



One equality scheme

2007-2010

Detailed consultation report



Published: April 2008

Background

Cross Keys Homes is regulated by the Housing Corporation. As a result, the Corporation passed the duty to its registered social landlords to develop and publish equality schemes to ensure its members are compliant with relating equality legislation.

The Housing Corporation has published its own range of equality schemes to set out its intentions for meeting disability, race and gender equality duties.

Since our inception in 2004, we have always upheld our commitment to fulfil our public duty to equality and diversity and have published policies and strategies to this effect.

As a result of more recent changes, in particular to disability and gender equality legislation, we have refreshed our policies and have produced our own equality scheme, which goes beyond the legal requirements to consider disability, gender and race. We have also included our intentions to deliver homes, services and employment opportunities that consider age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. The final scheme was approved by our management board in January 2008 and the result is our One equality scheme 2007-10 and an accompanying action plan.

Introduction

In early 2007, our original plan was to ensure our compliance with the Disability Discrimination legislation, and sought to help of consultants to produce a disability health-check, to identify gaps in service and for us to use this to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. The consultants work was extended to produce an overarching equality and diversity gap analysis.

During mid to late 2007, further disability equality guidance was issued by the Housing Corporation. At the same time, the government released consultation and proposals for a single equality bill to replace the existing multitude of equality legislation. A changing pattern was emerging and we made the decision to publish an all encompassing equality scheme. The health-check and gap analysis reports, were used to inform our scheme along with comments made during an in-depth consultation period with a range of stakeholders.

This report provides details of the feedback which resulted from the consultation period, which spanned from March to November 2007 and also sets out how we engaged a range of people in the consultation and delivery process in the lead-up to the production of our One equality scheme.

The appendices contained at the end of this report provide an overview of consultation responses received, a breakdown of the respondents details, a schedule of key meetings and events and a brief project timetable.

One equality scheme consultation feedback

We are grateful for your feedback on our draft One equality scheme and have carefully considered the issues you have raised and suggestions you have made. Our responses and resulting actions are summarised below and where relevant, your suggestions have been included in the final version of our One equality scheme and action plan.

Q1: Are the values and principles upon which the scheme is based appropriate?

You were in agreement with the principles of the scheme and felt that these were well explained, particularly with regards to the principles for race, gender and disability. You also thought the scheme should be extended to include principles for other recognised equality strands including; age, sexual orientation and religion/belief. We have extended the scheme to include our intentions for these three further equality strands.

Q2: Are the level of responsibility for the scheme appropriate?

You were in agreement with the level of responsibilities contained within the scheme. As this is an area of policy, which is conducted with involvement from the highest management level, you also stressed the importance to ensure effective delivery of the action plan and to implement regular monitoring and review so as to ensure the plan is delivered on time and where this is not the case, that regular monitoring and review would enable these areas to be suitably addressed. We added a statement to the scheme to communicate our quarterly monitoring and reporting arrangements to our committee who has the responsibility for addressing such issues and we will continue to annually report performance at the highest level to our management board and to customers.

Q3: Are the priorities for disability, gender and race equality appropriate?

You wanted a better commitment regarding how we will ascertain the current numbers of various ethnic groups in the city and where these are located and suggested that we should work with partners to delivery this. You also asked us to consider the suitability of our homes in relation to local demands, including Lifetime homes. We are working with local race equality agencies and the city council to adopt and embed a standardised approach to monitoring race, so that we have a good understanding about our customer needs and can tailor our homes and services to reflect this. We are also working with the city council to discuss ways to improve information on the housing register, so that people on the housing waiting list have a good understand about whether the accommodation to let is suitable to meet their specific needs. We have set a target to achieve a minimum of 10% of all new homes to meet either wheelchair or Lifetime Homes' standards. This better demonstrates the commitment that you requested.

Q4: Are the procedures for tracking change and addressing impact assessment effective?

