

The Social Housing Equality Framework

Self-assessment guidance **2012 edition**



Key to assessment standards

- **Developing**
- **Achieving**
- **Excellent**

This Equality Framework has been developed by the LGA in conjunction with the sector as a resource to drive improvement through peer challenge and review.

Knowing your customers

Developing ●

Understanding the importance of equality

Achieving ●

Developing better outcomes

Excellent ●

Making a difference

Collecting information

1.1

The organisation has in place plans to gather information on the profile of their service users covering all the protected characteristics as well as other relevant factors such as literacy, rural isolation etc.



2.1

Relevant and appropriate information about service users is gathered efficiently using a range of techniques. This informs the organisation's policy and strategy and helps to identify key gaps in service delivery.



3.1

The organisation has good quality information on the equality profile and needs of their customers, both individually and as a community. The evidence is regularly used and updated to take account of any changes.

Analysing and using information

1.2

Systems are being developed to collect and analyse data / intelligence about service users, their needs and aspirations and to store data with appropriate safeguards to ensure confidentiality.



2.2

Information and data are broken down and analysed to monitor and assess and to set equality objectives and targets. The information is used in assessing the impact of new and existing policies.



3.2

Equality objectives and outcomes are reviewed and evaluated regularly, based on updated equality data.

Sharing information between partners

| 1.3 | | 2.3 | | 3.3 |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Plans and protocols are in place to collect, share and use equality information about the area with contractors, other agencies and partners. | → | Relevant and appropriate customer information and data is collected, shared and used with contractors, other agencies and partners, to set and review equality objectives. | → | The organisation and partners work together and share data to identify how communities are changing and the impact this may have on shared equality priorities. |
| Questions to ask in self assessment for knowing your customers – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for knowing your customers – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for knowing your customers – excellent organisation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we drawn up an action plan to collect customer profiling data? • Does this cover leaseholders and other service users as well as residents? • Have we set up systems to store customer profiling data safely and securely? • Are we clear how we will use the customer profiling data once it has been collected? • Is there a programme in place to brief staff and customers on why we need to collect this information, how it will be stored and how it will be used to provide customers with appropriate services? • Are protocols in place with partners and contractors to share and use equality related data? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we collected information for at least 60% of our residents about their protected characteristics, communication and other relevant needs to provide them with appropriate services? • Does this figure cover leaseholders and other service users as well as residents? • Have we plans in place to collect the remaining customer profiling data? • Have we begun to use the customer profiling data collected to tailor our services better to the needs of our service users? • Have we begun to use the customer profiling data when conducting an equality analysis? • Are we regularly sharing customer profiling data with our partners and contractors? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we collected logged and are regularly using information for at least 90% of our residents about their protected characteristics, communication and other relevant needs to provide them with appropriate services? • Do we have in place systems to keep this data up to date? • Do we review our equality aims, objectives and outcomes at least every three years to take account of significant changes in the communities we serve? • Do these reviews also include our main partners and contractors? |

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Developing ●

Understanding the importance of equality

Achieving ●

Developing better outcomes

Excellent ●

Making a difference

Leadership, vision and commitment

1.4

The board, chief executive and partners, including contractors, commit publicly to improving equality outcomes and are aware of the organisation's equality commitments.



2.4

Clear organisational and partnership equality objectives and outcomes have been set and have been publicised to all stakeholders including residents and other service users.



3.4

The organisation can demonstrate and publicise success in meeting a range of equality objectives and outcomes, working with partners and contractors, and is reviewing them on a regular basis.

Mainstreaming equality

1.5

Business plans have been reviewed with partners, customer representatives, contractors and other agencies, to ensure they reflect the organisation's equality commitments for service delivery and employment.



2.5

Equality objectives and outcomes are incorporated into service improvement plans and appropriate resources are being allocated. Performance is monitored regularly by the board and senior leadership with service user involvement.



3.5

There is a coherent vision of equality which sits within the wider business framework and is shared and owned by the organisation, contractors, its partners, other agencies and its customers.

