



Cestria Community Housing Association Equality and Diversity Strategy

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Arabic

তথ্য পাওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে সমান সুযোগ দিতে আমরা প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। যদি আপনি অন্য কোনো ভাষায় বা ফরম্যাটে তথ্য পেতে চান যেমন ব্রেইল, অডিও বা বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Bengali

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Chinese

हम जानकारी की उपलब्धता के लिए उचित अवसर प्रदान करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं. यदि आप किसी अन्य भाषा या संरूप जैसे ब्रेल, ऑडियो या बड़े प्रिंट, के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं तो कृपया निम्नलिखित फ़ोन नंबर पर कॉल करें.

Hindi

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Polish

ਅਸੀਂ ਹਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਢੁੱਕਵਾਂ ਮੌਕਾ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਚਨਬੱਧ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫੌਰਮੈਟ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਬਰੇਲ, ਆਡੀਓ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Punjabi

ہم معلومات تک رسائی کی خاطر مساوی مواقع فراہم کرنے کے لئے پابند عہد ہیں۔ اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات دیگر زبانوں یا شکلوں میں درکار ہیں مثال کے طور پر بریل، آڈیو یا بڑے حروف میں طباعت کی شکل میں تو، براہ کرم درج ذیل نمبر پر کال کریں۔

Urdu



0800 587 0001

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Equality and Diversity Strategy has been developed to ensure that Cestria Community Housing Association meets its legal and social responsibilities, ensures equal access to services and meets the needs of all sections of the community.
- 1.2 This Strategy reaffirms the Association's commitment to compliance with relevant legislation, statutory guidance from Equality and Human Rights Commissions and the Tenant Services Authority National Standards. It aims to develop a plan which works towards eliminating discrimination and promoting fairness and equality.
- 1.3 Valuing diversity and promoting equal opportunities are key principles of Cestria Community Housing. Our objective as a housing association is to be more than just a social landlord and employer within the district of Chester-le-Street. We recognise that in fulfilling our duty to promote good relations with minority groups we are contributing to the wider aims of social inclusion, anti-poverty and community cohesion.
- 1.4 This Equality and Diversity Strategy sets the framework in which Cestria Community Housing will operate and perform, ensuring equality of opportunity and embracing diversity in employment and service delivery.
- 1.5 We are committed to ensuring that the Equality and Diversity is a fundamental principal in all policies and procedures. We will ensure that all policies and procedures are effectively promoted and used equitably across the Association.

2. Context of the Strategy

- 2.1 Our approach to Equality and Diversity is shaped by and consistent with:
- ✦ Our Vision & Corporate Objectives
 - ✦ Equality Act 2010 & Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Guidance & Code of practice
 - ✦ Audit commission's Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE 31 Diversity)
 - ✦ Tenant Services Authority National Standards (1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard)

2.2 **Our Vision and Corporate Objectives**

2.2.1 Our vision is 'to be an excellent landlord by being a first rate provider of affordable housing and housing services for the community of Chester-le-street district with tenants at the heart of what the Association does. We will work with communities and partners in order to achieve our mutual objectives'.

2.2.3 Our Corporate objectives:

+ Delivering Service Excellence

- ✓ We will aim to deliver the highest standards of service and customer care
- ✓ We will fulfil the promises made to tenants on transfer

+ Decent Homes

- ✓ We will invest in our housing to provide modern and affordable homes

+ Working in Partnership

- ✓ We will work in partnership with others to make sure that we help build sustainable communities
- ✓ We will work with partners to make sure services for tenants are fully joined up at a local level

+ Value for Money

- ✓ We will make sure that the services represent value for money

+ Landlord of Choice

- ✓ We will be the landlord of choice in the area

+ Financial Strength

- ✓ We will be a reputable, financially robust Association

+ People

- ✓ We will have an effective, efficient team of staff, valuing equality and diversity

2.3 Equality Act 2010 & Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Guidance & Code of Practice

2.3.1 As an association, we are required to comply with equality and diversity legislative framework. The Equality Act 2010 brings together in one piece of legislation all the existing Acts and Statutory Instruments that currently make up UK equality law. It intends to harmonise definitions and concepts of discrimination, update equal pay legislation, strengthen enforcement and introduce new public sector duties

2.3.2 The Equality Act 2010 strengthens UK equality law by:

- ✦ Introducing a new public sector duty to consider reducing socio-economic inequalities;
- ✦ Putting a new integrated Equality Duty on public bodies;
- ✦ Using public procurement to improve equality;
- ✦ Banning age discrimination outside the workplace;
- ✦ Requiring gender pay and employment equality publishing;
- ✦ Extending the scope to use positive action;
- ✦ Strengthening the powers of employment tribunals;
- ✦ Protecting carers from discrimination;
- ✦ Clarifying the protection for breastfeeding mothers;
- ✦ Banning discrimination in private members' clubs;
- ✦ Strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people; and
- ✦ Protecting people from dual discrimination - direct discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics.

