



Inclusion Strategy

Date of approval	22 March 2021
Responsible director	Executive Director of Resource and Transformation
Strategy monitoring body	Group Board
Resident input into strategy date	February 2021
Date for strategy review	March 2023
Linked strategies/policies	People Strategy Health and Wellbeing Strategy Value for Money Strategy Resident Involvement Strategy Customer Access Strategy Community Investment Strategy Development Strategy Community Safety Strategy Neighbourhood Strategy
Statutory and Legal Framework	Equality Act 2010
Version/date	V5.0

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As outlined in our 2020-2022 Corporate Plan, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) is one of the largest Manchester based housing associations providing homes to approximately 29,100 people. We employ 540 people, and 48% of them live in Wythenshawe. We recognise and understand that this context means we have an extensive reach and impact in our role as an influencer and place shaper across our business and the communities we are a part of. We will use our presence as an employer, landlord and partner to promote and embed inclusivity in all we do, and will be an exemplar of good practice to others we work with or provide services to.
- 1.2 We have started to transform our business over the next two years and this strategy has been designed to help drive at pace, a step change in our internal and external operating environment. It will be reviewed in line with the implementation of the new Corporate Plan, at which time a longer-term strategy will be developed, building on the delivery outcomes that have been achieved.
- 1.3 WCHG have chosen to focus on delivering equality, diversity and inclusion as demonstrated in one of the guiding principles underpinning the Group's purpose. It states that the Group will:

Invest in an inclusive staff team

- 1.4 We will promote WCHG as an inclusive employer of choice where colleague's differences are recognised as strengths in delivering our purpose.
- 1.5 The Group's Corporate Plan confirms the commitment to inclusion through the strategic priorities and the five 'People Principles', and colleagues have made clear their appetite for change and improvement in their recent staff survey responses. At the core of this choice is the desire to change the culture of WCHG to be truly inclusive; by building on areas of real strength, acting upon ideas for improvement, and acknowledging the potential challenges and showing the will to address inclusion across the organisation. This strategy will ensure all this related activity is aligned.
- 1.6 We will invest in the health, wellbeing and personal development of our staff, who we will reward fairly and empower and trust to deliver their best work for the benefit of the Group, tenants and stakeholders.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 Our Purpose is to provide homes, to service our tenants and the wider community, to champion their strengths, and to play a leading role in creating a stronger, healthier and more resilient Wythenshawe.

- 2.2 WCHG will use this strategy to take us beyond simply accepting people for who they are, but into a modern, forward thinking organisation of choice, where differences are recognised as strengths in delivering our purpose. WCHG will use this strategy to improve the diversity of our organisation, and critically ensure that we are an inclusive business, one where everyone who works here has a sense of belonging, and where they know their presence is valued, and their contributions are actively sought. This will be reflected in ensuring that we provide our services in an inclusive manner to the community that it serves. This helps to ensure that all services are accessible to current and future tenants and are delivered in-line with their requirements.
- 2.3 This strategy will support the delivery of the range of activity, initiatives and policies that are required to enable us to demonstrate and evidence our commitment to ensuring the values across all areas of the business mean discriminatory acts or language are not acceptable, and not accepted by anyone who witnesses such behaviour. The Group will have zero tolerance to this.

3 Business and Moral case

- 3.1 Underpinning WCHG's overall purpose are the guiding principles, four strategic themes, five people principles, the four R's model and the 180 plus plan actions identified to deliver the four strategic themes.
- 3.2 All of which provide a strong case for the focus and development of inclusion in the organisation to fulfil its purpose and strategic themes through its people, culture, short and longer-term planning, partners, communities and customers. People are at the heart of everything and inclusion will enable voices to be heard and acted upon while moving towards achieving the organisation's overall purpose.
- 3.3 How WCHG embarks on its inclusion journey and communicates it will impact its wider reputation as a leader in this area, as a place shaper, its partner and customer relationships and ambitions for becoming an employer of choice.
- 3.4 WCHG's values, leadership, management practices, policies, behaviours and culture all contribute to an inclusive workplace culture. By engaging with staff, customers and management, by investing in skills, behaviours and values, by creating strong foundations and expectations for acceptable behaviour through effective policies and processes – the potential for a more inclusive work place culture, more staff and customers to be able to be themselves, performance to improve and the potential for unlocking creativity, talent and engagement with under-represented customers, are increased.