You were in agreement with our procedures for tracking change and addressing our impact, although some reserved judgement until evidence of this was made available. You suggested that we consider working with local partners such as the city council and other housing associations while delivering this. We added a statement to this effect within the One equality scheme. At present, we are fulfilling our commitment by delivering training and support and by working with and empowering tenants to assess the equality of our homes and services.

Q5: Are the proposals for consultation and involvement appropriate?

You asked us to consider involving and consulting other partners, we have added a statement to the scheme, to ensure we take-up opportunities to engage with local agencies while delivering the scheme and action plan.

Q6: Will the actions listed in the scheme action plan meet the three equality duties?

You asked us to consider how we would promote good relations between race, men and women and people with and without disabilities. We have established networking arrangements with local strategic, operational and specialist equality and diversity related groups. Our representation on these groups and expertise will be used to embed, promote and address equality and diversity related matters most specifically locally and regionally. We also engage in national strategic consultation which enables us to play a part in influencing matters which are subsequently drive down to local level.

Consultation methodology and engagement

A range of stakeholders were consulted in a range of ways about the One equality scheme. The following sets out who was consulted. The views from these groups were appropriately incorporated into the final One equality scheme.

Residents' diversity forum - formerly the disability and bme sub-groups (residents)

In April 2007, the disability sub-group received information and proposals to engage a consultant to produce an equality and diversity gap analysis and disability health-check to identify gaps against the Disability Discrimination Act. This information would be used to inform the resulting Disability equality scheme (DES) and action plan. The group was asked to elect members to sit on an interview panel, as part of the consultants' selection process, 2 out of 3 residents participated in this activity.

In July 2007, the diversity received proposals to deliver a Single equality scheme in place of the original plans to deliver a DES.

The equality and diversity gap analysis report was delayed and was not received by Cross Keys until September 2007. This report was not made available in time to take to a diversity forum meeting for consultation.

In October 2007, the Diversity forum (14 members) received a draft copy of the Disability health-check report and consultation questionnaire. 1 response was received. The response was generally positive about the content of the report and stressed the importance of Cross Keys' complying with the Disability Discrimination Act.

A draft version of the One equality scheme and consultation questionnaire was posted to Diversity forum members in November 2007 ahead of the forthcoming One equality conference. Group members were offered the opportunity to feedback their comments either via a pre-paid envelope or at the following weeks' One equality conference. 5 members of the group fed back comments on the scheme, these were positive.

One conference (residents and key stakeholders)

We held our annual equality and diversity conference in November 2007. An equality and diversity display stand, which included copies of the draft One equality scheme, action plan and consultation questionnaires to enable attendees to comment on the scheme. A member of staff was on hand and answered questions for a number of conference attendees. 2 conference attendees commented on the scheme.

Electronic consultation (general public)

The draft scheme and consultation feedback form was placed on the Equality and diversity internet pages during November and December 2007, to enable feedback from the general public.

One equality working group (staff)

The working group received initial proposals to deliver a disability equality scheme in March 2007. This was followed by further monthly updates on progress, with regards to selecting a consultant to deliver an equality and diversity gap analysis and disability health-check to inform the scheme.

The working group received a copy of the disability health-check report in October 2007, where comments were received and fed back to the consultants to make the necessary amendments to the health-check.

The group received an emailed version of the equality and diversity gap analysis report. Comments were collated and fed back to the consultants to make necessary amendments.

A copy of the draft One equality scheme and action plan was received by the group in November 2007, where comments were received. The comments were considered and the scheme was amended as appropriate. A further draft final copy was received by the group in December 2007, prior to final Board approval.

One equality committee (CEO, board, residents, external stakeholders and staff)

The committee received proposals to deliver an equality and diversity and disability equality impact assessment in September 2006. A star chamber with the Executive team in December 2006, saw these plans change to reflect that of a gap analysis.

