St Leger Homes of Doncaster

Equality and Diversity Strategy

Introduction

This is the first Equality and Diversity Strategy produced by St Leger Homes of Doncaster. Appended to this Strategy is an Action Plan, which defines actions, which need to be taken in order to deliver the Strategy. It allocates responsibility for each action, and sets a timescale for completion of the action. The Action Plan is attached as Appendix A.

ST LEGER HOMES OF DONCASTER – OUR VISION AND VALUES

St Leger Homes of Doncaster is an Arms Length Management company set up from 1st October 2005, by Doncaster Council to manage all Council Housing in the Doncaster borough.

Vision We will provide excellent customer responsive services that encourage tenants/people to take pride in their homes and work with others to develop sustainable communities.

- Provide excellent services to all our customers
- Empower our customers through meaningful consultation and participation
- Demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity
- Engage with others to increase the sustainability of estates
- Achieve the best value for money from all of our resources
- Engage with others to fulfil the strategic objectives of St Leger Homes and DMBC

The Strategy: To provide effective leadership through structured governance which involves all Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents in the decision making process.

To employ sound business principles, use resources effectively and achieve demonstrable value for money.

Core Values

- We will be open and honest and inform
- We will care for tenants and customers and be tough on those who do not fulfil their responsibilities
- We will encourage participation from tenants, leaseholders and residents
- We will encourage staff to reach their full potential
- We will promote equality in service delivery and behaviour of employees, Board Members and partners.

- We will strengthen the bonds of trust between the company, its customers and staff.
- Work with other agencies and partners to partners to and ensure that communities are sustainable

We will provide quality housing management services, and will play a key role in partnership working with the Council and other agencies, to provide quality homes in quality neighbourhoods, which are sustainable. We aim to achieve a minimum of a 2-Star rating for our services, which will allow us to access the additional resources we need in order to make sure that all Council housing in Doncaster meets the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

THE DONCASTER CONTEXT

Age Doncaster is geographically the largest metropolitan borough in England, with just under 290,000 residents. The 2001 Census showed that 21% of our residents are younger than 16, 58% are aged between 16 and 59, and a further 21% are over 60. In line with the national trend, this shows that Doncaster's residents are living longer and this has an impact on how we will deliver our service in the future.

Gender There are fairly even numbers of men (49%) and women (51%) living in Doncaster. However, the percentage of men who are over 75 is only 38% with women increasing to 62%. The last 20 years has seen a decline in the younger population, with a fall of 30% in both women and men who are aged between the ages of 15 and 24.

Disability The 2001 Census shows that approximately 23 % of Doncaster's residents stated that they were limited in their daily activities. This is 4.7% higher than the national figure. We want all our customers, including people with physical or learning disabilities, sensory impairments or with mental health problems, to have equal access to our services, information, employment opportunities and publicly used buildings. We recognise that there are many different needs to be considered when we deliver our services.

Race Doncaster has a rich and diverse multi cultural range of communities located across the Borough. The 2001 Census showed that in the last decade, the proportion of the minority ethnic population in Doncaster has grown from 1.6% to 2.3 %. Now that asylum seekers are located in Doncaster the pattern of diversity is increasing and constantly changing. This means that there are people from a wide range of backgrounds and speaking a wide variety of languages now living in Doncaster.

Religious Belief We recognise that people in Doncaster have wide ranging religions and beliefs; a minority of residents do not have a religion.

Sexual Orientation We recognise that members of our workforce and the local community who are of a minority sexual orientation may suffer from discrimination or unfair treatment. Although we are generally aware that our local community comprises of various sexual orientations, research has shown that at this time there is no accurate data on the make up of the local community in this regard

EQUALITY POLICY

St Leger Homes of Doncaster has an Equality Policy, which it adopted on 2nd November 2005.
The Policy applies to removal of direct and indirect discrimination against people on any unjustifiable cause. It gives various examples including:

- Gender or marital status
- Racial or ethnic grouping
- Disability
- Age
- Nationality
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Religion or spiritual beliefs
- Responsibility for dependants
- Trades Union activists
- Alternative lifestyles
- Prior offences – where the offences committed are irrelevant
- HIV status or other medical issues
- Illegitimacy

The policy allocates responsibility for Equality to the Board and to everyone who is employed by St Leger Homes of Doncaster. It embeds Equality and Diversity work into all roles and thereby into mainstream services. An identified officer has, however, specific responsibility for driving and monitoring progress across services. The policy is attached as Appendix B to this strategy.

