



# Equality Strategy

## 2017-2021

# Contents

F.	<b>Introduction</b>
G	<b>Our vision, values and strategic objectives</b>
H	<b>St Leger Homes and Doncaster's profile</b>
I.	<b>Legal requirements</b>
Í.	<b>Our collaborative approach to safeguarding communities from abuse and neglect</b>
Î.	<b>How we arrived at this strategy: self-assessment and consultation</b>
Ï.	<b>Our Equality Commitments for 2017-2021</b>
Ì.	<b>How we will achieve these commitments</b>
9.	<b>Monitoring our progress</b>
1€	<b>Glossary of terms and abbreviations</b>



# Introduction

This equality strategy sets out how St Leger Homes will meet its obligations relating to fairness and equality over the next four years, in accordance with the public sector equality duty. It establishes a new set of key equality objectives for the period 2017-2021, which will actively support the organisation's commitment to the following priorities:

- ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty
- delivering an excellent service to customers, tenants and residents
- providing employees with a positive working environment in which they feel valued and empowered to achieve their full potential

The overarching aim is to ensure that our corporate commitment to fairness and equality is embedded throughout the organisation, and is demonstrated by everyone representing St Leger Homes.

The previous equality strategy, covering the period from 2013 to 2016, contained a number of objectives and performance targets which have now been achieved and documented; the current equality strategy retains a view of these to ensure the achievements are not lost.

The new equality commitments are designed with a dual purpose; both to maintain the high standards already achieved, and to realise new ambitions and meet new challenges. The objectives take account of, and aim to progress further, the following outcomes established in the 2013-16 strategy:

- Employees, customers and partners are valued and respected
- Equality and diversity is integral to all that we do
- Delivery of equality and diversity is demonstrated

Some of our achievements following the 2013-16 equality strategy:

- The previous strategy sought to refresh the former Equality Steering Group to improve its effectiveness. This has been successfully achieved, resulting in a new Framework for Fairness Group which has an active role in embedding equality considerations across the business framework. The Fairness Champions who make up the group act as ambassadors for equality in their individual business areas and provide support with equality projects and strategies.
- Since publication of the previous strategy, we have initiated and developed the highly acclaimed World of Work Academy. This has allowed us to support our tenants in preparing for and securing employment, strengthening our core offer to tenants and forging links with influential community partners.
- St Leger Homes has developed considerably in promoting equality and fostering good relations by supporting some of the most vulnerable sectors of its community through its support for food banks, the Fareshare Project and the Amber Project (to name a few). We provide support and guidance to customers impacted by socio-economic hardship and welfare reform.
- Engagement with young people has been an area of notable success, with the recruitment of a dedicated customer involvement officer and the introduction of a number of successful initiatives such as the Schools Project and Personal, Health and Social Education sessions, providing opportunities for young people whilst also protecting against vulnerability.
- St Leger Homes has refined its Safeguarding process, resulting in the implementation of a highly effective 'single point of contact' system, which all staff can use to report concerns. This process has greatly supported the prevention of abuse in our communities.
- As part of the 2013-16 strategy we have implemented a range of innovative processes to address equality issues across the workforce, a good example being the 'Championing an Ageing Workforce' initiative as part of our New Directions Scheme. This has attracted national recognition through the Business in the Community Awards 2016.
- The organisation's approach to business transformation and people development has been completely revised following the previous strategy. St Leger Homes now provides a comprehensive programme of personal and professional development opportunities including equality training packages, for example disability awareness, equality analysis training, and Gypsy and Traveller awareness training.

# Our Vision, Values and Strategic Objectives

St Leger Homes' vision, values and strategic objectives are a statement of our commitment to delivering excellent services for our customers and creating quality neighbourhoods where people want to live.

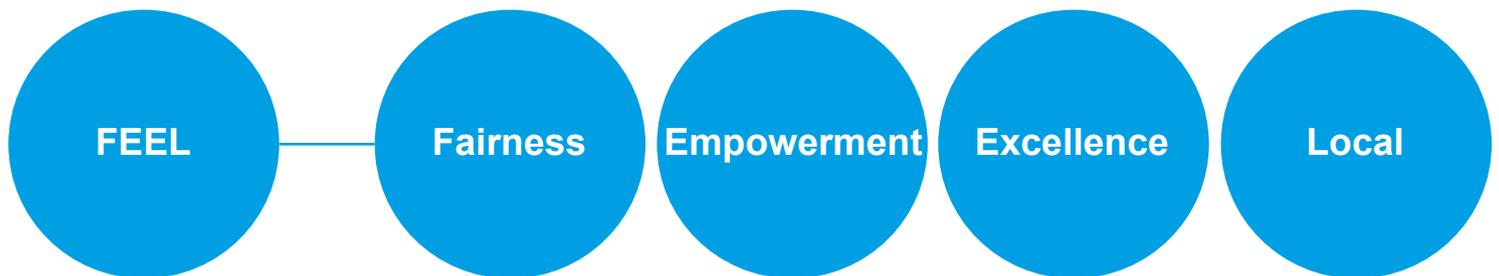
## Our Vision

- To deliver excellent value for money in all that we do
- To ensure we are customer focused by engaging with our tenants and customers and involving them in decision making and service delivery
- To have quality homes in quality neighbourhoods where people want to live
- To be a catalyst for change and become a housing provider of choice, an employer of choice and a partner of choice.

## Our Values

## Our Strategic Objectives

- Ensuring we are a customer focused organisation by putting our tenants and customers at the heart of what we do
- Ensuring we deliver value for money by making best use of our resources
- Addressing the impact of welfare benefit reforms on our customers
- Supporting communities and individuals by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and providing support to sustain tenancies
- Improving our performance to build on our excellent service delivery
- Maintaining and improving homes and properties by investing wisely and managing effectively
- Improving our communications both internally and externally with others
- Developing opportunities for new business growth and diversification.



# St Leger Homes and Doncaster's profile

Doncaster is located in the centre of South Yorkshire and is the largest geographic metropolitan borough in England. It has an estimated population of 306,397 (Data Source: Office for National Statistics, Population estimates 2016).

Doncaster is ranked the 39th most deprived local authority out of 326 areas nationally, under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010. This places Doncaster in the 12% most deprived areas across England.