2.3.3 Once in place, the EHRC statutory and non statutory guidance and code of practice will provide practical advice to assist organisations in understanding the new Act and how equalities legislation will change.

2.4. Audit Commission's Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE 31 Diversity)

- 2.4.1 Cestria Community Housing, through inspections undertaken by the Audit Commission, must demonstrate how the requirements of KLOE 31 for Diversity are met. The purpose of the KLOE is to ensure that the services address the different needs that customers have. It has three consistent themes: understanding the customer; tailoring the service and providing leadership.
- 2.4.2 The KLOE covers six key areas; Corporate Culture and Governance; Access and Customer Care; Service User Involvement; Partnerships; Harassment and domestic Violence and Legislation.
- 2.4.3 We use the KLOE to inform our work and development across the equalities spectrum. Our performance management system (Clearview) links projects directly to the cross cutting theme of 'KLOE 31 Diversity' where relevant.

2.5 Tenant Services Authority (TSA) National Standards (1. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard)

- 2.5.1 The TSA has introduced new regulatory framework that social housing providers have to meet from April 2010. At its heart are six national standards, and against each of these the TSA has described the outcomes landlords should meet and specific expectations of them.
- 2.5.2 Providers need to ensure, for their tenants, that they are meeting the obligations contained within the TSA's six National Standards. These have been influenced by the TSA's National Conversation that helped them establish tenants' priorities.
- 2.5.3 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard is one of the six National Standards and is a cross-cutting standard. It contains specific references to how, in meeting all the standards, providers take into account tenants' diverse needs. It also includes requirements in relation to local offers in a number of areas related to the other standards

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Cestria recognises the added value that the stakeholders involvement can bring to the Association. We are committed to consultation to ensure that we have a good understanding of equality issues that affect our stakeholders and the social housing sector.
- 3.2 We believe in involving stakeholders in the development of our key documents, services and functions. This Strategy and the Objectives are also developed in consultation with the tenants; Board Members; the Equality and Diversity Working Group and wider staff.

- 3.3 We have consulted on this Strategy with our Tenants through our Cestria Tenant Reference Group.
- 3.4 The Equality and Diversity Working Group and the Board Champions have been consulted on the Strategy.
- 3.5 Our staff have been consulted through our Staff Conferences and the draft document has also been available on our intranet.
- 3.6 The Strategy has been amended to reflect comments received throughout the whole consultation programme.

4. Our Progress So Far

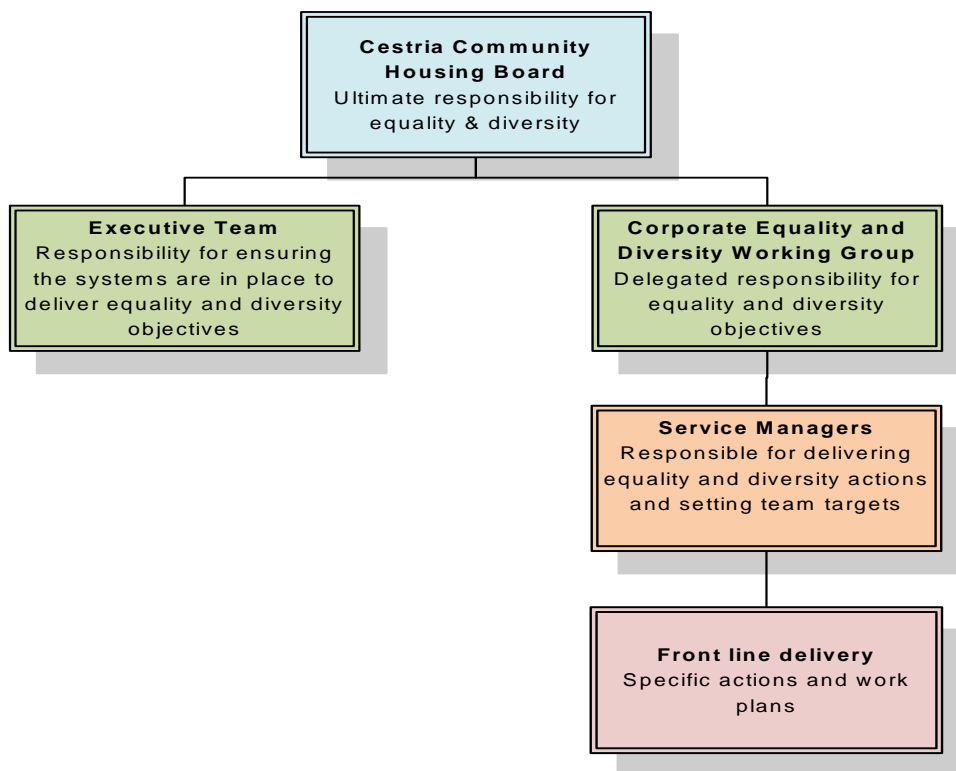
4.1 Our first Equality and Diversity Strategy was developed 2008. This Strategy replaces the 2008 Strategy due to change to equality and diversity priorities. We have delivered some major projects over the past two years and listed below are some of our key achievements. We have:

