

Hexagon Housing Association

Single Equality Scheme 2020 - 2023

Hexagon believes that equality and diversity is fundamental to the way we deliver our services and perform as an employer.

Our Mission

“To meet housing needs in South London through our commitment to existing and future residents, local communities and the environment.”

Our Mission Statement is underpinned by our values which we have identified as follows:

1. We place the interests of our residents and service-users at the heart of what we do and aim to treat people with respect.
2. We value our staff and are committed to them achieving their potential.
3. We foster equality of opportunity and embrace diversity in everything we do.
4. We are committed to ensuring affordability of all our homes and services.
5. We strive to be open and accountable to our customers and partners.

What is our Single Equality Scheme?

Hexagon’s Single Equality Scheme sets out how we will tackle discrimination and promote equality. We developed our first Equality Scheme in 2009 in consultation with customers, staff, and partners. Through the scheme we have made many strides forward but our aim is to continuously improve and in this, our fourth Single Equality Scheme, while we have set out some of our main achievements, we want to concentrate on the future, setting out a number of new objectives for the next 3 years.

Background

The Equality Act (2010) brings together all the legal requirements on equality that we must meet and ensures a consistent approach to addressing discrimination against the nine protected characteristics. • Age • Disability • Gender • Gender reassignment • Sexual orientation • Marriage and civil partnership • Pregnancy and maternity • Customer Service Quality • Race • Religion and belief

Hexagon provides social housing and services to a wide range of customers from different age groups, backgrounds and cultures. All of our customers are equally important, but we recognise they have different needs that may require specialist services and management. We acknowledge our role in helping to tackle deprivation and discrimination through providing better services which are more inclusive and

accessible and introducing measures to combat discrimination in day-to-day operational services. We believe a socially inclusive society is more likely to prosper and thrive than one where exclusion and inequalities are left unchecked.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring there are no discriminatory practices in any aspect of our work and we will be proactive in challenging prejudice, complacency and apathy.
- Achieving a diverse board and workforce, recognising the value that access to a wide range of talent and abilities brings to the Organisation and whole community.
- Ensuring that equality of opportunity remains an integral feature of everything we do.
- Making a contribution to the overall prosperity and well-being of individuals and communities by addressing factors that leave people and communities socially isolated and excluded.

Our Work Areas

Hexagon is based in South East London with properties in five local authorities. We recognise the need to understand the area we work in and to have a picture of inequality in the area across the protected characteristics. The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 identifies areas of England which are experiencing multiple aspects of deprivation. The income deprivation summary shows Southwark and Lewisham in the 20 local authority districts with the highest proportions of older people in income deprivation. London boroughs are among the most deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services. The Census of 2011 gives us more up-to-date information on the ethnic diversity of our areas, which, remain some of the most diverse in the country. This information has informed our Single Equality Scheme. We recognise the need to understand the areas we work in.

Progress since our 2016 – 2019 Equality Scheme

The following is a small selection of what we have achieved over the last 3 years:

- We have developed E&D Performance Indicators across all areas of our work. These are monitored by our Diversity Working Group and reported annually to our Board with recommendations for service improvements.
- We have developed our equality impact assessment framework. Using the information we collect from our customer profiling and our diversity monitoring in our EIAs
- We now collect and monitor data on the religion/belief of job applicants and staff in post to ensure there are no barriers to employment or development at Hexagon.

- We have continued to promote Aids and Adaptations to enhance awareness of what Hexagon can offer to help elderly and disabled residents to remain in their own homes.
- We have encouraged our main partners and contractors to provide training and employment opportunities for Hexagon residents, (especially young people and women)
- We have provided training for Board members and Managers covering our commitments to advance equality
- We employed a Money Support Adviser to assist our Financial Inclusion Officer to provide advice to individual Hexagon residents on money matters affecting their tenancy and home
- We work with new local support agencies where we find that we are not adequately meeting the needs of our residents
- We have introduced Neighbourhood Events to improve engagement of a wider range of residents.
- We have reviewed our resident involvement mechanisms and introduced a new Residents Group to participate in service improvements and policy development.

What we intend to do over the next 3 years

Each year, the Diversity Working Group will produce and monitor an Action Plan to ensure that we continuously improve in relation to equality and diversity. Progress will be reported to the Board on an annual basis.

The following are some examples of areas we intend to action over the next 3 years.

- Review options for improving the diversity of our Board to ensure that it reflects the communities we serve.
- Extend our E&D training for all staff to include improved awareness of the issues faced by different religions/beliefs and the LGBT population.
- Undertake a comprehensive customer profiling exercise to include sexual orientation and religion/belief and use this information to better tailor our services.

- Having developed our Equality Impact Assessment framework, we will continue to work to ensure that this is thoroughly embedded.
- There is an under-representation of White British residents accessing Hexagon's employment and skills services. We will continue to seek appropriate ways to address this issue.
- The under-representation of younger customers in relation to Resident Involvement has also been highlighted by the Diversity Working Group as an issue to be considered. Actions to address this issue will be included in the Single Equality Action Plan.
- Continue to ensure that our Aids and Adaptations budget provision is sufficient enough to meet the needs of our residents with disabilities, and that this service is publicised effectively. We will also continue to seek feedback via the Disabled Residents Forum.
- Identify targets for lettings by age, gender and disability, and monitor against these.
- As the majority of Hexagon's employees are in the 45- 54 age band, we will closely monitor the age profile of Hexagon employees to ensure that: any necessary succession plans are in place; younger people are recruited into the workforce.
- Track residents' satisfaction with repairs by diversity strands and use the information to improve access to services as appropriate.

Our commitment

This is our fourth single equality scheme and it will help us to ensure that:

- We have effective leadership and governance arrangements in place to scrutinise performance in E&D.
- Our services are non-discriminatory by assessing the impact of our policies, procedures, and strategies
- We provide excellent customer service that responds to the individual needs of our customers.

- We continue to improve our knowledge and understanding of our customers ensuring that services are shaped and reviewed using that knowledge and understanding.
- Our workforce will understand and promote our commitment to E&D.
- Our board and workforce will broadly reflect the communities we work in.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about our Single Equality Scheme, please contact Tracy Inniss, HR Manager – tinniss@hexagon.org.uk

All our publications can be made available on request in large print, braille, or audio and in other languages.