## Characteristics of Doncaster's Population

The 2011 Census shows the following characteristics:

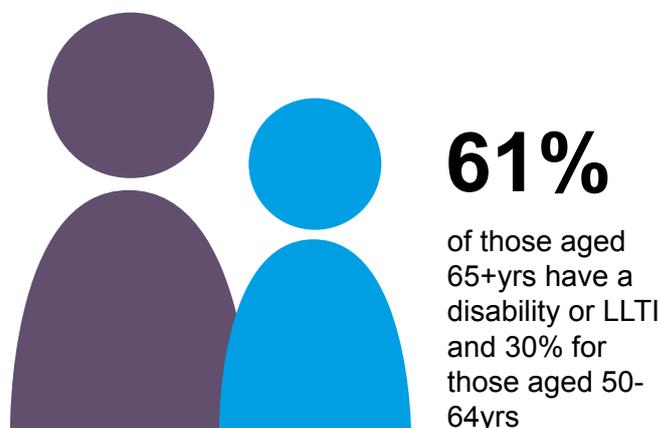
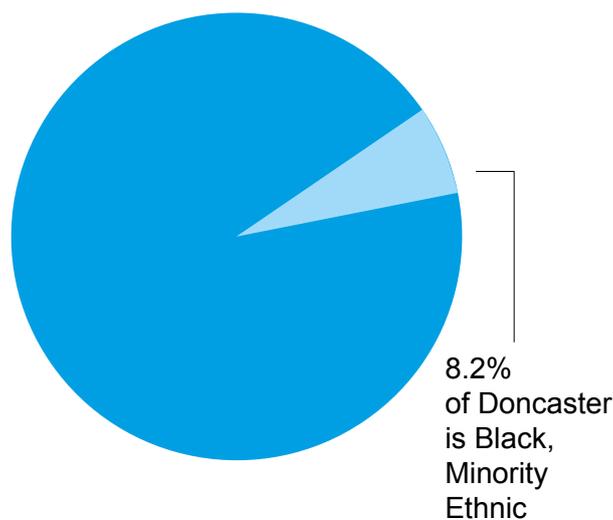
- 'White British' is Doncaster's majority ethnic group making up 91.8% of the population
- The Black and Minority Ethnic population of Doncaster is 8.2% this figure represents all non-White British categories and includes Black, Asian, Other White and Gypsy, Romany and Irish Traveller
- Doncaster's second largest ethnic group is 'Other White' which makes up 3.4% of the population and includes the 4,484 Polish people who live in the borough
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British, Arab and other ethnic groups combined make up 4.6% of Doncaster's population
- While the ethnic group 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' accounts for only 0.2% of Doncaster's population, this represents the largest Gypsy and Traveller population in South Yorkshire
- Over a fifth of the population has a disability or limiting long term illness (LLTI)
- 61% of those aged 65+yrs have a disability or LLTI and 30% for those aged 50-64yrs
- Over 37,000 (12%) are aged 55-64 years old, almost 1/4 of the borough's population are 60+yrs old; about 1/6 are 65+yrs.

St Leger Homes is an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) with responsibility for the day to day management of the stock of approximately 20,400 homes owned by Doncaster Council.

St Leger Homes provides services to a number of customers including council tenants and household

members, leaseholders, private sector landlords, and other residents of the neighbourhoods it manages.

Doncaster Council has commissioned St Leger Homes to manage some additional services including housing options, homelessness, emergency accommodation and Gypsy and Traveller sites, this includes some residential sites and a New Age Traveller site.



## Our Customers

Our customer equality profile data from 2016-17 shows the following information about our tenants:

81.31% of our tenants define themselves as White British, which is lower than the figure for Doncaster as a whole (91.8%) and for the Yorkshire and Humber region (85.8%).

We have a Black and Minority Ethnic tenant base of 6.84% (this includes people from all non-White British census categories). 11.85% of our tenants have not provided us with information about their ethnic group.

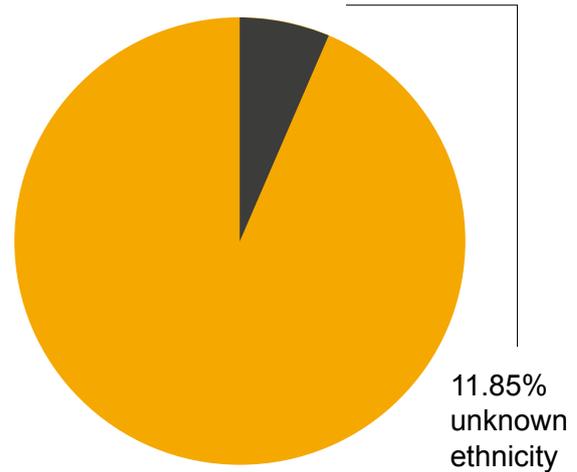
The ethnic profile of customers on St Leger Homes' housing waiting list is changing over time. This reflects the changes in Doncaster's population as a whole, where we have seen an increase in the 'Other White' category. This group now makes up 7.15% of customers actively seeking rehousing compared with the 6.56% reported in the previous equality strategy.

33.40% of customers define themselves as disabled, although there is a high degree of non-disclosure at 42.16%.

A high proportion of customers, 42.44%, are over 60 years old and 17.14% are age 75 plus. 60.54% of our customers are women. Less than 1% of our customers define themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), however 7.10% of customers said they prefer not to disclose this information and a further 21.15% have not provided any information about their sexual orientation so there may be some LGBT customers unaccounted for.

In terms of religion or belief, the largest group is 'Christian' at 62.54%. The second largest group is 'No Religion/Atheist' at 31.85%, followed by 'Other' at 2.08% and 'Muslim' at 1.95%.

**Note:** The above information is taken from Customer Profile Questionnaire (CPQ) data for 2016-2017 which pre-dates the roll out of the new Customer Insight form and procedure, which aims to improve the way we collect and use our customer information. This is reflected in the new equality objectives as previously, it was acknowledged that some of our customer information was inaccurate, out of date and incomplete.



**62.54%**

In terms of religion or belief, the largest group is 'Christian' at 62.54%



**33.40%**

of customers define themselves as disabled

## Our Workforce

St Leger Homes had 766 full time employees as at the end of March 2017. Our equality monitoring data at this date shows that 1.57% of our employees defined themselves as 'Black and Minority Ethnic', and 72% defined themselves as White British.