The committee received subsequent quarterly progress updates from June 2007 and a copy of the Equality and diversity gap analysis report in October 2007.

A tracked changes version of the draft final One equality scheme inclusive of all consultation comments received was reported for interim approval by the committee in December 2007. Further comments were received and were incorporated in to the draft final version ahead of seeking final Board approval.

Management board (tenants, independents and councillor)

The management board received the draft final version of the One equality scheme and action plan in January 2008. The Board approved the scheme and made some comments regarding the weighting of equality and diversity, the answers were fed back by the CEO at the Board meeting in February 2008.

Feedback

Board – A copy of the One equality scheme has been posted on the secure Board members internet pages, following their approval of the Scheme in January 2008.

Tenants – A final version of the One equality scheme was fed back to our main resident involvement group, inclusive of Diversity Forum members in February 2008. We will be feeding back details of the final One equality scheme to tenants in the June issue of the Keylines tenants' newsletter.

Staff – Details of the final One equality scheme appeared in the December 2007 issue of the Key News staff newsletter and on the One equality intranet pages.

Stakeholders – External stakeholders who sit on our One equality committee were advised in December 2007, that the scheme would be made available via the Equality and diversity internet pages, to ensure it is made publicly available.

Appendix A: Responses to Cross Keys Homes' One equality scheme consultation questionnaire

Questions	Yes	No	Not sure	Needs further consideration	No answer	TOTAL
Q1. Are the values and principles upon which our scheme is base appropriate?	63%	0%	0%	12%	25%	100%
Q.2. Are the levels of responsibility for the scheme appropriate?	75%	0%	0%	0%	25%	100%
Q.3. Are the priorities for disability, gender and race equality appropriate?	63%	0%	12%	0%	25%	100%
Q.4. Are the procedures for tracking change and addressing impact assessment effective?	37.5%	0%	37.5%	0%	25%	100%
Q.5. Are the proposals for consultation and involvement appropriate?	63%	0%	12%	0%	25%	100%
Q.6 Will the actions listed in the scheme action plan meet the three equality duties?	63%	0%	12%	0%	25%	100%

Appendix B: Respondent details

Respondent details				
Disability	Y	N	No answer	TOTAL
Disabled	3	1	4	8
	38%	12%	50%	100%
Wheelchair user in household	2	2	4	8
	25%	25%	50%	100%
Gender				
Male	4	50%		
Female	2	25%		
No answer	2	25%		
TOTAL	8	100%		
Race				
Ethnicity	Respondent		Partner	
Asian or Asian British (East African Asian)	1	25%	0	13%
White Irish	1		1	
English	1	25%	0	0%
British	1		0	
No answer	4	50%	7	88%
TOTAL	8	100%	8	100%
Age				
35-44	1	12.5%		
60-64	1	12.5%		
75-84	1	12.5%		
85+	1	12.5%		
No answer	4	50%		
TOTAL	8	100%		
Religion				
Muslim	1	50%		
Christian	3			
No answer	4	50%		
TOTAL	8	100%		
Sexuality				
Heterosexual	2	25%		
Gay man	0	0%		
Gay woman	0			
Bisexual	0			
Other	0			
Prefer not to say	1	75%		
No answer	5			
TOTAL	8	100%		