- ✦ established an E&DWG with representation from Board, Service Teams and Executive Team.
- ✦ launched our Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit to assist managers in carrying out EIAs effectively;
- ✦ undertaken a major service review by completing Equality Impact Assessments on all our services to ensure we do not discriminate against any community group. In total we assessed 15 service areas;
- ✦ developed our first Single Equality Scheme with strand specific action plans;
- ✦ completed over 90% of actions on our initial Single Equality Scheme Action Plan;
- ✦ recruited and hope to retain the Future Job Fund Trainees;
- ✦ become a member of Stonewall and are part of the Stonewall's Diversity Champion programme;
- ✦ attained 'Disability Two Ticks' and now guarantee an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria;
- ✦ revised our policy template to ensure equalities impacts are included;
- ✦ delivered equality and diversity training to all staff and Board members and have a new programme to roll out further 'Drama based training';
- ✦ ensured all complaints are monitored to check for any potential disadvantage to any groups;
- ✦ collated diversity profile data on our tenants, staff and board members;
- ✦ carried out DDA Audits on all our properties to ensure that they are accessible to disabled customer;
- ✦ ensured we regularly update our staff and Board about our performance in achieving equality and diversity objectives;
- ✦ put in place positive action statements to encourage applicants from under-represented groups;
- ✦ access to multi-faith calendars and celebrated 'LGBT History Month' for first time in February 2010.

- ✦ developed an Equality and Diversity Networking Directory and worked in partnership with number of different organisation such as Age Concern;
- ✦ become a member of the 'Durham Equality and Diversity Partnership' and are contributing to the production, publication and delivery of the partnership projects.

5. Our Equality and Diversity Governance Structure

- 5.1 The Association shows commitment towards equality and diversity through its governance structure. There are two Board Champions who are part of the Equality & Diversity Working Group and make recommendations and provides updates to the Board.
- 5.2 Cestria aim to ensure that the composition of the Board reflects the communities it serves. We will continue to work towards the recruitment and retention of a Board that is representative of our communities.
- 5.3 We will ensure that all Board members possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable Cestria to meet its commitment to equality and diversity. All Board members are actively encouraged to attend Equality and Diversity training.
- 5.4 The Equality and Diversity Working Group takes a corporate role in ensuring that the equality and diversity is mainstreamed and implemented across the whole organisation and that this work is co-ordinated and consistent.
- 5.5 The Equality and Diversity Working Group (E&DWG) is chaired by the Officer Champion, and comprises of Board Champions and staff from across the organisation.
- 5.6 Governance Structure:



6. Our Equality and Diversity Commitments, Policy Statement and Objectives

6.1 Cestria believes that everyone has a right to live in an inclusive society that addresses the socio-economic gaps and is free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and prejudice. We believe that everyone should be treated fairly, with respect and should have an equal access to all services provided and delivered by Cestria Community housing Association.

6.2 We want to achieve equality of opportunity in all our activities, including the delivery of services to the community, as an employer and through the range of activities we fund. We will put into place a range of practical strategies to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation within our communities and among our workforce. We are committed to ensure that:

- ✦ Everyone has fair and equal access to our services and receive the same excellent standard of service;
- ✦ All of our employment policies are fair and that we promote equality in all aspects of employment;
- ✦ Goods and services that our partners provide on our behalf are of high quality, do not discriminate and promote equality and diversity.

6.3 Cestria has recently introduced an Equality and Diversity Policy statement that outlines our Equality and diversity commitments in detail:

"Cestria Community Housing is committed towards fairness, equality and above all values diversity in all aspects of service delivery (directly or through partners), both as provider of housing services and as an employer.