This suggests we are not yet fully representative of the Doncaster population, although roughly a quarter of the workforce has not provided this information so there may be some variation from the figures above, in real terms. We will look at measures to address this gap in data to improve accuracy.

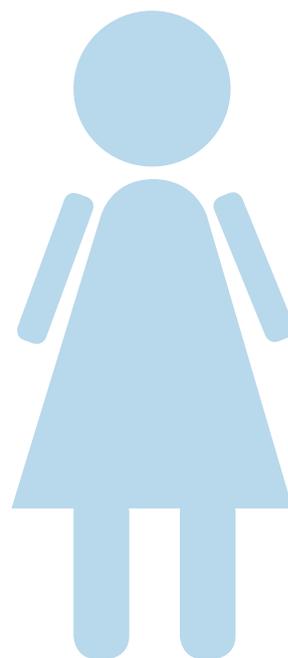
St Leger Homes has a high proportion of workers in the older age groups, with 48% of employees aged 45 or over. We have made good progress in supporting older workers as evidenced by awards such as 'Championing an Ageing Workforce', and are committed improving the recruitment rate of younger workers through apprenticeships, graduate placements, and the World of Work Initiative. We attend events targeted at young people to encourage applications from this age group, and our apprenticeship/training contracts are paid at a competitive rate.

St Leger Homes is committed to supporting people with disabilities and long-term health issues to enter and remain in employment. In the 2016/17 period 2.48% of employees defined themselves as disabled, although there is a high proportion of non-disclosure at 18%. Again, we will work to address this gap in data.

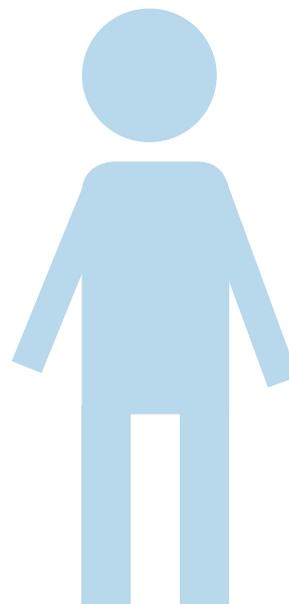
Less than 1% of the workforce have identified as LGBT. The sexual orientation of 39% of the workforce is currently unknown.

Men account for 59.53% of employees, largely due to the types of work undertaken by St Leger Homes. We are keen to attract more women into the traditionally male-dominated roles and have included this as an aim in the new equality objectives.

With reference to the top 5% of earners, there are no disabled people or people from BME groups in this sector, although the percentage of women in this category is relatively high at 45.71%.



**45.71%**  
of the top 5% of earners  
in our workforce  
are women



**59.53%**  
of employees are men,  
largely due to the types  
of work undertaken

# Legal Requirements

This equality strategy is underpinned by current equality, employment and health and safety legislation, best practice guidance including the Equality and Human Rights Commission codes of practice, and the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

## The Public Sector Equality Duty

All public authorities are required to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Act 2010 through the Public Sector Equality Duty (contained in section 149 of the Act).

This duty places both general and specific duties on public authorities. The general duty requires all public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share those characteristics**
- **Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.**

St Leger Homes is keen to ensure our commitment to fairness and equality extends beyond just meeting the statutory duties.

We are committed to working within the spirit of the Public Sector Equality Duty by supporting Doncaster Council and our partner organisations to deliver shared priorities and working together to achieve greater community cohesion.

Our equality commitments are supported by specific equality objectives and accompanied by a dedicated action plan which will evidence progress through the life cycle of the strategy.



# Our collaborative approach to safeguarding communities from abuse and neglect

Children and adult safeguarding remains a key priority for St Leger Homes, and as a consequence we have a comprehensive safeguarding approach embedded within all our services.

We recognise that an increasing proportion of people with care and support needs live in our communities and that we have a key safeguarding role to play in keeping people safe, alongside our colleagues and partners in social care, health and the police.

At St Leger Homes we have a safeguarding process that includes a single point of contact for all staff to report any concerns. This process has greatly supported the prevention of abuse and reduced risk. The single point of contact process enables all employees to report any concerns they have seen, heard or received from residents or other professionals they may come across whilst carrying out their day to day duties. Our proactive working practice enables us to conduct courtesy visits to customers and, through engagement, identify, offer and arrange tailored advice and support services to meet their individual needs at an early stage. All incidents of safeguarding are treated as a high priority and visits are made to the individual's address within 24 hours of receiving the information.

All cases are investigated by an estates officer and reviewed by the safeguarding lead to ensure that the enquiry was responded to within the required timeframe and that the case is being dealt with correctly.

During 2016-17 a total of 308 concerns were received which, following case management, resulted in 495 referrals for various support services.

## Key safeguarding activity undertaken during 2016-17

As a member of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children and Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Boards, St Leger Homes of Doncaster have contributed to the delivery of these Boards core functions, strategic priorities and work streams. During 2016-17 we have contributed to the strategic and operational development and delivery of the Early Help Hub, Child Sexual Exploitation, Multi-Agency training, Growing Futures and Faith and Culture engagement.

As well as being a member of the Boards and their sub groups, St Leger Homes sits on various 'task and finish groups' and panels which are established as and when required, to manage and complete specific pieces of work; e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, Resolving Professional Differences Protocol, Voice of the Child, Neglect Strategy and Toolkit, Children and Young People's Plan (2017-20), Children Missing Operational Group, Serious Case Reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and the support and delivery of local and national initiatives that promote safeguarding awareness.

St Leger Homes adopts a proactive approach to Adult Safeguarding. Paul Tanney, Chief Executive of St Leger Homes, has overall responsibility for adults at risk and provides strong leadership and a clear vision to the organisation. Paul is a member of the Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board and chairs the sharing and engagement sub group.

In addition, there is a designated safeguarding lead officer whose role is to ensure we fulfil our responsibilities and promote positive practice within our organisation. The lead officer is a member of a number of sub groups of the Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Board and is also delegated to Safeguarding Adult Review Panels and Domestic Homicide Panels as and when required.

