage & Civil Partnership

- A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner and therefore the Trust will not discriminate or treat customers or colleagues any less favourably on these grounds.



Tailor making our services for individual customers needs.



Employment

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

The trust will:

- Ensure that women and men are valued equally and that salaries, pensions and other financial rewards and benefits reflect parity and are free from any form of bias;
- Continually review the recruitment and selection policy / procedure to ensure that individuals are selected or promoted on the basis of their merits and abilities appropriate to the job;
- Maintain records in recruitment, employment and training to identify areas of inequality;
- Provide all employees with equality of opportunity and encouragement to progress and develop within the organisation;
- Analyse the profile of staffing by gender, disability, race and identify appropriate actions to address any inequalities;
- Ensure equal opportunities information is detached 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 HR policies to ensure that the workplace is free from unfair treatment;
- Ensure all staff receives equality and diversity training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure there is no direct or indirect discrimination against the needs of any particular individuals, community or groups.
- Publicise these policies;
- Provide training to front-line staff on identifying and dealing with harassment, including domestic violence;
- Set and monitor targets for the level of satisfaction that victims of domestic violence has with the Trust's response.

Service Provision

We will work in partnership with residents to ensure that our services are barrier free. The Trust will also monitor the take up of services and satisfaction by each diversity strand wherever possible. This information together with the feedback from residents will be used to ensure that our services are being delivered fairly and effectively, and to identify appropriate action necessary to address any inequalities that may be highlighted.



Domestic Violence

The Trust has developed a violence policy for its customers, which states that any form of abuse / aggression, including that on the grounds of gender / sexual orientation and race will not be tolerated. This is published separately to this document. The Trust also works in partnership with other Housing Associations in the vicinity and the Police in supporting customers suffering domestic violence within Wythenshawe. The trust will:

- Publicise these policies
- Provide training to front-line staff on identifying and dealing with harassment, including domestic violence

Employment performance of suppliers, contractors and consultants

Parkway Green's prime objective will be to work with suppliers, contractors and consultants who share our values and beliefs in relation to equality and diversity. Where it is within the Trust's control to do so, we will ensure that suppliers, contractors and consultants, policies and procedures fully meet the same standards applied in Parkway Green and that they can demonstrate adherence to them.

Existing suppliers, contractors and consultants which may fall short of the standard we require, we will work with them to achieve the necessary standard within a reasonable time scale, or we will discontinue their employment.

Resident Involvement

We will ensure that residents are involved from all sections of the Parkway Green community and we will strive to engage with those hard to reach and potentially excluded residents. The Trust will collect and analyse information on residents involved in all 'Resident involvement' activities and set targets to ensure that the profile of these groups reflect our current residents and the community as a whole
The Trust will also analyse satisfaction surveys and recommend actions to address any inequalities identified.

Asset Management

The Trust will ensure we provide homes that meet the needs of the communities we work with. The Trust will also ensure that we monitor the delivery of our maintenance services to eliminate discrimination. We will ensure that our homes and neighbourhoods are designed and developed to remove barriers that may prevent people feeling safe and secure. We will ensure that homes and services are accessible to all.

The Trust recognises that, as a major housing association in the West Wythenshawe area and a key player in regeneration activities, we can have a major influence on other organisations and our partners in the delivery of services to vulnerable people.

Lettings & Allocations

The Trust will promote fairness and the inclusion of equality issues into all of our housing strategies. Selection for housing will be based objectively on housing needs and we will promote the effective use of housing for BME, disabled people, men, women and those who are transgender. We will eliminate any form of discrimination in the allocation of homes. We will set and achieve meaningful targets that ensure no bias against any minority group.



Community Cohesion and Integration

Parkway Green will work with local partners to promote and support community cohesion and to ensure inclusion of all marginalized groups. We will maintain an active role within the Wythenshawe Community Cohesion Group.

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Existing suppliers, contractors and consultants which may fall short of the standard we require, we will work with them to achieve the necessary standard within a reasonable time scale, or we will discontinue their employment.

Our approach to this scheme

This scheme will be reviewed every year in the light of the progress we have made and the knowledge we develop on equality issues. The progress against the action plan will be monitored periodically, and we will continue to involve our residents and employees in its development and implementation.

We will take an outcome based approach that concentrates on the following outcomes:

- ensuring that our services are equally accessible to all BME groups, disabled customers and employees, men, women and those who are transgender;
- ensuring equality for all employees and our customers
- impact assessing our policies, procedures, and practices to ensure elimination of any discriminations.