LINKAGES TO DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL AND TO THE DONCASTER STRATEGIC PLAN

This Strategy will not only ensure delivery of the Equality Policy of St Leger Homes of Doncaster, but will also contribute towards the delivery of the Borough Strategy.

St Leger Homes of Doncaster not only work in partnership with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, but also actively participate in the work of Doncaster Strategic Partnership, through membership of Doncaster Strategic Housing Partnership. In addition, a tenant's representative and tenant member of the Board is the Doncaster Strategic Housing Partnership's representative on the Doncaster Strategic Partnership.

The vision for Doncaster is that "By 2010 Doncaster will be a major contributor to regional and national prosperity. The Borough will enjoy a high growth economy, supported by a substantial increase in educational attainment, the consolidation of commercial strength and widespread improvements in quality of life. Our communities will be vibrant and sustainable and Doncaster will be able to offer everyone living and working here the opportunity to achieve their full potential".

Underpinning this vision, are seven Transformational goals, which can be summarised as :

- Tackling Deprivation
- Achieving world class skills
- Improving skills and access to new technology
- Achieving an urban and rural renaissance
- Community participation in democracy
- Environmental sustainability
- Fastest Growing Economy in the North of England

The Housing Strategy 2005 has 3 key themes:-

- Creating a new impression of Doncaster – building on the regeneration of the Borough to create a city that people associate with being a great place for living, working and leisure activity.
- Improving quality and choice – providing access to aspirational and affordable housing for all and, in areas where the market cannot respond, tackling unfitness and poor standards in all sectors including the need to find a long-term solution to the investment need in the Council's own stock.
- Something for everyone – tackling social exclusion, deprivation, homelessness and finding innovative ways to meeting the needs of people who need more than a bricks and mortar solution.

The Strategic Housing Priorities are:-

- Ensure the quantity, quality, design and environment of housing supply matches changing demands
- Market the choice of housing available both to local people and others
- Improve the sustainability local communities by developing and delivering housing market regeneration and renewal programmes
- Increase the range of affordable housing available, including innovative options for ownership
- Improve the quality of life in Doncaster's neighbourhoods and communities for tenants with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas

Both the Council and St Leger Homes of Doncaster recognise that none of the above can be delivered effectively unless Equality & Diversity considerations are firstly built into their delivery. It is not possible for everyone to achieve their full potential if they are experiencing disadvantage, discrimination and / or harassment for any unjustifiable reason.

Therefore, this Equality Strategy and delivery of the Action Plan contained within it, are key to ensuring that our services are developed and delivered in a way which not only meets the needs of individual customers and each community, but also in a way which contributes to the Doncaster Strategic Partnership's and the Council's vision and goals.

STRATEGIC AIMS

St Leger Homes of Doncaster has identified the following aims for delivering the equality and diversity commitments.

1. Improving Access to services and responding to our diverse customers.
2. Improving our accountability as a service provider.

3. Developing innovative solutions by involving and responding to our diverse communities, customers, employees and partners.
4. Ensuring we provide high quality services at all times with an emphasis on continuous service improvements.
5. Improving opportunities for local involvement and promote cohesive communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

At an organisational and service level we have identified a number of key objectives and implementation strands for delivering our strategic aims on equality and diversity. These strands are central to ensuring we integrate and mainstream our equality policy and diversity action plan across the organisation.

Commitment and Leadership

We will seek to consistently provide leadership provide leadership and champion our commitment to equality and valuing diversity in all aspects of our organisational culture, policies and practice.

A Corporate Standard

Our equality policy reflects good practice developments. They set a corporate standard and set clear expectations across the organisation on managing its performance on equality and diversity.

Communication and Promotion

Our policy and strategy will be clearly communicated throughout the organisation. We will make information available in an accessible format for our customers, employees and partners. We will launch this new policy and strategy through a variety of means to ensure it is widely publicised. This will aid effective understanding and create a climate for environmental and organisational change. We will actively promote the policy and strategy and celebrate the diversity of our communities.

Planning and Performance Management

All service areas will reflect equality and diversity considerations and priorities in their respective service plans.

The Equalities Action Plan will dovetail existing planning processes but will also be a stand-alone plan for reporting and monitoring purposes.