St Leger Homes' partnership approach has led to better communication, support and guidance for driving and delivering the Board's agenda, as well as facilitating better co-ordination and oversight to ensure the health & well-being of customers is promoted, and the best possible outcomes are achieved.

St Leger Homes is also a member of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy Group, Doncaster Domestic Violence Working Party, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Hate Crime Multi Agency Partnership (HMAP), Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA); the MAPPA Strategic Management Board, Doncaster Children's Trust Growing Futures - Operational and Strategic Groups, and the Vulnerable Persons Panel.

## Internal business

- Safeguarding concerns are monitored centrally and area based managers complete monthly compliance checks. During 2016-17 we worked collaboratively in delivering support services to 61 children and families either directly with a partner or through the Children's Trust. Housing Officers attend Core Groups, Team Around the Child and Child Protection meetings on invite and attend area based Case Investigation Meetings (CIM) weekly to discuss and identify early help for children, young people and families in need.
- During 2016-17 we completed the Safeguarding Children and Adults Board audit assessments to ensure that our internal arrangements and processes reflect WTSC 2015 Guidance and the Children Act 2004 (Sec 11) requirements. In addition we also completed an Internal Business Assurance Review of the way we deliver safeguarding services. All challenges and recommendations were received positively, noted and action taken.
- We have created a Young Person's Engagement Board to develop and deliver the commitments for young people. The Board looks at how we engage with and encourage engagement from young people across the borough. The commitments that the Board have developed are available on St Leger Homes' website.



- The Schools Partnership Programme, which is facilitated and co-ordinated by St Leger Homes, continues to develop. The programme is delivered in a workshop setting to young people in sixth form academies across Doncaster and aims to empower and support young people. The workshops are delivered by partner organisations and cover various topics such as, health and well-being, healthy relationships, living in the wider world and domestic violence. Currently there are 30 organisations involved with 10 academies signed up to the programme.
- The Joint Protocol between Doncaster Children's Trust and St Leger Homes for young people Aged 16-17 years at risk of homelessness has been agreed and implemented.



# How we arrived at this strategy: self-assessment and consultation

Before embarking on this strategy we have aimed to gather as much up to date information as possible through a rigorous self-assessment programme, staff and customer consultation surveys, and a customer consultation event. The equality objectives have been influenced by the findings from all of these.

## The self-assessment 2017 and Staff Equality Survey

St Leger Homes successfully attained the 'Excellent' level of the Social Housing Equality Framework (SHEF) in 2014, following a rigorous assessment. This award applied for three years, and in preparation for the end of the three year period, we looked into various options for reassessment. In September 2016, the Board and the Executive Management Team agreed that St Leger Homes would conduct its own self-assessment against the Local Government Authority Equality Framework (the same framework used by the SHEF assessment).

The self-assessment was undertaken and completed in Quarters 3 and 4 of 2016/17 by the Fairness and Insight Manager with the support of the Customer Focus Service Manager and the assistance of the Fairness Champions. We consulted people from a cross section of the organisation to obtain a broad and representative view.

Evidence was gathered in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- Examination of strategies, policies, processes and procedures
- Analysis of monitoring statistics
- Focused meetings and interviews
- Drawing on shared knowledge from Framework for Fairness network
- Questionnaires and surveys aimed at all levels of staff
- Evidence from the Social Audit Reports and Framework for Fairness Reports.

We followed the same process as the original SHEF assessment and assessed our performance against five areas:

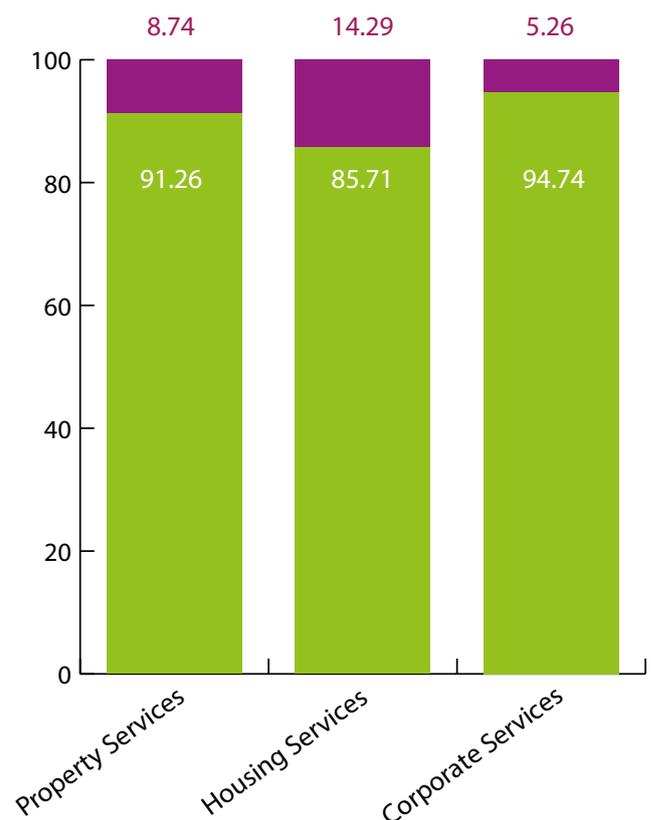
- Knowing your communities/customer
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Involving your communities/customers

- Responsive services, access and customer care
- A skilled and committed workforce.

Out of the 32 sub sections assessed; 15 were determined as 'Excellent', 12 as 'Achieving' and 5 as 'Developing'.

