

Equality & Diversity Position

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to highlight the need to recruit a permanent Equality & Diversity Officer.

Introduction

An interim Equality & Diversity Manager commenced work on Equality and Diversity issues in February 2006 and is due to return to her substantive position, (Service Improvement Manager) in mid- August 06. There are a number of pieces of work relating to Equality and Diversity that requires further progression, which equates to the workload to a full time employee. A summary of work that needs to be progressed is listed below;

- To progress the Equality and Diversity Action Plan,
- To evaluate progress against Equality performance targets and to initiate appropriate action;
- To assist in reaching each Level of the Equality Standards (Level 3 by March 2007)
- To review and develop an Action Plan to comply with large array of equal opportunities legislation that are effective at the end of this year,
- To carry out the pilot of the Equality Impact Toolkit,
- To provide additional training to the Senior Management Team and new starters,
- To contribute to multi-agency meetings and liaise with various partners, continuing to obtain good practice,
- To monitor Hate incidents and ASB cases and assess customer satisfaction levels,

- To progress recommendations from the post Inspection Action Plan.

Service Improvement Team Function

It is proposed that the Equality and Diversity Officer will report to the Service Improvement Manager for a number of reasons;

- The Service Improvement Manager, having worked on Equality Diversity in the last few months, has an understanding and knowledge of Equality & Diversity issues. In particular, the Manager understands the organisational priorities that relate to Equality & Diversity issues. By working under this Manager the direction of the Equality & Diversity Officer work will be both effective and specific to needs of the organisation;
- The Service Improvement Manager will take overall responsibility for Equality & Diversity Issues, providing advice, guidance and coaching to the Officer.
- Within the Service Improvement function, there is a need to develop, review and implement policies and procedures, which is part of the role of the Officer – to look at the impact of policies in terms of Equality & Diversity. This role will sit comfortably within the main function of the team.

Finance

The Service Improvement budget had already set aside some funding, as it identified early on that a post may be required to focus on Equality & Diversity issues. The grade of the Officer is proposed to be pitched at pay scale P01 (£ 26,187- £28,221) which is in line with other similar ALMOs and the Manchester City Councils pay scales for the particular role.

Advertising and Recruiting

A draft job specification and job description is at Appendices 2 and 3 of this report. While we wish to recruit the best person for the job, we would like to ensure that we advertise in areas to target under-represented groups. For example, advertising this position where Asian and Black people frequent (see HR Strategy) and advertise accordingly.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Board approves the following:

- To advertise and recruit for a post of Equality & Diversity Officer,
- The Equality & Diversity Officer to work in the Service Improvement Team, and
- Agree the grade of PO1 for the position.

Appendix 2

Northwards Housing Job Description

Equality & Diversity Officer, scale PO1

The main purpose of the job

To make sure Northwards Housing meets its commitment to equality, diversity and involvement and that its strategies, priorities and action plans are delivered to identified timescales within the Equality & Diversity Action Plan.

To make sure Northwards Housing complies with the relevant legislation, the revised CRE Code of Practice for Racial Equality and progresses through the various Levels of the Equality Standard.

Work with faith groups, voluntary organisations, private businesses and other public sector bodies to improve services for all in North Manchester.

Main duties and responsibilities

1. To Work on multi-agency initiatives, with specific focus on Race, Gender, sexuality (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bi-sexual), Disability, age and religion which will contribute to the overall achievement of Northwards' values, aims and objectives.
2. To facilitate and co-ordinate achieving each Level of the Equality Standards and help disseminate learning from Inspections.
3. To carry out, monitor and evaluate Equality Impact Assessments on existing policies, procedures, strategies and services.
4. To provide advice and develop and deliver training in Equality and Diversity issues.
5. To liaise with relevant faith groups, voluntary groups, communities, businesses and other agencies with the aim of enhancing partnership working and improving services for all of Northwards tenants and customers.

6. To monitor Equality performance and identify innovative ways to improve performance.
7. To arrange and carry out Equality and Diversity mystery shopping exercises.
8. To service the Equality and Diversity Working Group
9. To lead on the organisation's focus groups that deal with Equality and Diversity.
10. To develop services to ensure Northwards Housing provides effective support for vulnerable tenants.

Where the post holder is disabled every effort will be made to supply all necessary adjustments or equipment to allow them to carry out all duties of the job. If however, a certain task proves to be unachievable, job redesign will be given full consideration.

Person Specification

Equality & Diversity Officer

For this position we are looking for:

1. Experience and in-depth knowledge of various Equal Opportunities Legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA), Sex Discrimination Act, Human Rights Act.
2. A clear understanding of social inclusion and its importance to community cohesion
3. Experience of carrying out Equality Impact Assessments
4. A proven track record of monitoring and evaluating policies and redressing negative impact
5. Experience of leading and developing multi-agency working
6. A clear understanding of how to challenge service delivery to achieve cost effective, high quality, fair and equal services for all Northwards Housing tenants and customers.
7. Experience of formulating, developing and implementing multi-agency strategies, preferably with the public sector
8. A record of success in creating equality in service delivery

Personal Style and Behaviour

1. A commitment to Equality & Diversity and to Northwards Housing values
2. A commitment to continuous Service Improvement
3. Drive and commitment to make quick progress on a range of issues, including some “quick wins”
4. An enthusiastic and effective ambassador for the organisation
5. A professional demeanour, credibility and presence in groups
6. An excellent communicator, able to engender commitment at all levels
7. An inclusive team worker who fosters partnerships, work collaboratively across boundaries and achieves positive outcomes through others
8. Willingness to learn and a positive attitude towards new challenges