4 Legal or Compliance Case

4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 as a registered provider of social housing, WCHG is subject to the general public sector 'equality duty' because we carry out public functions. This means that we must, as a minimum, have due regard to the following:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

4.2 The Act explains that having due regard for promoting equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

4.3 The relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

4.4 As a provider of social housing, WCHG is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Our Regulator specifies the requirements for housing associations through its Standards framework. Under these standards, all housing associations must:

- Treat their residents with fairness and respect.
- Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their residents, including the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and residents with additional support needs.
- This is the minimum and something that the Group aim to exceed in all aspects.

5. Inclusion in a Global context

5.1 The wider context of what is happening in the world including impact of the current pandemic on the economy, employment and well-being, the housing and homelessness crisis, increasing health inequalities, climate change, the need for digital inclusion, new ways of working, Brexit and Black Lives Matter – there are a number of challenges facing WCHG similar to many other

organisations. Prioritising the Inclusion Strategy and the resulting work demonstrates a commitment to improving the culture and refreshing practices at a critical time.

- 5.2 WCHG have strategies and plans in place including the Corporate Plan, People Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Health and Safety Strategy along with other key policies – all of which link closely with the newly developed Inclusion Strategy as they all have customers and staff at the heart of them. The Corporate Plan refers to investment in staff, the culture of the organisation, working smarter and importance of equality, diversity and inclusion, the guiding principles that help establish the impact of decisions and the four strategic aims which can all be viewed through the lens of EDI. Inclusion helps people feel fairness, respect, engagement and development for them in an organisation that values and encourages their contribution and diversity of self and thought.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Board, leadership, management, staff, customers and partners/suppliers all have a role to play in taking responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion in and outside the organisation.
- 6.2 WCHG's Board have adopted the National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020, and seek to comply with its provisions, which include:
- That the Board demonstrates a clear and active commitment to achieving equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion in all of the Group's activities, as well as in its own composition.
 - That the Board has policies and statements which meaningfully demonstrate this commitment, and sets priorities and objectives for the Group to achieve.
- 6.3 Group Leadership Team are responsible for ensure that the working environment in WCHG is one that promotes EDI. To do so, it will ensure that all working practices are evaluated for their impact on EDI and that monitoring is in place.
- 6.4 Involved Tenants have a similar responsibility as Board in that they will challenge the Group's commitment to the delivery of EDI.
- 6.5 Tenant Committee will review all papers for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion issues and raise any concerns for the Group to be addressed.
- 6.6 The delivery of the action plan is the responsibility of the leadership and management teams along with the equality and diversity steering group.

- 6.7 All colleagues are responsible for actively championing, promoting and participating in equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of work and the action plan. Failure to do so, or acting outside the spirit of the EDI is against the values of WCHG.
- 6.8 Partners and suppliers are responsible for setting out their own position in relation to WCHG's values and purpose. Failure to act in line with WCHG values will be investigated and action taken.

7. Strategic Themes

- 7.1 The Group has worked with its staff and Housing Diversity Network to develop a clear strategy and action plan. At its core are 5 themes which are: -
 - 1. Leadership and Governance – accountability, commitment and prioritisation
 - 2. Driving Cultural Change – under-representation, celebration and equality of opportunity
 - 3. Training and Development – investment in EDI, skills and inclusive behaviours
 - 4. Delivering Best Practice to Customer & providing accessible services for all– service development, insight and inclusion
 - 5. Data Collection, Analysis and Purpose

8. Reporting

- 8.1 Progress in achieving the priorities, objectives and actions detailed in the Inclusion Strategy will be reported to Board at least annually.
- 8.2 Information about the work to deliver the commitments and objectives of the Inclusion Strategy will be published annually.