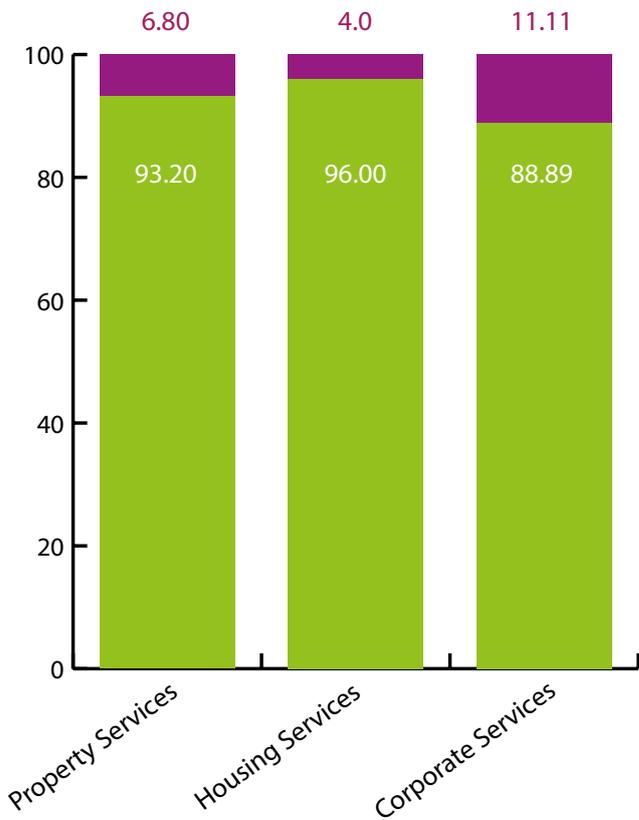
A summary of the self-assessment findings can be found on the SLHD website in the 'Equality' section. The self-assessment was accompanied by a staff consultation survey, consisting of a number of questions asking staff to comment on their experiences of working for St Leger Homes from an equality perspective, and asking them to record any criticisms, comments or suggestions. The survey received a representative response rate from across the organisation's directorates. The comments have been scrutinised by the Fairness and Insight Manager and the Framework for Fairness Group Champions. The results of both the self-assessment and staff survey have been used to shape our new equality objectives.

### I work in a positive environment free from discrimination and prejudice

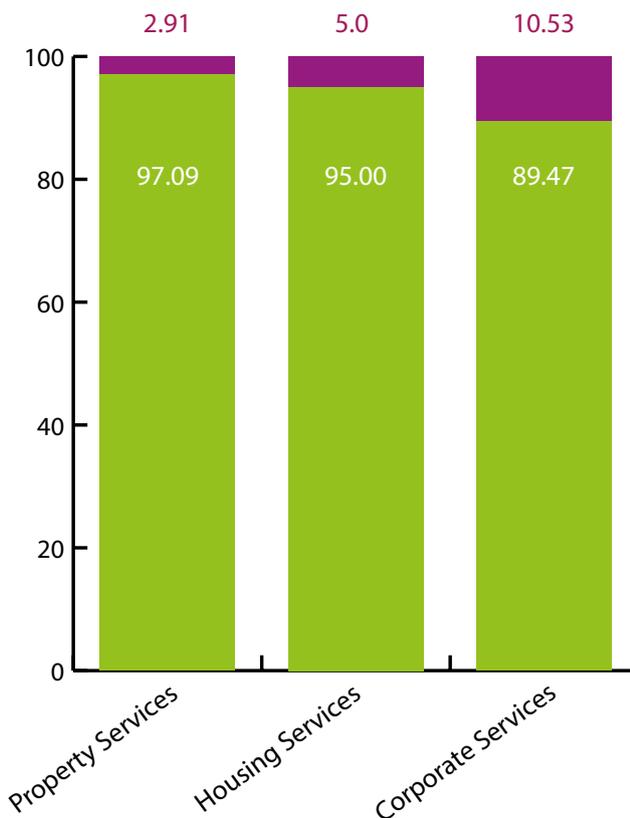




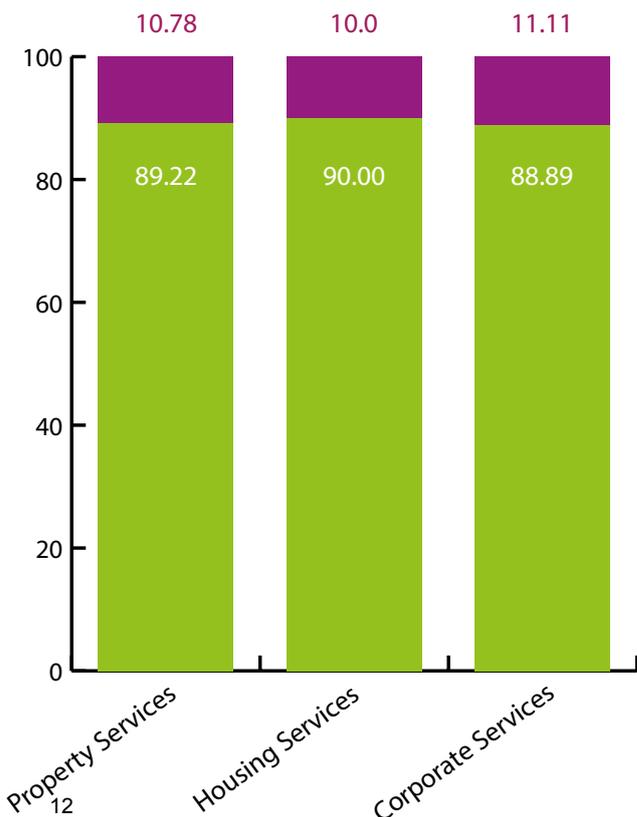
### St Leger Homes Staff will often go the extra mile to ensure the wellbeing of their colleagues and customers



### I know how to identify and support our more vulnerable customers, particularly those with disabilities or impairments



### The leaders in our organisation are good role models in demonstrating respect for equality, diversity and fairness



## Customer Consultation Survey

A survey was also created for customers to provide feedback on how well they felt St Leger Homes is performing in carrying out its equality obligations and meeting the needs of its diverse communities. This also provided the opportunity for customers to raise issues important to them, and make suggestions for improvement. The survey was distributed to a wide range of customers. A link to the survey was placed on the St Leger Homes website and promoted through a range of channels including our social media pages. It was sent out to the members of the Tenants and Residents Involvement Panel and to all Tenants and Resident Associations (TARAs). The Fairness and Insight Manager and Community Engagement Officers also promoted the survey in person at community group meetings.

The results of the survey were analysed and used to shape the new equality objectives in this strategy and the equality action plan. The survey was also used to promote a customer consultation session held in June 2017 to give customers the opportunity to discuss their views in an open forum. The following graph (overleaf) shows customer responses:

## Customer Consultation Event

Following the customer consultation survey, a consultation event took place in June 2017. The first part of the event involved a discussion about how effectively St Leger Homes is putting equality and fairness into practice while providing services to its customers. During the course of this discussion, the facilitators posed several pre-prepared questions to the attendees around how well they thought St Leger Homes is complying with its obligations under the public sector equality duty. Participants were asked if there were any equality-related priorities they would like to see included in the Equality Strategy.