This will form part of the performance management process on equality and valuing diversity. The equalities and diversity planning process will have due regard for meeting all legislative and planning requirements at a national and corporate borough level (including commitments to the Race Equality Scheme, Equality Standard and Impact Assessments).

Research and Consultation

We will continue to build our knowledge base and understanding of the diverse needs of our local communities. This will continue to aid our service planning and needs led service provision for a diverse customer base.

KEY STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

By mainstreaming equality and diversity into our business planning and service provision we will achieve the following service outcomes.

1. Improved access and take up of services, reflecting diversity issues.
2. Improved accountability and governance.
3. Improved forums and participation for service users.
4. Promoted good community relations and community cohesion.
5. Delivered effectively on equality and diversity issues for our employees, customers and partners.

ACTION PLAN

An Action Plan has been produced to drive delivery of the policy and strategy. The key sources for the Action Plan were:

- Doncaster Council's Corporate Equality & Diversity Strategy and Action Plan, Race Equality Scheme, and its Traveller and Gypsy Strategy
- Key Lines of Enquiry
- Audit Commission advice
- BME Housing Needs Survey
- Impact Assessments
- Status survey

<u>Doncaster Council's Corporate Equality & Diversity Strategy and Action Plan, Race Equality Scheme, and Traveller and Gypsy Strategy</u>

Doncaster Council published its Corporate Equality Plan in March 2005. The Race Equality Scheme was revised in 2005. The Corporate Equality Plan explained how the Borough Strategy would be delivered in a way which reflected Equality & Diversity issues, and how services would be delivered in such a way that celebrated and reflected diverse communities and individuals in a way which would not cause disadvantage / discrimination or harassment. The plan included an Action Plan. St Leger Homes of Doncaster has included in its Action Plan, actions which would help to deliver the actions contained in the Corporate Action Plan.

Doncaster Council has worked to develop strategies to reflect the particular needs of its Traveller and Gypsy communities.

The Race Equality Scheme reviews the previous Corporate Council Scheme. St Leger Homes of Doncaster has also taken this into account in developing its Action Plan.

<u>Key Lines of Enquiry</u>

These are standards which the Audit Commission identifies as elements of good practice undertaken by all organisations which are achieving 3 or 2 Stars (from a maximum of 3 available stars) when their services are assessed by the Audit Commission.

Audit Commission Advice

St Leger Homes of Doncaster has been working with the Audit Commission to identify ways in which it could improve its services.

Impact Assessments

Doncaster Council undertook impact Assessments on the repairs and maintenance service, Lettings Registration service and Estate Management. These assessments considered whether the provision of the services unequally affected customers – particularly with reference to disability, gender and race. Some issues have been addressed. Outstanding operational issues are reflected in the Strategy Action Plan. However, the Impact Assessments are old and "out-of-date". St Leger Homes of Doncaster will be undertaking further impact assessments of its services, as part of an ongoing process of review and revision of the way in which it progresses Equality & Diversity initiatives.

BME HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Council undertook a BME Housing Needs Survey in 2005/06. St Leger Homes of Doncaster will work positively with the Council to address issues raised.
Particular points in relation to St Leger Homes of Doncaster are:

- Double glazing and efficient heating systems – as the survey covered all housing, there is a strategic role for the council, particularly in relation to owner occupied properties and privately rented properties which lack these facilities. However, there is a role for St Leger Homes of Doncaster in ensuring that decency works reflect these needs
- Lack of Community facilities – this is predominantly a matter for the Council. However, St Leger Homes of Doncaster can assist by investigating whether some currently unmet needs could be addressed using Community Houses / Communal Halls
- Action to increase awareness of the services provided by St Leger Homes of Doncaster
- Ensuring that St Leger Homes of Doncaster mainstreams Equality & Diversity issues into the services that it provides
- More varied, customer orientated ways of consulting with customers

Status Survey

A survey was undertaken in 2004, which identified the following service issues:

- BME customers were slightly less satisfied with their accommodation, neighbourhood and services than non-BME customers, but a greater proportion of BME customers felt that they were improving.

- It also identified that 57% of all customers have a longstanding illness, disability or infirmity. However, further detail is required,

consequently all customers are to be surveyed to find out more about their disability and ethnicity, where they are happy to provide this information. A further Status Survey is also being commissioned to obtain a more recent understanding of customer's views.