Appendix C: Schedule of key meetings and events

Date	Event
Sep 06	Equality and diversity committee – received a report setting out proposals for deliver an equality and diversity and disability equality impact assessment.
Dec 06	Exec star chamber – changed the above plans to supply a budget to deliver an equality and diversity gap analysis. These plans were later expanded to include a disability health-check with a view to using both pieces of work to inform a disability equality scheme and the then current E&D action plan.
Mar to Sep 07	Equality and diversity working group – received updates about equality and diversity gap analysis and disability health-check work, which was used to inform the content of the One equality scheme and action plan.
Mar 15, 2007	Equality and diversity working group – staff received information about the disability equality duty requirements, including the implications and proposals for the way forward
Apr 4, 2007	Disability sub group – residents received information about the disability equality duty requirements and proposals to carry out an equality and diversity gap analysis to inform the future equality to ensure the scheme can reflect good practice and legislative requirements
Jun 4, 2007	Equality and diversity committee – received a progress update on work surrounding the delivery of a disability equality scheme and equality assessment.
Jul 11, 2007	Diversity forum – residents received proposals and way forward for the single equality scheme and its workings
Aug 2, 2007	Equality duty conference feedback - to management team about equality duty requirements and proposals to produce a single equality scheme.
Sep 17, 2007	Annual equality and diversity progress report - to the board, including forthcoming work to produce a single equality scheme in place of the equality and diversity strategy.
Oct 2, 2007	Equality and diversity committee – Received a briefing report about the single equality bill, as information in the lead up to Cross Keys' own One equality scheme and a copy of the equality and diversity gap analysis report.
Oct 17, 2007	Diversity forum – received a copy of the draft Disability health-check report and a consultation questionnaire to enable them to feed back their comments. 1 response was received.
Oct 18, 2007	Equality and diversity working group – received a copy of the Disability health-check report for comment. These comments were fed back to the consultants.

Date	Event
Nov 2007	Diversity forum – a draft final copy of the One equality scheme was mailed to resident diversity forum representatives, along with a consultation form to enable them to feedback comments, prior to committee interim approval.
Nov 15, 2007	Equality and diversity working group – received information about the transition of live actions from the equality and diversity action plan to the new draft One equality action plan, as well as a draft copy of the One equality scheme and action plan for comment.
Nov 23, 2007	One diversity conference – residents were able to access a One equality consultation display stand, copies of the scheme and consultation questionnaires for completion
Nov/Dec 2007	Electronic consultation - A draft copy of the Scheme and consultation questionnaire was posted on Cross Keys' equality and diversity web pages
Dec 10, 2007	Equality and diversity committee – received a draft final copy of the One equality scheme and action plan for final comment and interim approval was sought
Dec 20, 2007	Equality and diversity working group – received details of consultation feedback and a draft final copy of the One equality scheme and action plan; approved in principle by the committee, inclusive of conference, working group and committee feedback

Feedback

Dec 2007	Key News – an article was published in the staff newsletter to make them aware of the One equality scheme
Jan 21, 2008	Final board approval – One equality scheme received final board approval and comments
Jan 2008	CKH website and intranet - A final board approved copy of the One equality scheme, has been published on Cross Keys Homes' website and One equality intranet pages.
Feb 13, 2008	Diversity forum – residents received a final copy of the One equality scheme and action plan
Jun 08	Keylines – an article will appear by way of feedback to all tenants about the One equality scheme and its core principles.

Appendix D: Project timeline

Activity	Target completion date	Actual completion date	Groups involved
Communicate proposals to deliver a gap analysis and health-check	Sep 06 - Mar 07	On time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E&D committee Executive team Disability sub-group
Tender process – project brief designed, pack submission, interview, evaluation and references	Feb - May 07	On time	<p>Interview panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 staff and 2 tenants (3 tenants approached) <p>Submissions returned to CKH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 expressions submitted 2 interviewed
E&D gap analysis/ disability health-check delivery - information supplied, interviews (tenants and staff), reports drafted	May - Aug 07	May – Oct 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and tenants interviewed Reports prepared and provided to CKH
Produce One equality scheme - consultant reports, other examples and good practiced used	Aug - Sep 07	Oct 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CI manager
Consultation on consultants reports and One equality scheme	Aug – Dec 07	Oct – Dec 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity forum E&D Committee E&D working group One conference attendees External stakeholders and general public
Final board approval	Dec 07	Jan 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board
Feedback	Dec 07 – Jan 08	Dec 07 – Jun 08	Board, tenants, staff etc, as outlined in this report.