Participants had been issued with a summary of the equality self-assessment ahead of the event, and were asked for their views on the findings.

The second part of the consultation consisted of a group activity asking participants about what they thought St Leger Homes should 'stop, start or continue' in terms of its fairness and equality work. As with the survey, the comments and suggestions from the consultation event were recorded and used to shape the objectives in the new equality action plan.

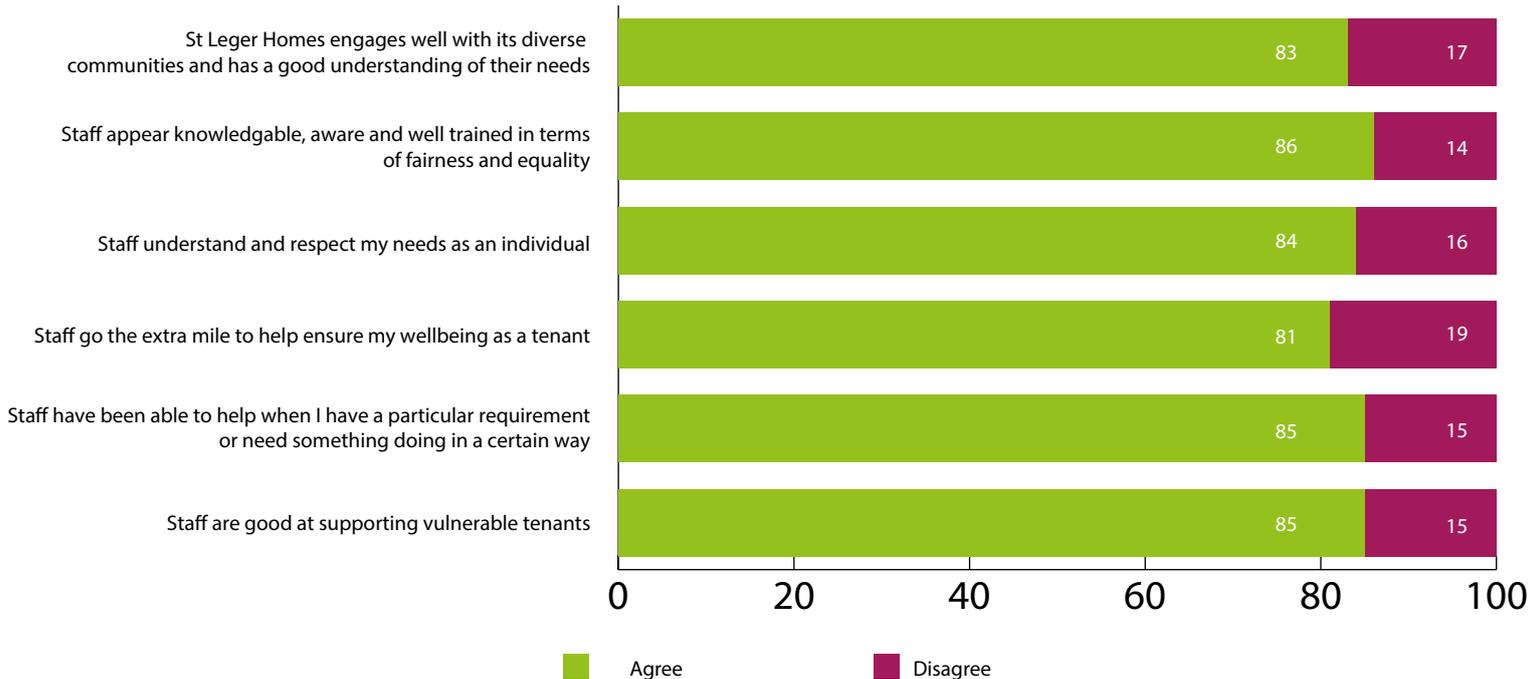
## The Framework for Fairness Group

The role and purpose of the St Leger Homes 'Framework for Fairness Group' has been revised following a lapse in participation in the former Equalities Steering Group. The 2016-17 year has seen the introduction of a new forward plan and terms of reference for the group. This will afford greater scope and influence in steering the culture of the organisation to be more insight driven, embedding equality into all aspects of the business, and scrutinising performance on equality objectives.

The group consists of a number of 'Fairness Champions' from each area of the business. It also has representatives from the relevant Trade Union and TRIP (Tenants and Residents Involvement Panel), and our partners at Doncaster Council.

The Fairness Champions have assisted with the self-assessment and staff consultation, and will have an on-going role in scrutinising performance against the new equality action plan, ensuring the objectives set out in this strategy result in clear, well evidenced equality outcomes. As a result of the information gathered from a variety of sources, we have developed five equality commitments with key objectives to sit underneath each one.

### Equality and Diversity Customer Consultation Results



# Our Equality Commitments for 2017-2021

These are listed below in brief, followed by a more detailed explanation of how we intend to achieve each of them.

## Commitment 1: Understand our customers and support their needs

Objectives:

- To ensure the customer insight data we collect, hold and analyse is accurate, complete and up to date and use this to support the needs of our tenants and our business moving forwards.
- To ensure we are sharing equality information effectively with our partners
- To have a consistent organisational approach to ensuring accessible communications.

## Commitment 2: Ensure the organisation is a leader in inclusion and fairness, and reflects this in the service provided to our customers

Objectives:

- To ensure we have an effective approach to Equality Analysis that is consistent across the organisation
- To ensure the Framework for Fairness Group has an active role in embedding fairness and equality in the business
- To ensure the organisation's procurement and commissioning processes keep equality considerations at their forefront
- To enhance and facilitate the participation of under-represented groups in governance and resident involvement.

## Commitment 3: Engage customers effectively, foster good relations and advance equality in our local communities

Objectives:

- To expand and strengthen the organisation's community engagement structures, and to foster good relations between different groups in our communities.
- To actively support organisations representing hard to reach groups in Doncaster, and to improve awareness of St Leger Homes in the community.

