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|  | | Report to: Northwards Housing Board Tuesday 11 May 2010 | | Item No: <h1>7a</h1> | |
| Title: | | Annual Diversity Report | | | |
| Date: | | 19 April 2010 | | | |
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| Confidential: | | | | | |
| For: (Please tick action required) | | NOTING ✓ | | DISCUSSION | |
| | | APPROVAL | | | |
| PURPOSE OF REPORT | | | | | |
| To provide the Board with an end of year summary of Northwards performance in meeting it's equality aims and objectives | | | | | |
| RECOMMENDATION | | | | | |
| It is recommended that the Board note the progress made in meeting equality objectives in 2009/10 and are aware of areas of priority in 2010/11. | | | | | |
| IMPLICATIONS | | | | | |
| Equality & Diversity: | | Northwards must monitor its performance in relation to equality to ensure that the services provided do not directly or indirectly discriminate against certain groups, and that they are fair and accessible to all. | | | |
| Financial: | | None directly | | | |
| Staffing: | | None directly | | | |
| Decency Target: | | None directly | | | |
| Governance: | | The Board must satisfy itself that the needs of all Northwards employees and customers are being met. | | | |
| Risk Assessment: | | Northwards have a number of legal duties in relation to equality that must be met. | | | |

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| Equality Impact Assessment When a new policy, procedure or initiative is being submitted for approval an Equality Impact Assessment must have been completed. Please give details below. | |
| Function being assessed | N/A |
| Section | |
| Date of assessment | |
| Person Responsible for assessment | |
| Is this a new or existing policy? | |
| If there are significant implications in terms of equality please append a summary report. | |

Consultation/Consideration:

| | Yes, No or N/A: | Name: | Date: |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Sub-Committee: | | | |
| Area Panel: | | | |
| Task Groups: | | | |
| Ward Councillors: | | | |

Annual Diversity Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Northwards values and objectives clearly outline our commitment towards the promotion of equality and valuing diversity.
- 1.2 The actions Northwards take to fulfil these objectives ensure that we deliver a service in keeping with the expectations of the Housing Inspectorate's Diversity KLOE 31, and in accordance with our legal obligations as well as the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- 1.3 Northwards Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011 sets out our strategic approach to equality, and is supported by a three-year action plan. Equality actions are also addressed within the Access to Services Strategy and action plan, as well as through individual Team Improvement plans.
- 1.4 This report provides a summary of Northwards performance throughout the year in meeting our equality aims and objectives.

2.0 Single Equality Scheme Review

- 2.1 Under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Equality Act 2006 Northwards Housing has statutory duties to promote equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination in the areas of race, gender and disability:
- 2.2 There are also a series of specific duties which included the publication of Race, Gender and Disability Equality Scheme and an Action Plan to outline how these objectives would be met.
- 2.3 In September 2008 Northwards published our first Single Equality Scheme (SES). The Scheme provides a strategic overview as to how we intend to meet our statutory duties, as well as addressing the needs of other the equality groups - age, religion/belief and sexual orientation. The Scheme was accompanied by a three-year action plan.
- 2.4 Northwards carried out a review of our Scheme from August to October in 2009. A series of consultation exercises were held with employees and tenants to review progress, and to discuss areas where additional actions may be required.
- 2.5 At the time of the review 79% of actions had been completed or were ongoing. This included:
 - Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are now built into the policy review process, and assessments carried out on a regular basis.

- A wide range of training and awareness sessions have been delivered, including Mental Health, LGBT and Refugee Awareness Sessions.
- A new Family Friendly Policy has been introduced to provide additional support to employees when trying to balance home and work life commitments.
- Employee support groups have been established in partnership with Eastlands Homes.
- Equality specifications became a central aspect to procurement and tendering processes.
- The Domestic Abuse Policy and Sanctuary Scheme was launched and reviewed. As of 31.03.10 no Northwards tenants have presented at the Homeless Families Unit since the scheme commenced.

2.6 Consultation led to a number of new actions being introduced, including more work around promoting hate crime reporting and positive action taken. Northwards also aim to improve communications with local mental health teams to raise awareness of issues faced by our tenants.

3.0 Equality Actions in Team Improvement Plans (TIPs)

3.1 In March 2009 Northwards made the decision not to produce a separate Equality & Diversity Action Plan for 2009/10 but rather to include all actions within Team Improvement Plans. This was to ensure that responsibility for promoting equality was embedded across the organisation, and that individual teams took ownership of equality actions.

3.2 Reports on the progress of equality actions within Team Improvement Plans were brought to all Sub-Committees on a quarterly basis.