Equality analysis

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1.6 | | 2.6 | | 3.6 |
| Staff and service users as appropriate are equipped to conduct equality analyses of relevant strategies, policies and functions. | → | Equality analyses and evaluations of key services and functions are conducted on an ongoing basis and the results are published. Action is taken following equality analysis to mitigate adverse impact where this has been identified and to promote examples of good practice. | → | Actions arising from equality analyses are integrated into strategic and operational plans and monitored. |
| Equality objectives and legal duties | | | | |
| 1.7 | | 2.7 | | 2.7 |
| The organisation is compliant with equality related legal requirements and equality objectives have been set | → | Action is being taken to implement the commitments within equality action plans and they are monitored regularly by the board and senior leadership with service user involvement | → | The organisation can demonstrate improvements and outcomes as a result of its equality objectives and targets. |
| 1.8 | | 2.8 | | 3.8 |
| Corporate, departmental and team service level structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of the equalities commitments of the organisation | → | There is regular and frequent scrutiny and monitoring at board, senior management and team meetings, of progress on meeting the organisation's equality commitments | → | The organisation provides details of its performance on equality to staff, service users and external stakeholders. |

| Communicating and promoting commitments | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1.9 | | 2.9 | 3.9 |
| The organisation's communication strategy includes promoting equality of access and fostering good relations across all service users and local communities | → | The organisation provides information to service users and potential service users about its equality priorities, how it is responding to its customers' needs and fostering good relations. | → |
| | | | Feedback from its strategic and voluntary and community sector partners and from residents and service users demonstrates that it is seen as championing equality and fostering good relations. |
| Procurement and commissioning | | | |
| 1.10 | | 2.10 | 3.10 |
| The organisation has a procurement strategy that reflects the equality commitments of the organisation. | → | Procurement and commissioning frameworks and processes take account of the differing needs of customers and encourage supplier diversity. | → |
| | | | The organisation can demonstrate that commissioned / procured services are delivering its equality related objectives. |
| Promotion of equality and participation | | | |
| 1.11 | | 2.11 | 3.11 |
| Plans are in place to improve the participation of under-represented groups on the board and at all levels of the organisation. | → | Initiatives are in place to promote equality of opportunity in terms of the participation of under-represented groups at board level and within other governance and resident involvement forums. This work is regularly monitored. | → |
| | | | There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in governance and resident involvement. |

| Leading by example | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1.12 | | 2.12 | | 3.12 |
| The board and senior managers have been equipped to carry out their roles to lead and evaluate the organisation's commitments to promote equality. | → | The board and senior managers take an active part in the organisation's work on equality – as members of Working Groups, portfolio holders etc | → | The board and senior managers demonstrate personal leadership and accountability and understand and promote the importance of equality to the organisation's customers and local communities. |
| Good practice and benchmarking | | | | |
| | | | | |
| The organisation seeks good practice from the social housing sector through membership of networks and local forums. | → | The organisation shares its experience with other local social housing providers. | → | The organisation benchmarks its achievements against other social housing providers and shares its experience in developing good practice across the sector. |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organisational commitment – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organisational commitment– achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organisational commitment– excellent organisation |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we adopted a statement or policy setting out our equality related aims and objectives? • Are these equality related aims and objectives reflected in our business plan? • Have we reviewed our relevant policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the current legal requirements? • Have we adopted a system for conducting our equality analyses? • Have we drawn up an initial programme for carrying out equality analyses? • Have we set up an equality and diversity working or improvement group? • Have we reviewed our communications strategy to ensure that it promotes our commitments on equality and diversity? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we publicised our statement or policy setting out our equality related aims, objectives, outcomes and priorities to our residents and other service users? • Have these aims, objectives, outcomes and priorities been incorporated into our service improvement plans? • Are we regularly monitoring and reporting our progress in meeting these aims, objectives, outcomes and priorities to our board or relevant committees? • Do we involve service users in this monitoring? • Are the results of this monitoring publicised to our residents and other stakeholders? • Have we completed our initial programme of equality analyses? • Have we taken action in the light of these equality analyses to mitigate any negative impact? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we publicised our successes in meeting our equality related aims, objectives and outcomes? • Did we incorporate our updated equality related aims, objectives and outcomes when we reviewed our business plan? • Have we implemented the recommendations arising from our initial programme of equality analyses? • Have we begun our next round of equality analyses? • Does our monitoring show that our contractors are consistently working with us to help achieve our equality related aims, objectives and outcomes? • Are local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) bidding for our contracts? |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organisational commitment – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organisational commitment– achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for leadership, partnership and organizational commitment– excellent organisation |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we incorporated our commitments to promote equality and diversity into our procurement strategy? • Is the composition of our Board and senior management team broadly representative of the communities we serve? • Have Board members and senior managers received advice and guidance on their roles in promoting equality and diversity and on human rights? • Are we part of any social housing networks which share good practice on promoting equality and diversity? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we including equality related considerations when inviting contractors to tender and when appointing contractors? • Have we briefed local Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) on how they can best bid for our contracts? • Have we increased the representation of people from previously under-represented groups on our Board and senior management team? • Do board members and senior managers champion our work to promote equality and diversity within the organisation? • Are we regularly identifying and taking up examples of good practice through our involvement on social housing networks and forums? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the composition of our Board and our senior management team now broadly reflect the composition of the communities we serve? • Are we seen by other social housing providers and local organisations as a champion of equality and diversity and a source of best practice? |