## Commitment 4: Fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities to the highest standards

Objectives:

- To commit to improving the quality of safeguarding and support for children, young people, adults and families through partnership and influence
- To improve and strengthen our safeguarding services through training, communication and awareness
- To ensure we are providing effective services and wider opportunities for children and young people
- To work as a key partner in delivering Doncaster's safeguarding agenda
- To take a proactive approach to tackling all types of hate crime in collaboration with partners.

## Commitment 5: Develop a progressive and diverse workforce, in a workplace free from discrimination and harassment

Objectives:

- To ensure the organisation is fully compliant with its equality and human rights duties in its provision of staff training and development
- To create a more representative and inclusive workforce
- To create a workplace free from discrimination and harassment
- To work towards gender pay equality across the organisation
- To progress our 'Disability Confident' status.



# How we will achieve these commitments

## Commitment 1: Understand our customers and support their needs

The SHEF assessment highlighted that our organisation varied in its approach to collecting, storing and updating customer profile information, including the information about our customer's protected characteristics. To address these issues, St Leger Homes has assumed a new approach to customer profile data collection and handling by implementing the Customer Insight Project.

The aim of the project is to ensure we are collecting a broad range of information about our customers, enabling us to meet their needs more effectively by tailoring our services to fit with their requirements, rather than making general assumptions or adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.

As the project evolves we will ensure St Leger Homes is collecting and processing a comprehensive range of customer equality and diversity information. This will not be limited to just the protected characteristics specified in the Equality Act; we will aim to obtain a much more in-depth knowledge of the factors influencing individuals' lives including their vulnerabilities, particular requirements and contact preferences, and their ability to access communication facilities and information technology.

We want to develop our staff to be ambassadors of fairness and equality for St Leger Homes, embedding an insight-driven culture throughout the whole of the organisation. We will provide staff with support and guidance to enable them to collect and process information in the right way, while at the same time respecting the customer's human rights and ensuring we are meeting our data protection obligations. In addition to collecting the information, we will ensure we are analysing it appropriately and using it to improve the actual services delivered to our customers. For example, we will look at how we send out HouseProud and other communications to ensure we are providing material in formats that customers find accessible and easy to use.

In the staff equality survey, participants' feedback indicated the systems we currently use to access and record customer details often do not 'speak' to each other or have accurate up to date information stored in one easily accessible location. We will aim to tie in the Insight Project with the Customer Access

Strategy and Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS) to enable us to manage and analyse customer equality information more effectively.

During 2017 we reviewed the accessibility of the documents, communications and other materials sent out by the organisation. After analysing customer requirements, we produce Houseproud in audio and large print formats, and we include a note in a large font on the back of the magazine advising customers they can request alternative formats. The Income Management Team also produces rent statements to meet customers' individual needs, for example in different coloured formats to accommodate readers with dyslexia or visual impairments. We have already received positive feedback from customers on these improvements; however we need to build on this by establishing a consistent approach across the organisation, including the introduction of a standard accessibility statement

## Commitment 2: Ensure the organisation is a leader in inclusion and fairness, and reflects this in the service provided to our customers

We will continue to grow the refreshed Framework for Fairness Group and role of the Fairness Champions, furthering the actions in the group's Forward Plan.

We will use the group to embed a culture of equality which sits within the business framework and is shared and owned by the organisation and its contractors, partners, stakeholders and customers. We will continue to develop the organisation's new approach to Equality Analysis, which will enable us to measure more effectively the impact of our services on different groups.

This will involve rolling out the new Equality Analysis form, process and guidance across the organisation, ensuring the Equality Analysis system is more accessible and user friendly for staff. We will explore options for digitalising the form to enhance ease of use. Training will be provided to staff on the use of new form to ensure consistent application across the organisation.

St Leger Homes will continue to require exemplary equality standards from partners through its procurement and commissioning process. Our objective is to ensure our procurement and commissioning processes keep equality considerations at their forefront.

The contract and compliance team will review its equality framework, particularly with regard to how it monitors contractors to ensure their equality and diversity provisions meet our standards.

The team will also be looking at how they can work with small businesses to bring them up to the required equality and diversity standards as the smaller companies may in some cases have fewer resources to accomplish this.

We need to ensure that we are involving a broad range of tenants and residents in service planning and delivery, and in monitoring progress on our equality objectives. Customer consultation has indicated that in their current form, the existing structures are not very diverse.

The Tenants and Residents Involvement Panel and some of the Tenants and Residents Associations are not seen as being representative; involvement opportunities need opening up to a wider audience, particularly the harder to reach groups who may have found it more difficult to participate.

In response to this, we will initiate work to enhance and facilitate the effective participation of under-represented groups in governance and resident involvement, at all levels including the Board.

We will explore innovative ways to engage people from a range of backgrounds, including those communities who may traditionally have faced real or perceived barriers to getting involved. To start this process we will consult with a broad range of under-represented groups to spread awareness of the opportunities and assess their requirements.

Based on their feedback we will assess the appropriateness of the existing involvement structures. If these are not suitable we will explore alternative ways the different groups could participate and engage with the organisation.

We will create a dedicated action plan to ensure we identify, consult with and involve a wide range of groups in the Doncaster borough.



### **Commitment 3: Engage customers effectively, foster good relations and advance equality in our local**

We will expand and strengthen the organisation's community engagement structures to foster good relations between different groups in our communities.

We will develop a scoping project to assess which groups and members of the community we are not currently engaging effectively with, and the reasons why, with the aim of reducing and hopefully eliminating these barriers to engagement. We will then undertake consultation with these groups to gain insight into their particular needs, helping us ensure we are providing the appropriate services. In response to the customer consultation feedback we will explore ways for St Leger Homes to interact in a more frequent basis with communities.

This will not only make St Leger Homes' staff more accessible, it will also help to bring communities together to encourage greater cohesion and understanding.

We will explore how we can make best use of our communication tools such as HouseProud and our online and social media communication channels, to promote and raise awareness of issues affecting our diverse communities.

We will maximise the opportunities to support and include some of the more under-represented groups, for example by communities, and explore options to support and work more closely with them. This will enable us to achieve shared equality aims and to improve the opportunities for under-represented groups, for example by including a regular article in HouseProud that will be of particular interest to our Gypsy and Traveller communities.