- BME customers had more concerns about noise, damage, neighbour problems and racial harassment than non-BME customers.

Ensuring Delivery

Delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored through the ACE (Achieving Continuous Excellence) group, which is a group of Officers and Tenant Representatives. Monitoring reports will be presented to the St Leger Homes of Doncaster Departmental Management Team on a quarterly basis. A fuller monitoring and review report will be presented to the Board and to the Standing Joint Committee of Tenants & Residents Associations twice per year.

Further Information

For further information, please contact the Equality & Diversity section of the Community Liaison Team of St Leger Homes of Doncaster.
Contact details are attached as Appendix C of this Strategy.

Appendix A

ACTION PLAN

Key to Plan

Task = the desired outcome of each task
Purpose = the reason the task has been set
How = the method which will be used to achieve the desired outcome
Who = dedicated officer or team
When = target date for completion of task

Task	Purpose	How	Who	When
Analyse Customer Profile	To be able to identify whether any customer groups are under-represented	• Questionnaire • Allocations • Cards – Visiting Officer & Reception • Ensure IT system availablility	Service Review Manager / Diversity & Mediation Manager	01.01.06 01.02.06 01.02.06 01.02.06
Investigate and address any imbalances in Customer Profile	To identify whether under-representation is due to discrimination or disadvantage and to take remedial action	• Analyse Customer Profile compared to boroughwide Profile • Consult on differences • Report to Management Team / Board as part of reviewing strategy	Service Review Manager / Diversity & Mediation Manager	01.03.06 01.05.06 30.06.06
Raise staff awareness of Diversity issues	To deliver a better service by ensuring that equality and diversity is embedded into service delivery	• Training • Newsletters • Team briefings	All Managers	Ongoing process
Review and improve ways of communicating with customers	To improve customer access to services	• Minicom provision • Portable hearing loop • Customer needs identified through survey & review arrangements for interpretation / language line	Diversity & Mediation Manager / Service Review Manager	30.01.06 30.01.06 01.03.06
Improve inclusivity of customer participation	To ensure that customers who wish to be, are included in consultation / participation and remove barriers	• Consider meeting times / venues / crèche, transport etc • Look at other methods eg postal, telephone, visiting	Community Liaison Officers / Diversity & Mediation Manager	30.03.06 30.03.06 30.03.06

		• Make contact with community groups		
Review ways of dealing with harassment and implement any identified changes	To address harassment in a more effective, comprehensive way	• Review tenancy agreement • Review work with antisocial behaviour team • Ensure multi-agency approach	Customer Services Manager / Estates Managers in liaison with DMBC	30.06.06
Work with partners / contractors to ensure Diversity policies in place & implemented	To ensure that employees and customers of contractors / partners do not experience disadvantage / discrimination, and that equality & diversity matters are embedded into their organisation	• Enhance Equality / Diversity considerations when awarding contracts • Incorporate Diversity into contract monitoring • Joint training with partners	Business Planning Manager / Capital Investment Manager	01.04.06 01.04.06 01.04.06
Embed Equality / Diversity into service provision	To provide a better service to customers	• Service planning and service standards • Performance monitoring • Increase staff awareness through training / team briefings	All Managers	Ongoing
Improve community facilities	To ensure that groups are aware of facilities which are available, and to explore further provision	• Establish contact with community groups • Review use of Community Houses and investigate expansion of Community House provision	Customer Services Manager / Diversity & Mediation Manager	01.04.06 30.07.06
Improve awareness of services	To ensure that lack of awareness does not prevent customers from accessing services	• Quarterly newsletters	Customer Relations & Marketing Manager	Ongoing
Double glazing / efficient heating	To provide warmer homes and more affordable heat	• Implement decency standard • Additional double glazing	Capital Investment Manager	Ongoing to 2010
Analyse different customer experiences of services and take action to address	To find out whether customers experiences of services differ – and if so, why.	• All questionnaires to include Diversity information to allow analysis • Discrepancies to	Service Review Manager / Diversity & Mediation Manager	31.03.06 31.03.06