Customer engagement

Developing ●

Understanding the importance of equality

Achieving ●

Developing better outcomes

Excellent ●

Making a difference

Community engagement structures

1.14

Inclusive community engagement and customer involvement structures are developed with appropriate support being provided to build capacity to be involved. This includes involving and consulting stakeholders / representatives of vulnerable groups to ensure their views are taken into account



2.14

Community engagement and customer involvement structures are working efficiently and effectively and are monitored regularly.



3.14

The organisation involves and consults all its service users on an ongoing basis before priorities are agreed and can show how this consultation has influenced priorities.

The organisation can demonstrate that effective mechanisms are in place to enable all equality stakeholders / representatives of vulnerable groups to challenge, scrutinise and evaluate priorities.

Effective engagement

1.15

Applicants and residents are consulted and / or engaged appropriately on service planning and delivery.



2.15

A good cross section of applicants and residents contribute to the development of the organisation's service delivery equality goals through its engagement structures.



3.15

A good cross section of applicants and residents are involved in monitoring progress on the organisation's service delivery equality goals through its engagement structures.

| Questions to ask in self assessment for customer engagement– developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for customer engagement – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for customer engagement – excellent organisation |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we adopted a resident involvement strategy? • Does this highlight the need to ensure that we involve and consult vulnerable and other people who may be under-represented as part of community engagement? • Have members of our scrutiny panel and other relevant forums received advice and guidance on their roles in promoting equality and diversity and on human rights? • Are we members of local partnerships and forums designed to promote cohesion and reduce community conflict? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What progress have we made in involving a cross section of all our residents as part of our community engagement work? • What steps are we taking to address areas of our work where there are significant differences in these satisfaction levels? • How have we worked with our partners to help promote cohesion and reduce community conflict? | → | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a broad cross section of our service users consulted and involved regularly and systematically in setting and reviewing our equality related aims, objectives and outcomes? • Are our scrutiny panel and other relevant forums regularly making recommendations to improve our work to promote equality and diversity and human rights? • Are we working with our partners and using our expertise to prevent community conflict arising and to develop more cohesive communities? |

Responsive services, access and customer care

Developing ●

Understanding the importance of equality

Achieving ●

Developing better outcomes

Excellent ●

Making a difference

Tackling harassment and domestic abuse

1.17

Structures are in place within the organisation and across partnerships to deal with harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse effectively.



2.17

Performance on dealing with harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse is monitored and analysed regularly, in partnership with appropriate agencies. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified.



3.17

More residents believe that harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse are being dealt with effectively.

Providing accessible services

1.18

Systems are in place to provide information to applicants and residents in formats and languages they can understand and the organisation's reception areas have been audited to see if they are easily accessible for disabled people and people with children etc.



2.18

Applicants and residents communication needs are checked and met and the organisation's reception areas are easily accessible for disabled people and people with children etc.



3.18

Monitoring shows that most applicants and residents find the organisation's services are convenient and easy to access.