The Trust objectives to achieve are:

- to inform all staff of their duties under legislation to prevent discrimination, encourage respect for all people and promote good relations;
- develop further on our information gathering procedures;
- encourage participation where there is under representation or disadvantaged groups;
- ensure our practices and procedures are non-discriminatory by impact assessing all of them over a specified time period;
- review and upgrade our Managing Grievance policy under which any issues relating to unfair treatment is dealt with;
- promote equality in pay.



Equality Impact Assessment

The Trust carries out equality Impact assessment as a way of identifying whether an existing or proposed policy or services affects, or is likely to affect, different equality groups.

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

The impact assessment process is designed to tackle the long-term challenge of removing 'institutional discrimination', and ensures that policies, services and strategies do not unfairly discriminate against people. An important part of this process is to gather information about the barriers people experience and ensure solutions are found to overcome them.

Monitoring the scheme

We recognise that the Single Equality Scheme should be a 'living' document to be effective. The scheme will be reviewed on an annual basis and all action plans, guidance and standards set out in the scheme will be subject to monitoring and assessment against the Equality Standard for Housing Associations

The Trust is committed to the following:

- To strive to achieve Board female representation of 50%
- An annual programme of Equality Impact Assessment;
- Annual review of the Single Equality Scheme as part of the annual report on Equality and Diversity to the Board.

The Trust will play a pivotal role in monitoring progress on the Scheme and the Action Plan.

Tailoring our services

Statement

Parkway Green is committed to providing excellent services to all its tenants. It recognises that to achieve this some tenants may need to have services varied or enhanced in order for them to be able to fully access all services sustain their tenancy.

The purpose of our Tailor Made Services policy is to ensure that services are provided in a way that is appropriate to the needs of individual tenants particularly those tenants who are more vulnerable.



Scope and Application

This policy applies to all tenants and applicants who receive services from Parkway Green or any contractors employed by Parkway Green.

It will provide guidance to staff and contractors on the way services can be enhanced and procedures varied to support tenants and applicants.

Policy

Parkway Green believes that it is important to recognise the needs of tenants who may be vulnerable or who may be having difficulties in sustaining their tenancy.

As a responsible landlord, we are committed to ensuring that all of our tenants have every opportunity to sustain their homes. We aim to ensure that vulnerable and marginalised residents are provided with appropriate responsive housing services, and that support and care arrangements (including liaison with other agencies) are in place, where appropriate.

The Housing Corporation Regulatory Code states that:

“Housing associations must provide good quality housing services for residents and prospective residents by being responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents – vulnerable and marginalised residents are provided with appropriate responsive housing services. Support and care arrangements (including liaison with other agencies) are in place where appropriate”. The code also states that Associations should **“act to support and sustain, rather than terminate a tenancy”** and that **“early intervention is essential”**.

Tenants can require Tailor Made Services for a variety of reasons, from a single problem to a combination of factors. The level of need for these enhanced services can vary from time to time but frequently increases as tenants get older. The need can also occur at different points in people’s lives, and be permanent such as mental health disorders, or temporary such as bereavement.

Those needing this service can broadly be described as:

- An individual or household experiencing difficulties with everyday living on account of financial, educational, health, age, employment, learning, language, behavioural, family, social or other circumstances or any combination of these

Examples of circumstances in which people can be vulnerable include, but are not limited to;

- Older people
- Hospitalisation and the period following hospital discharge
- Homelessness or living in unsuitable accommodation
- Long term illness in the home
- Physical Disability or sensory impairment
- Learning Disability
- People with autism or Asperger’s Syndrome



- People with communication problems
- Mental Health Issues
- Changing from supported to independent living
- Suffering from anti-social behaviour
- Victims of or others affected by hate crimes
- Victims of crime
- Victims of rape or other sexual assault
- Being a victim or witness involved in legal proceedings
- Being in debt or rent arrears
- A previous history of tenancy loss
- Suffering domestic abuse
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Addiction to gambling
- Refugees or people seeking asylum
- English not spoken, or spoken only as a second or other language
- Relationship or family breakdown
- People living alone or who are socially isolated
- People who may be vulnerable for religious reasons, eg Muslim women.

We aim to consider each case individually, so there are no set criteria to define vulnerability and no standard response. We aim not to 'label' individuals. Anyone needing some additional support to sustain his or her tenancy can be considered vulnerable

What Are Tailor Made Services?