Cestria Community Housing is committed to eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, religion/belief, gender reassignment and sexuality as well as the socio-economic background. We aim to provide accessible services, delivered in a way that respects the needs of each individual and does not exclude anyone in the community. By demonstrating these beliefs the Association aims to ensure that it develops a workforce that is diverse and non discriminatory.

Cestria Community Housing intends to embed its equality and diversity values into every day practices, policies and procedures so that equality and diversity is mainstreamed.

We believe: Equality is not about treating everyone the same; in fact it is about ensuring that the equality of opportunity is offered to all by taking into account different needs and capabilities.

We believe: Diversity is about recognising and valuing differences regardless of someone's age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief and sexual Orientation.

Cestria Community Housing is working towards developing a thorough customer profile and a workforce that is representative of the community it serves."

- 6.4 We have identified 10 Equality and Diversity Objectives, across three different themes in order to deliver our commitments to promote equality and value diversity. Our Equality and Diversity Objectives link closely to our over-arching Corporate Objectives.

Theme 1: Leadership, Governance and Promoting Inclusion

1. To provide clear and consistent leadership on Equality and Diversity and to develop strategies and policies that clearly outlines our commitment to equality and diversity.
2. To ensure that the Board and the wider workforce value and promote equality and diversity and understand their role in relation to equality and diversity.
3. To establish Board and wider workforce that broadly reflects the Chester-le-Street district profile.
4. To comply with relevant equality and diversity legislation and meet our statutory duties on equalities.

Theme 2: Service Delivery, Resident Involvement and Consultation

1. To achieve service excellence by delivering highest standards of service and customer care tailored to individual's needs.
2. To ensure that vulnerable people including disabled people and victims of Harassment, Hate crime and domestic violence receive adequate and appropriate advice and support.
3. To encourage involvement from tenants and leaseholder and to ensure that this reflects the diversity of Chester-le-Street district.

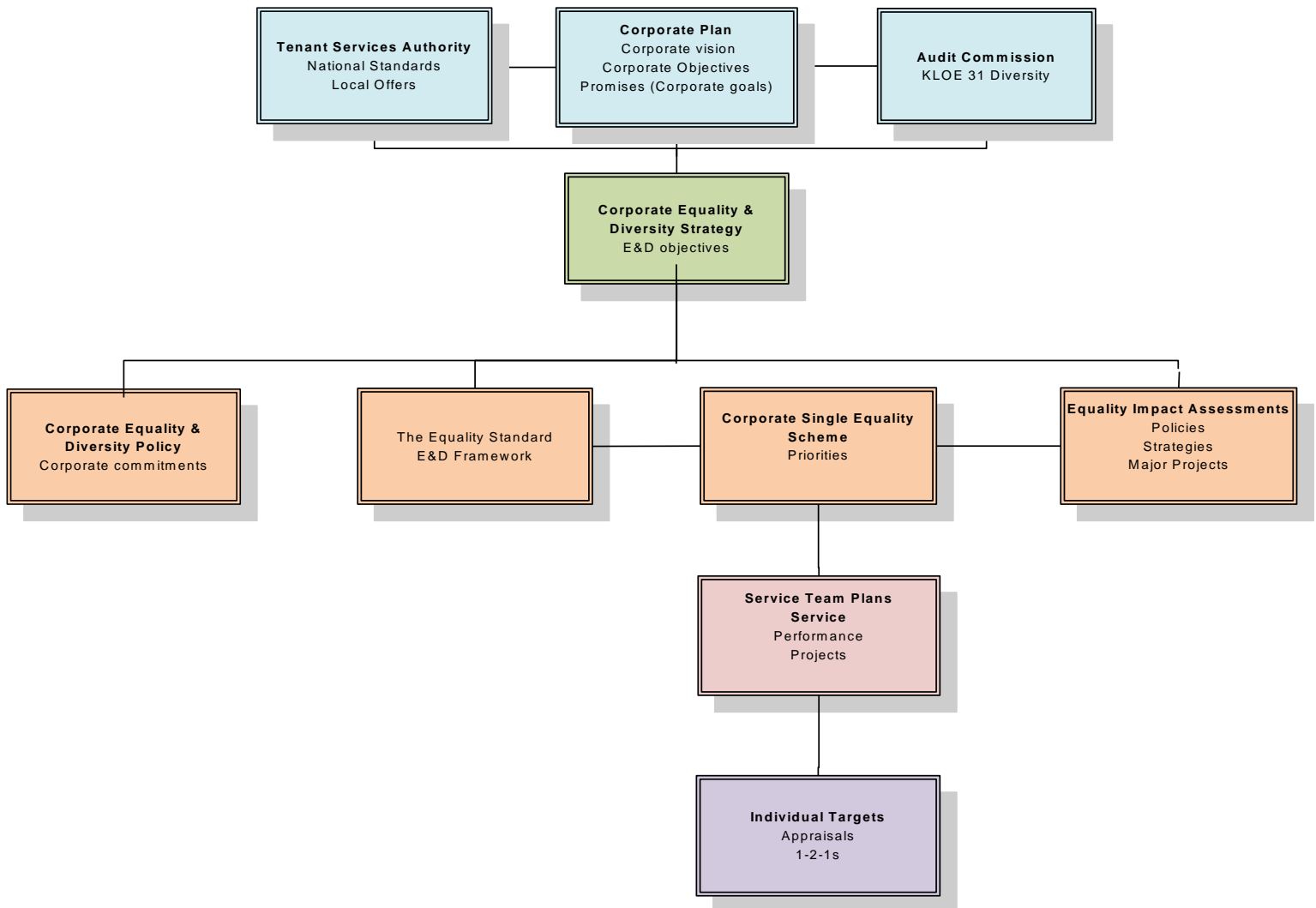
Theme 3: Procurement, Partnership working and community Cohesion