3.3 At year end 2009/10, 89% of equalities actions within Team Improvement Plans were completed. Highlights included:

- Customer profiling information has been collected on 89% of our tenants.
- The Resident Involvement Team worked hard in 2009/10 to increase involvement from young people. A number of events and activities were arranged to engage young people in our communities. This included a "Shout Out" Event in Cheetham in late 2009 and in Moston on 8 March.
- Northwards 'Junior Warden Scheme' continued to be successful, expanding to 22 schools in the Northwards area with 220 Junior Wardens. The wardens have been involved in litter picks and inter-generational activities, while at the same time learning how to become responsible community members.
- The Responsive Repairs Team carried out a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment on the introduction of electronic handhelds. This involved consultation with tenants and operatives on the accessibility of the handhelds, as well as discussions around sharing communications needs information through the system.
- The Home Improvements Service has delivered on actions arising from the previous year's Equality Impact Assessment. This included an analysis of tenant satisfaction by the six equality strands, as well as LGBT Awareness training for members of the Home Improvements Team and contracting partners.
- The HR Team carried out its second employee satisfaction survey, and also revised the employee details form. This now enables workforce profiling and satisfaction to be analysed for all equality groups. Consultation on a revised

application form for Northwards was carried out with REMPLOY and the Fairground group.

4.0 Performance and Satisfaction

- 4.1 Northwards has in place a number of equalities based performance indicators (PIs) including employment PIs, annual and quarterly tenant satisfaction PIs and contracting partner PIs.

Employment PI's

- 4.2 Equality related performance within HR is measured through Organisational Health Statistics. Targets have been set to address under-representation within the workplace of minority groups. This includes BME employees, women and disabled people. PI's are also used to monitor representation at senior management levels.
- 4.3 Representation from BME employees has increased this year, with around 12.3% of employees from minority ethnic backgrounds. The ratio of male to female employees remains balanced with a ratio 50.7% to 49.3%. However, the number of disabled employees has fallen from 7% to 4.9% of the workforce. This is therefore an area to consider for positive action when pursuing any future recruitment.
- 4.4 Due to limited personnel changes at senior management level there has been little change in the representation of BME and disabled employees at senior management level. However, Northwards senior management team continues to have strong representation from female employees.

Tenant Satisfaction PI's

- 4.5 Tenant satisfaction by equality strands is measured through the annual status survey and individual service area surveys, such as Home Improvement, Re-Housing, Retirement and Repairs satisfaction surveys.
- 4.6 This year's annual status survey indicated that there were very few significant variations from the overall scores for equality groups. Areas of note were:
- i) Satisfaction with the contact centre was lower for BME (81%) than non-BME (86%) respondents.
 - ii) LGB respondents reported a higher perception (42%) of ASB than other respondents (26%).
 - iii) Non-BME respondents were less likely (56%) than BME respondents (65%) to agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

Further work continues to be carried out with the BME and LGBT Forums on increasing satisfaction rates. Detailed survey work to measure perceptions of change and cohesion within neighbourhoods is also being progressed through the North Manchester Cohesion Working Group

- 4.7 Service area satisfaction surveys are monitored through the Sub-Committees, with equality strand satisfaction reported on a quarterly basis. Analysis has again showed that there is little variation in satisfaction rates for minority groups. Areas of concern, such as lower satisfaction from LGB tenants with some Home Improvements works, have been addressed and trends are now showing positive increases.

4.8 Our main contracting partners also report against a set of equality key performance indicators (KPIs). These were monitored through Asset Management Sub-Committee and at Impact Manchester Community Benefits meetings. KPIs are monitored for the number of women, BME and disabled employees at each company, as well as looking at tenant satisfaction figures.

4.9 Positive work around Women in Construction is likely to have been a factor in the increase of female employees working for our contracting partners (for example MWL rising from 7% in quarter 1 to 10% by year end). Wates and Seddons show good representation of BME employees their workforces with 17% and 10% respectively. At present only 3% of Manchester Workings workforce are from BME communities. They do however report 7% of employees to have a disability, while Wates report only 1% and Seddons 0%. Northwards are keen to work with our contracting partners in the year ahead to tackle barriers to recruitment for people in the construction industry.

5.0 Events and Awareness Raising Exercises

5.1 Northwards have again this year taken part in numerous events to raise awareness of equality issues, further engagement with young people and to promote positive relations between different groups of people in our communities.

5.2 The International Food and Dance Festival (FAD) has quickly become a much anticipated event in the summer calendar. Northwards first entry at Manchester's Pride festival in August last year was also hailed as a huge success.

5.3 Northwards employees have also shown great generosity this year in raising money for many worthy causes, including Breast Cancer and AIDS awareness.

6.0 The Year Ahead

6.1 Equality actions for the year ahead will again be captured within service area Team Improvement Plans and progress reported quarterly at Sub-Committee. Other upcoming equality matters to note include:

- The new Equality Bill finally reaches the statute books in October 2010 mainstreaming existing equalities legislation and enacting new extended rights for some equality groups, and including a duty to tackle socio-economic inequality. Northwards will therefore be carrying out consultation with employees, tenants and partners on a new Equality Scheme to be published for 2011-2014 to cover all equality areas and respond to the socio-economic duty.
- The Equality Bill also increases the importance of the public sector role in promoting equality through procurement. Northwards will therefore need to ensure that we take a leading role in promoting this agenda, particularly through our involvement in the newly merged Procure Plus procurement consortium.
- Following positive feedback from our Equality Framework Gap Analysis, Northwards will be going forward for assessment at the Excellence level of the Social Housing Equality Framework in Summer 2010.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that the Board note the progress made in meeting equality objectives in 2009/10 and are aware of areas of priority for the year ahead.