All of the services provided by The Trust have agreed policies procedures and standards. These have been developed with tenants and approved by the Board. These policies, procedures and standards ensure that for the majority of tenants will be able to access and receive excellent services.

In some circumstances and for some tenants it may be necessary to vary or enhance these services in order for that tenant to sustain their tenancy. All staff are empowered to vary the way they deliver the service to respond to these needs.

The Trust will train its staff to be sensitive and responsive to these situations - ensuring that in being so staff reflect residents' rights to information, choice, dignity and confidentiality.

Services can be varied in many ways from providing communication in the tenants' language of choice, to carrying out home visits rather than sending a letter. It may be as simple as requesting that anyone visiting the house give ample time for the tenant to get to the door as they have decreased mobility.

Services may be Tailor Made through the provision of additional support. This support can be provided in a variety of ways depending on the service area some examples of which are:

Lettings

- Move to more appropriate housing
- Assistance in completing application form



- Interviewing the applicant at home
- Helping them to obtain furniture/equipment
- Advice and help in getting their utilities' connected

Housing Management

- Giving advice on practical living skills
- Support in dealing with tenancy issues
- Spending additional time explaining the tenancy/repairs reporting
- Supporting in accessing social activities

Rent management

- Providing or signposting them to advice on benefits and grants
- Signposting them to help with budgeting
- Special concessions before issuing a notice

Repairs

- Enhanced response times
- Providing adjustments to the property e.g. external lighting
- Enhanced security to the property

Identifying Tenants and Applicants who may need Tailor Made Services

Tenants requiring Tailor Made Services can be identified in a number of ways:

- Application forms/medical forms
- Tenant profiling form
- During the sign up process
- Notification from existing residents whose circumstances have changed
- Notification from relatives of existing residents of any changes in their circumstances that may have increased their vulnerability
- During home visits
- When a repair is being carried out
- From the residents social worker, probation officers, support workers
- If the tenant commands a disproportionate amount of their time/contact with the Trust or are failing to maintain their tenancy.

In recognition of each resident's right to dignity and choice we will rely on them to let us know if they have a problem or need that affects their ability to sustain their tenancy. ***However, we will encourage them to let us know about such problems if they wish to and seek our advice/support in addressing them.*** If a resident



chooses to share this information with us we will agree what we can do and how we respond.

Using the Checklist to Identify Tenants Who Need support

In order to identify record, and respond to tenants who need Tailor Made Services or additional support that cannot be provided by the Trust we must first be able to identify these tenants in a fair and consistent way.

The checklist has been proposed as a way of doing just this.

The checklist offers staff a structured, consistent method of identifying and responding appropriately to resident's whose needs may be in excess of those that can be met through the Trust's core housing management service. It will enable staff to:

- make a rapid assessment of a residents additional and individual needs and
- To respond appropriately to those needs

The checklist will allow for a common sense approach to meeting people's needs whilst at the same time providing the Trust with a consistent and fair mechanism for identifying and measuring the incidence of customers with additional needs.

The criteria does not list vulnerable "types", but by requiring staff to think through a number of set questions will enable them to make a rapid assessment of a resident's needs on an individual basis.

By requiring staff to consider the services actually available to the residents at each stage an effective gate-keeping mechanism for service delivery is maintained. For example staff are required to look at the need for core services, Tailor Made Services and local services before looking at more intensive support opportunities for the customer.

The criteria are designed to allow the assessment of need to be specific to the service actually being delivered. For example a maintenance officer might use it to determine whether an enhanced response time is required or an arrears officer may use it to determine if special concessions are to be applied before issuing a notice.

Once we are able to identify the service level needs of tenants we can review our approach to existing services e.g. arrears, lettings, anti-social behaviour. The aim being to agree variations to these services in order to deliver Tailor Made Services to tenants to enable them to sustain their tenancy and reduce the costs associated with failed tenancies.

Confidentiality and Information sharing

The permission of all residents and potential residents will be sought before information is disclosed, except in exceptional circumstances as mentioned above or as governed by data protection legislation and guidance. Guidance from the Information Commissioners Office based upon the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 state that information disclosed will be sufficient, impartial and valid. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer



than is necessary for that purpose or purposes for which it was obtained. Further information can be obtained from www.ico.gov.uk.

Essentially, the Trust will deal with information provided by tenants in terms of protecting confidentiality in the following ways:

- Information should be used only for the purposes for which it was given.
- Information about an individual should normally be shared only with the consent of that person.
- Information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- Individuals should be advised why and with whom information concerning them has been shared.
- All confidential information should be rigorously safeguarded