1. To provide small, large and minority-led organisation's the opportunity to work for the Associations.
2. To work with partners from all sectors of the community who embrace the value and principles of equality and diversity.
3. To ensure that our partners (Contractors and Consultants) share our commitment to value diversity and to encourage community cohesion and social inclusion.

7. Achieving Our Equality and Diversity Objectives

7.1 We will achieve our Equality and Diversity Objectives outlined in section eight of this strategy by implementing the Cestria Community Housing's Equality and Diversity Framework. This framework outlines and identifies internal drivers including: the Corporate Plan; this Strategy; our Equality and Diversity Policy; the Single Equality Scheme; Equality Impact Assessments; Service Team Plans and Individual Targets.

7.2 Equality and Diversity Framework:



- 7.3 Cestria's **Single Equality Scheme** will be a key document in achieving our equality and diversity objectives. The Single Equality Scheme action plan has been developed under the equality and diversity themes outlined within this strategy to ensure that the actions link directly to our equality and diversity objectives.
- 7.4 Cestria is committed to completing **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** on all strategies; policies and services. Cestria has completed full EIA Service Reviews during 2009.10 to ensure that all services deliver Cestria's commitment to equality and diversity. An action plan has been developed as the result of the service reviews and this will form part of our 2010-2011 Single Equality Scheme.
- 7.5 Cestria is also very keen to introduce and achieve the Equality North East 'Equality Framework' standard. On successfully attaining approval, the framework will assist in implementing processes to achieve the over-arching Equality and Diversity Objectives. **The Equality Standard** will help Cestria to achieve tangible business benefits; reduce the risk of discrimination litigation and achieve fairness in the workplace and embrace diversity.
- 7.6 We will measure performance using **Key Performance Indicators**. Our 'Diversity Indicator Suite' includes:
- ✦ Staff Diversity Indicators
 - ✦ Customer Services Indicators and
 - ✦ Corporate Diversity Indicators

8. Responsibilities, Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 Cestria recognises that the ownership and leadership by the Board; Executive Team; Senior Management Team and the Equality and Diversity Working Group is essential for the implementation of this strategy.
- 8.2 The Board has nominated two Board members to be Board Equality and Diversity Champions. Their role is to ensure that strategic decisions are both influenced by and responsive to needs and to promote equality and value diversity.
- 8.3 The Corporate Services Team and the Equality and Diversity Working Group have specific responsibility for driving forward Equality and Diversity throughout the organisation. The officer Champion chairs the Equality and Diversity Working Group.
- 8.4 The Equality and Diversity Working Group brings together the representatives from service teams across the Association and will monitor the progress of the strategy and the implementation of the Single Equality Scheme action plans.
- 8.5 Equality and Diversity is essential in delivering excellent services. Every employee has a responsibility to promote equality and value diversity in all aspects of their work. We have developed an 'Equality and Diversity Staff Handbook' to provide advice and guidance to all staff.

- 8.6 The Equality and Diversity Working Group meets monthly and will report progress to the Board on a quarterly basis.
- 8.7 An Equality and Diversity annual progress report will be published detailing the progress throughout the year in achieving the Strategy, Single Equality Scheme and other equality and diversity related projects.
- 8.8 The Strategy will be formally reviewed at least every three years or earlier if there are changes to the legal or regulatory framework by the Performance and Resources Committee.