	To prompt action required	be investigated and reported as part of results of surveys, so that improvements can be identified		
Monitor for employment purposes and address imbalances Analyse staff profile and address imbalances	To make sure that employees / potential employees are not disadvantaged / discriminated against	• Collate and report Diversity information based on employment • Any identified imbalances to be considered by the Management Team and Action Plans produced	Performance Monitoring Manager Management Team	31.03.06 31.03.06
Review arrangements for dealing with allegations of staff harassment / bullying	To ensure prompt, effective action and to deter harassment / bullying	• Monitor levels of incidences of allegations of harassment / bullying • Monitor outcomes to check policies adhered to	Management Team	31.03.06 31.03.06
Employment – adapt former DMBC policies to meet SLHD needs Ensure Equality / Diversity considerations are fully taken into account in this process	To ensure policies / practices do not discriminate / cause disadvantage	• Review of DMBC Human Resources Policies • Adapt and revise those policies • Consider any additional policies and create those policies accordingly	Management Team	30.06.06 31.06.06 30.06.06
Implement a programme of Impact Assessments and design and deliver Action Plans	To ensure that policies and practices are not operating in a way which leads to disadvantage / discrimination	• Undertake "desktop" impact assessments • Devise Action Plans • Implement Action Plans	Diversity & Mediation Manager	30.06.06 30.06.06 Ongoing Thereafter

Appendix B

St Leger Homes of Doncaster

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

APPROVED		**02/11/05**
LAST AMENDED		**01/11/05**
NEXT FORMAL POLICY REVIEW REQUIRED		**July 2006**
FORMAL REVIEW OF POLICY BY		**Board**

NB: ALL POLICIES MUST BE REVIEWED BY RELEVANT MANAGER EACH YEAR

FREQUENCY OF FORMAL POLICY REVIEW		**3 years**
MAIN CONTACT	**Kate Reeves**	**Extn. 37462**

NOTES

Brief Policy Summary:

St Leger Homes of Doncaster believes in positive action to ensure that customers and employees are treated fairly, in accordance with their needs and that they do not experience discrimination or disadvantage. This policy is not only a statement of intent, but also allocates responsibility for actioning the policy and advises that delivery will be through a strategy and action plan, which will be subject to monitoring and to revision.

1. Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

1.1. St Leger Homes of Doncaster is an Arms Length Management company, set up from 1 October 2005 by Doncaster Council to manage all Council Housing in the Doncaster Borough.

We will deliver a massive programme of investment over the next 5 years which will result in all council housing in the Doncaster Borough meeting the Government's decent homes standard by 2010. We aim to provide quality housing management services and play a key role in partnership in working with the Council and other agencies to provide decent homes in decent and sustainable communities. It is recognised that, essential to the viability of this proposal, is the need to achieve a minimum 2 star rating for the service delivered by the St Leger Homes of Doncaster, so that we can access the additional resources we need.

We manage approximately 22,500 tenanted and leasehold properties and also serve applicants for rehousing. We know that our customers have diverse backgrounds and circumstances and we welcome this diversity. The people who live and work in Doncaster, or wish to live or work in Doncaster are of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, disabled and non disabled and from faith or non faith communities. Our Equalities policy recognises our responsibility to address imbalances, which communities can experience as a result of disadvantage or discrimination.

St Leger Homes of Doncaster employs approximately 800 people. Our equality policy recognises our responsibility to ensure that our workforce generally reflects the communities, which it serves. We are also responsible for ensuring that our employees do not themselves experience discrimination or disadvantage arising out of their employment.

This policy will be supported by an Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan, which will explain how the policy will be delivered. It will include specified actions, with officers allocated responsibility to deliver those actions within specified timescales.

We will monitor progress and review the policy and action plan annually.

2 Equal Opportunities Policy

2.1 Scope of the Policy

2.2 St Leger Homes of Doncaster believe that all individuals have the right to be treated with dignity and respect whilst at work or using its services. It recognises all forms of personal discrimination including harassment and bullying as a serious matter. All individuals have the right to have their business or concerns about St Leger Homes of Doncaster's actions pursed with equal attention and vigour, within the context of appropriate policy statements on priorities of need.

2.3 Definitions and Descriptions of Scope: for the purposes of this document the statements in this section shall apply.

2.3.1 The scope of this policy shall apply to discrimination against people on any unjustifiable grounds, including the following examples:

a) gender or marital status;
b) racial or ethnic grouping;
c) disability;
d) age;
e) nationality;
f) sexual orientation;
g) gender reassignment;
h) religion or spiritual beliefs;
i) responsibility for dependants;
j) trades union activities;
k) alternative lifestyles;
l) prior offences – where the offences committed are irrelevant;
m) HIV status or other irrelevant medical issues;
n) Illegitimacy.