#### **Focus: Working more closely with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community in Doncaster.**

From the results of the Annual Fairness Report 2015-16 and the equality self-assessment, we identified that St Leger Homes was not engaging effectively with the LGBT community in Doncaster. This applied both to our customers and the wider community.

We established a partnership between St Leger Homes and Doncaster Pride, as part of which the

two organisations promote each other through social media and on their respective websites. Doncaster Pride promoted a St Leger Homes survey on the website to encourage the LGBT community to feed back to us on how we can better support them, offering the opportunity to help shape our services. St Leger Homes representatives ran a stall at the Doncaster Pride event in August 2017 at which they carried out engagement work, promoted our services and consulted attendees on how we could increase participation in our activities.

We will continue to build on this growing partnership as the strategy evolves, in addition to establishing similarly effective partnerships with other representative bodies to help us to better understand the needs of all our communities and tailor our services appropriately.



## **Commitment 4: Fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities to the highest standards**

St Leger Homes will continue to learn, develop and fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities to the highest standards. We will continue to build on our collaborative approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, and continue to be a key partner in delivering the vision for Doncaster. We will remain visible and influential through effective engagement with other multi-agency partnerships, partner agencies and frontline practitioners.

We will maintain our commitment to improving the quality of safeguarding and support for children, young people, adults and families through partnership and influence, continuing our support of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children and Doncaster Safeguarding Adults Boards.

We will aim to reduce the likelihood of children and young people being sexually exploited by building on our partnership work with lead agencies such as Children Services and the Children's Trust to align objectives and resources to achieve outcomes for young people and families. This work is to be completed in conjunction with other young person's boards across the borough, including Children in Care Council, NCS Youth Board and the Youth Council.

We will improve and strengthen our safeguarding services through training, communication and awareness so that our most vulnerable and hard to reach communities can engage in support activities that will help them develop and thereby improve all outcomes for them.

As part of this, we will continue to deliver our rolling programme of safeguarding training and refresh training, both for our own staff and for partners through the Review and Learning Sub Group and the training pool. This training will cover various topics including Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking, Child Protection, Signs of Safety, Early Help and Suicide Prevention. We will continue to build on the successful launch of the Board's "Keeping Safe" campaign to a wider audience, via posters, leaflets, cards and visits to other agencies.

We will ensure we are providing effective services and wider opportunities for children and young people. We will continue to promote and facilitate the Schools Partnership Programme – this will be

expanded to extend the delivery of training sessions to more academies in the coming year; including sessions covering 'health and well-being' and 'living in the wider world'.

We will also facilitate Creative Education workshops for young people aged 16-25 to develop their maths and English skills, as well as learning basic skills to get them tenancy ready. These workshops will be based at the Young People's Service with the 18+ services, Youth Offending Service and Doncaster Foyer.

As always, we will ensure that early intervention and support remains a priority to prevent the escalation of the problems and issues children and young people face. We will continue to work on the delivery of the Early Help Offer.

We will implement a proactive approach to tackling all types of hate crime in collaboration with partners such as South Yorkshire Police and Doncaster Council. We will work closely with the Safer, Stronger Doncaster Partnership to ensure we are maintaining a shared approach to identifying and combatting the causes of hate crime targeted at various groups.



## **Commitment 5: Develop a progressive and diverse workforce, in a workplace free from discrimination and harassment**

We are keen to ensure the organisation is an inclusive and welcoming environment for all staff, in which no one feels disadvantaged due to their membership of any protected characteristic group. The organisation's leadership team will act as ambassadors for fairness and equality, and these principles will be embodied by all staff, contractors and associates.

During the lifetime of this equality strategy we will review and update the organisation's equality and human rights policies, guidance and procedures, so that all staff are familiar with their diversity and human rights obligations, they know where to look for guidance, and they are provided with the best possible support in meeting the needs of customers and colleagues. We will ensure that human rights considerations are incorporated into our processes to ensure all decisions, policies and processes comply with our obligations, which encompass both the 'positive' duties to promote and further enhance human rights, and the 'negative' duties to refrain from breaching them unlawfully.

We will ensure the organisation maintains a dedicated equality and human rights focus in its provision of staff training and development. We will determine if we need to provide any further support, training and guidance for staff in supporting colleagues and customers in relation to equality, diversity, human rights, mental ill health and other requirements. We will design and deliver new training as appropriate, to address any gaps and meet any new challenges. We will continue to work towards creating a more representative and inclusive workforce, with a particular focus on improving female representation in the traditionally less gender-balanced work areas. We will also introduce further positive action measures to attract more applicants from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and other minority groups.

We will look beyond recruitment to consider effective retention and progression measures. We will work towards a reduction in the gender pay gap, through the implementation of positive action plans to address under-representation based on gender in certain parts of our workforce, whilst ensuring that appointment to posts are based on merit.

We will maintain our successful schemes to attract younger workers, and will continue striving to

make the organisation a better place to work for employees in the older age groups. We are keen to ensure momentum is not lost following our success in achieving awards such as our one for 'Championing an Ageing Workforce'.

We will implement measures to maintain a positive workplace in which there is no tolerance of discrimination and harassment. Following the feedback provided to us in the staff equality survey, we will look at our existing mechanisms to evaluate their effectiveness in maintaining a workplace in which employees feel valued and respected.

We will review our support structure and mechanisms for bullying and harassment in the workplace. A further area for consideration will be the organisation's recently refreshed one-to-one process. As this is still a relatively new process it will need to be embedded throughout the organisation. Once this is achieved we will focus on assessing organisational outcomes from these changes to determine if further adjustments or additions are required.

## **Monitoring our progress**

We have created a dedicated action plan to accompany this strategy, which will focus on our five key equality commitments and the underlying objectives. This will be used to evidence outcomes from the strategy to ensure we are meeting and delivering the new commitments. Responsibility for the strategy and action plan sits with the Fairness and Insight Manager and the Customer Focus Service Manager, who will provide regular updates on progress to the Framework for Fairness Group and the Executive Management Team.

## **Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations**

### **St Leger Homes**

St Leger Homes of Doncaster

### **SHEF**

Social Housing Equality Framework

### **TARA**

Tenants and Residents Association

### **TRIP**

Tenants and Residents Involvement Panel

### **BME**

Black and Minority Ethnic

### **LGBT**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