| Take up of services | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1.19 | | 2.19 | 3.19 |
| The organisation is developing systems to collect, analyse and measure data on how service users are able to access services. | → | Access to and take up and appropriateness of services are monitored regularly, including by protected characteristic. | → Adverse trends identified from monitoring and analyses of data are acted upon. |
| Assessing satisfaction | | | |
| 1.20 | | 2.20 | 3.20 |
| The organisation has plans to collect satisfaction data covering all the protected characteristics. | → | The organisation is able to monitor satisfaction rates for all sections of its customer base, including by protected characteristics. | → Service users and all sections of the community are satisfied that the organisation have taken their views into account, that they have been able to influence strategic priorities, and that there have been improvements in service outcomes. |
| Human Rights | | | |
| 1.21 | | 2.21 | 3.21 |
| Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that human rights considerations are identified when planning and delivering services and that service users are treated with dignity and respect. | → | Human rights issues are considered and addressed when delivering services to service users and this is monitored. Service users are treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of protected characteristics and this is monitored. | → Service users believe that they have been treated fairly and that their human rights have been respected, irrespective of protected characteristics. |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – excellent organisation |
|---|----------|---|----------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have policies and procedures in place to identify and deal with all kinds of harassment and hate crime and domestic abuse? • Have we set time targets and other performance indicators for responding to harassment, hate crime and domestic abuse? • Are there arrangements in place to support people experiencing harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse? • Are arrangements in place for working with partners to deal with perpetrators and support victims of harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse? • Are arrangements in place to publicise how people can report harassment, hate crime or domestic abuse? • How have service users been involved in setting equality objectives for service delivery? | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we regularly monitoring our performance on tackling harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse against our time standards and other performance indicators? • Are we collecting feedback from our residents who have asked for our assistance to tackle harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse on how well we did? • Are we using this monitoring and feedback to review our work to tackle and prevent harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse? • Are the systems we set up to provide information in other formats and languages operating smoothly? • Are we identifying applicants and residents with low literacy skills and communicating effectively with them? • How have our service users been involved in setting equality objectives for service delivery? • How did we ensure that a wide range of service users were involved in this? | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do most of our residents who have reported incidents of harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse think that we deal effectively with these incidents? • Are we monitoring systematically and regularly to check that the equality related commitments and standards of the services we provide are being met? • Does our monitoring show that all our residents, regardless of their protected characteristics are similarly highly satisfied with the services we provide? • Does our monitoring show that we treat our service users with dignity and respect? • Are we communicating in the format or language preferred by our residents every time we communicate with them? |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for responsive services, access and customer care – excellent organisation |
|---|----------|--|----------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did we ensure that a wide range of service users were involved in this? • Have all services been assessed to identify particular access needs? • Do we have systems in place to provide information in other formats or languages if requested? Do these systems cover people with low literacy skills? • Are all our offices fully accessible for disabled people? • Do we have an effective, well publicised and well-resourced approach to providing Aids and Adaptations? • Have we set up systems to collect satisfaction data about our main services covering all the protected characteristics? • How do we ensure that staff treat service users with respect and are mindful of human rights consideration? • What systems do we have in place to collect information on the take up of all services by protected characteristics? | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all our services been assessed to identify particular access needs? • What does our monitoring show about the relative satisfaction levels of people with different protected characteristics with our services? • What steps are we taking to address areas of our work where there are significant differences in these satisfaction levels? • Are we collecting feedback to show whether service users are treated with respect and that we are mindful of human rights considerations? • Are we systematically collecting information on the take up of all services by protected characteristics? • Do we have clear service standards for the Aids and Adaptations service and does our monitoring demonstrate that these standards are being met? | <p>→</p> | |

A skilled and committed workforce

Developing ●

Understanding the importance of equality

Achieving ●

Developing better outcomes

Excellent ●

Making a difference

Workforce planning

1.22

The organisation's workforce planning strategy identifies key equality issues.



2.22

The equality aspects of the workforce planning strategy are implemented and monitored.



3.22

A range of innovative processes are in place which address equality issues for the whole workforce.

A more representative workforce

1.23

The organisation understands its local labour market and the barriers faced in terms of the protected characteristics and the impact this has on achieving a diverse workforce.



2.23

Fair recruitment policies and procedures are being followed, making use of positive action where appropriate.



3.23

The organisation can demonstrate movement towards greater equality in its workforce profile.

Workforce monitoring

1.24

The organisation has in place systems for collecting equality data covering applications, staff in post and other key aspects of its HR work.



2.24

The organisation regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data, covering the protected characteristics.