2.3.2 "Direct discrimination" shall mean treating a person less favourably than others are or would be treated in the same circumstances.

2.3.3 "Indirect discrimination" shall mean applying in any circumstances a requirement or condition, which, intentionally or not, has a disproportionately and unjustifiably adverse effect on a particular group or individual.

2.3.4 "Priority of need" shall mean that St Leger Homes of Doncaster will make objective and transparent judgements upon the urgency of spending money on one particular need as against another need, e.g. the work associated with danger to the public will be prioritised before routine maintenance within the same budget area.

2.3.5 "Service user" shall mean the individual user or their parent, guardian, carer or agent acting on their behalf, and shall also include user groups.

3 Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

3.1 St Leger Homes of Doncaster are committed to a policy of equal opportunity and fair access in employment and service delivery regardless of any unjustifiable causes.

3.2 We will seek to ensure that no direct or indirect discrimination exists within our operation and will seek to promote equal opportunities and good relations between diverse groups/individuals.

3.3 We will take steps to ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and their personal responsibilities under it.

3.4 The policy will be available for inspection at all offices.

3.5 The aim of the policy is to ensure that no employee, potential employee or service user receives less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by any form of direct or indirect discrimination. This applies to all areas of service delivery, including: access to services; quality of services provided; and information provision. Equally it applies to all aspects of employment, including: conditions of service; recruitment; promotion; training; and selection for redundancy.

3.6 St Leger Homes of Doncaster recognises that unfair discrimination cannot be eradicated merely by seeking to observe the letter of the law, but only by the energetic, practical commitment of all concerned to promote equal opportunity. All employees have a personal responsibility for the practical application of this policy in their day-to-day interactions with colleagues and members of the public. Board members, managers and others involved in determining service delivery and dealing with employment matters have responsibility to ensure that this policy is both promoted and put into practice. It is recognised that training is an important ingredient in equipping all Board members and all employees for this responsibility.

3.7 In the operational field of service delivery all Managers will endeavour to ensure that access to services, the quality of service provision and the quality of information provided to service users to enable them to use our services, does not lead to disadvantage for individuals or groups, which cannot be shown to be fair or justifiable.

3.8 In the employment field, selection criteria and procedures will be under constant assessment to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, trained, and in all respects treated solely on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

3.9 St Leger Homes of Doncaster values the role of the trade unions in assisting the promotion and application of an equal opportunity policy through normal trades union activities and training schemes.

3.10 Grievance and Harassment Procedures are available to any employee who believes that he or she has suffered unfair discrimination. Allegations of discrimination, harassment and victimisation by employees against other employees on the grounds covered by this policy statement will be investigated in keeping with the appropriate procedure, and if upheld, could result in disciplinary action.

3.11 St Leger Homes of Doncaster also recognises that it has a significant role to play in promoting good practice in relation to equality issues and in promoting Diversity, we will ensure that our written and pictorial communication is free from bias and actively reflects and promotes our diverse workforce and diverse customer base.

4 Delivery of the Policy

4.1 Responsibilities

St Leger Homes of Doncaster has officers with clearly defined responsibilities for equality/diversity over and above the responsibilities which all offices carry. These officers will work to increase participation opportunities for all customers and to increase the number of customers from diverse communities who engage in participation. However, we also recognise that equality and diversity are vital, integral aspects of everything we do – priority will be given to ensuring that services are delivered in ways that are appropriate to customer needs and that equalities/diversities issues are considered as part of mainstream delivery. The officers will work alongside all service delivery areas to ensure equality and diversity is embedded into both their consultation with customers and also into the delivery of their services. An audit trail and evidence will be produced.

4.2 In addition, Board Members are responsible for ensuring that St Leger Homes of Doncaster delivers this policy effectively.

4.3 Training

All St Leger Homes of Doncaster employees, and Board Members, will receive equality and diversity training. The training will be appropriate to their needs and to the roles which they are undertaking. Thereafter, ongoing, employee needs will be identified and met through the appraisal process.

4.4 Access to Services

St Leger Homes of Doncaster will ensure that its services are accessible. The accessibility of premises used will be kept under review. Services will be accessible through a variety of arrangements including

- Different methods of accessing services e.g. Office visit, telephone, e-mail, home visits;
- Additional technological assistance as appropriate e.g. Hearing loops, minicom;
- Alternative forms of communication e.g. large print, talking tapes, sign language, alternative languages.
- Use of accessible premises for meetings.

The above examples are illustrative

4.5 Service Monitoring

St Leger Homes of Doncaster will collate and keep information on diversity – this will allow it to monitor the impact of the delivery of its services, so that any imbalances may be addressed.

4.6 Access to Housing

We will administer Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's allocations policy, we will monitor delivery of the policy, to ensure that it is delivered in a way which does not discriminate against, nor disadvantage customers. Should the monitoring reveal that applicants are experiencing disadvantage/discrimination we will take action, in liaison with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council to address this.

4.7 Delivery of Services

St Leger Homes of Doncaster will deliver its services in ways that do not disadvantage or discriminate. This will be achieved by:

- Impact assessments will be undertaken on all policies/procedures/services. When new policies are introduced, impact assessments will also be undertaken upon those
- Information will be collected on diversity e.g. race, disability, gender for monitoring. Analyses of service provision and outcomes will be undertaken and actions agreed in relation to any arising evidence of a service unequally impacting upon customers.
- Increased inclusively of customer participation will also allow for services to be tailored to meet diverse needs.

4.8 Consultation

All Tenants and Residents Associations and the Standing Joint Committee of Tenants and Residents Associations are required within their constitutions to operate in an open, inclusive manner and to not act in a discriminatory way. In addition St Leger Homes of Doncaster will ensure that other consultation is undertaken to encourage and include those who do not generally participate in consultation.

4.9 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

St Leger Homes of Doncaster operates a Compliments, Comments and Complaints policy and procedure. Compliments, comments and complaints can be reported electronically, by personal visit, by telephone or to any visiting officer.

These are all recorded – included in our service standards are prescribed timescales for responding. In addition to responding on an individual basis, St Leger Homes of Doncaster analyses its Compliments, Comments and Complaints. This analysis is used to drive and inform service improvements and to make sure that improvements made are in accordance with the needs of our customers.

4.10 Harassment

St Leger Homes of Doncaster views harassment as an extremely serious matter. It is a breach of the conditions of tenancy to engage in any form of harassment (or to allow household members/visitors to do so). Racial harassment is also a specific breach of the conditions of tenancy. St Leger Homes of Doncaster will take prompt action to address instances of harassment, working alongside other relevant agencies to deal with perpetrators and to support victims.

4.11 Employment

St Leger Homes of Doncaster values its employees. It recognises the benefits of a diverse workforce, which reflects the community it serves. We undertake workforce monitoring to allow us to measure the extent to which our workforce reflects the community and to also allow us to check that employees and potential employees do not experience discrimination or disadvantage. We believe that all staff are entitled to be treated with respect. We have a bullying and harassment procedure, which is designed to deter such behaviour by sending out a strong message that it will not be tolerated. The procedure is designed to deal effectively with bullying and harassment immediately it is recognised. It is separate from the disciplinary procedure, but it is clear within the policy that unacceptable behaviour that cannot be changed by this process, or is so serious that it could lead to disciplinary action should also be dealt with under that procedure. We believe that all employees should be able to develop and be encouraged to do so. Our Learning and Development policy is designed to deliver this outcome. We operate many other employment related policies, which are geared towards ensuring that equality/diversity issues are addressed.

Examples include:
Worklife balance
Recruitment and Selection
Employee capability
Code of Conduct
Induction
Flexible working hours

4.12 Contractors/Partners

St Leger Homes of Doncaster will only employ contractors once we are satisfied that they have appropriate equality and diversity policies and that those policies are operating within the organisation concerned. We will include equality and diversity in the monitoring of contract compliance that we undertake.

5. Monitoring and Review

Delivery of the policy will be in accordance with the equality and diversity strategy and action plan. Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis, and the policy, strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually. The outcome of the review will be reported to the Board.

Appendix C

We would like to hear you views about our Equality Strategy and Action Plan.

It would be helpful if you could include the following information in your submission so that we can reply.

Name,
Organisation Name (if any),
Your address,
Telephone number,
Email address.

Please email your comments to us at: diversity@stlegerhomes.co.uk

Or you can send them to:

Diversity Team
St Leger Homes of Doncaster
St Leger Court
White Rose Way
Doncaster
DN4 5ND