3.24

Adverse trends identified from the monitoring and analysis of employment data are acted upon, with staff input.

| Equality analysis of HR policies and procedures | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 1.25 | | 2.25 | 3.25 |
| The organisation ensures that all employment procedures comply with equality legislation and has a framework for conducting an equality analysis on major and new employment policies. | → | An equality analysis is conducted for all new and existing employment policies and procedures. Regular reviews are undertaken to update policies and procedures in line with updates in equality legislation and relevant codes of practice. | The organisation can demonstrate that staff have equal opportunity to develop potential , irrespective of protected characteristics |
| Staff engagement | | | |
| 1.26 | | 2.26 | 3.26 |
| A range of inclusive structures are in place to engage and involve staff before priorities are set. | → | Staff are engaged positively in service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working. | The organisation has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups, irrespective of protected characteristics. |
| Promoting a positive working environment | | | |
| 1.27 | | 2.27 | 3.27 |
| Structures are in place to identify the needs of employees and to provide a good work life balance. | → | Regular improvements are made to the working environment and staff are regularly taking up the work life balance opportunities provided. | Staff say that the organisation is a fair place to work, that it provides a good working environment and a good work life balance. |
| Equal pay review | | | |
| 1.28 | | 2.28 | 3.28 |
| The organisation has made a commitment to equal pay and has started work on its equal pay review. | → | The organisation has made significant progress on its equal pay review and is working towards reaching agreement with unions and other staff consultative bodies. | Action has been taken to ensure equal pay is fully implemented. |

| Harassment and bullying | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1.29 | | 2.29 | 3.29 |
| Structures are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with all types of harassment and bullying in the workplace. | → | Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. | → Harassment and bullying at work are dealt with effectively and staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect. |
| Appraisals | | | |
| 1.30 | | 2.30 | 3.30 |
| Equality issues are integrated into appraisal systems. | → | Equality implications inform the setting of objectives in management and individual appraisals. | → Managers and staff are delivering improvements based on objectives. |
| Learning and development | | | |
| 1.31 | | 2.31 | 3.31 |
| The organisation has carried out a training needs assessment of the learning and development required to deliver equality outcomes. | → | The organisation provides a range of learning and development opportunities to support the board, leadership, staff and resident groups to deliver the equality outcomes commitments of the organisation. | → The board and leadership understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of customers. |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – excellent organisation |
|---|----------|---|----------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our workforce planning strategy include equality and diversity considerations? • What do we know about the local labour market and participation in that market by people with different protected characteristics? • How do we ensure that we keep up to date with employment legislation and good equalities related practice? • Do our recruitment and selection policy and procedures highlight equality related considerations? • Do we have plans to ensure that only staff trained in fair recruitment methods can sit on our recruitment panels? • Have we included employment and HR policies in our programme of equality analyses? • Have we committed ourselves to carrying out an equal pay review? | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we implemented the equality and diversity objectives in our workforce planning strategy? • Have they been effective? • Have we set workforce targets based on what we know about the local labour market? • Have we reviewed our human resources related policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the requirements of Equality Act 2010 and good practice? • Are we monitoring key stages in the recruitment and selection process to see whether we are attracting, short-listing and appointing candidates in line with our workforce targets? • Do we check that only staff trained in fair recruitment sit on our recruitment panels? • Have we completed equality analyses of our employment and HR policies and taken action in the light of their findings? | <p>→</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are we making progress in achieving our workforce targets? • Have we taken appropriate action in the light of the monitoring we undertake of our recruitment and selection processes? • Are we monitoring to check that all our staff have similar opportunities to develop their potential if they wish? • Have we completed our equal pay review and begun to implement its recommendations? • Do all our staff think we are providing a safe and secure working environment? • Do all our staff think we are a good and fair employer? |

| Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – developing organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – achieving organisation | | Questions to ask in self assessment for a skilled and committed workforce – excellent organisation |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we assessed the training needs of staff to equip them to carry out our equality commitments? • How do we identify and tackle bullying and harassment in the workplace? • How do we prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace? • How do we incorporate our equality aims into the appraisal process? • How do we consult and engage with staff to set priorities and shape the service? • How do we ensure that all staff have the opportunity to be involved in this consultation and engagement? | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we begun our equal pay review? • Have we met the training needs of staff to equip them to carry out our equality commitments? • Are we monitoring the effectiveness of the measures we have adopted to tackle and prevent bullying and harassment in the workplace? • What action have we taken in the light of this monitoring? • Have we reviewed the last round of our appraisals to determine whether we are incorporating our equality related commitments effectively? • How have staff helped to set priorities and shape the service? | | |





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