Inclusion Strategy Action Plan

Theme 1 Leadership and Governance				
	Action	Desired Outcome	Due Date	Lead Officer
1	<p>Engage GLT and Board Members with the Inclusion agenda, by developing a communication and engagement plan that might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements of support or otherwise on current issues reported in the media – GLT News, Vlogs, Coffee and Chat • Support for National campaigns • Corporate membership of relevant groups etc • Annual Inclusion event involving Board, Directors and Colleagues 	<p>Ownership of strategic objectives by the Board and Directors</p> <p>Visible and active engagement by Board and Directors in the Inclusion agenda throughout the Year that can be recognised by colleagues</p>	April 2021	Paul Roberts
2	Present a bi-annual Inclusion Board report to update on delivery of strategy and progress of Group against a range of indicators	Bi-annual monitoring of progress against Inclusion Strategy by Board	September 2021 Feb 2022	Paul Roberts
3	Undertake diversity monitoring of Board, GLT on an annual basis and annually publish information about the diversity, skills and attributes of board members.	<p>Establish the current profile</p> <p>Review how community is reflected in all aspect of the organisation</p> <p>Identify gaps and agree targets to mitigate them</p>	Annually – March (or via Board member appraisal process)	Christine Little

		Agree the appropriate ways to address areas of under representation including positive action if required		
4	Review the Board and Committee Member Recruitment and Succession Policies to encourage applications and recruitment from diverse groups	Board and Committees to comprise people with diverse backgrounds and attributes, having regard to diversity of communities that WCHG serve	November 2021	Christine Little
5	Develop and implement the Equality Impact Assessment process to evidence that all change to strategy, policy, procedure and working environment takes account of the impact on all protected characteristics and personal circumstances	Completed Equality Assessments required in all decision making, making best use of available data and identifying areas for improvement	June 2021	Shahida Latif-Haider / Penny Waller
Theme 2 Driving Cultural Change				
	Action	Desired Outcome	Due Date	Lead Officer
6	Design and implement the WCHG Human Library	Increased awareness and understanding across colleagues about the impact equality, diversity and inclusion issues have on individuals	August 2021	Victoria McDowell / Kendra Brown
7	Create and implement the 'It's not Okay' safe space for reporting discriminatory and offensive attitude, language and behaviour	Discriminatory and offensive attitude, language and behaviour reported and tackled	April 2021	Paul Roberts

8	Design and deliver inclusion awareness campaigns linked to national and cultural campaigns	Increased awareness of the Inclusion agenda across colleagues and the community Increased awareness of cultural traditions, events and festivals are considered in service delivery.	Annual programme	Paul Roberts
9	Agree areas of activity for positive interventions to improve the diversity of the Group in underrepresented areas (for example during recruitment)	A more representative business Create a neutral recruitment process and attract a diverse range of candidates. Applicants tracked throughout process	September 2021	Shahida Latif-Haider
10	Research the impact on social mobility on the workforce and community	Better understanding of factors that impact on staff and the community and additional actions agreed.	December 2021	Paul Roberts

Theme 3 Training and Development

	Action	Desired Outcome	Due Date	Lead Officer
11	Agree and deliver equality, diversity and inclusion training	All colleagues, Board Members and actively involved tenants trained on equality, diversity and inclusion agenda, issues and WCHG strategy and approach	June 2021	Shahida Latif-Haider / Darrel Foster
12	Develop and deliver bespoke equality, diversity and inclusion training to specific services across the Group e.g. courageous conversations; unconscious bias	Service areas have relevant understanding about how equality, diversity and inclusion may impact and improve services for customers.	March 2022	Shahida Latif-Haider / Darrel Foster

13	Deliver reverse mentoring programme focussed on under-represented groups	Managers and Leaders have a better understanding of how equality issues impact on their colleagues and team members.	October 2021	Penny Waller
14	Deliver Equality Impact Assessment training to appropriate colleagues across the Group and embed it into the principles	Equality impact assessment process embedded into all improvement, project and review work	Sept 2021	Shahida Latif-Haider / Penny Waller
Theme 4 Delivering Best Practice to Customer & providing accessible services for all				
	Action	Desired Outcome	Due Date	Lead Officer
15	Review our interactions with colleagues and customers that could be affected by discrimination and ensure systems allow data capture on protected characteristics	Analysis of our behaviours relating to inclusivity	March 2022	Paul Roberts
16	Redefine the Target Operating Model for the Group to shape services in line with current and future tenant requirements	Changes to service provision are assessed for their impact on all tenants and the wider community.	March 2022	Paul Roberts
17	Maximise the tenants voice to inform service design and delivery models	Cross section of tenants that represent the community shape future services and ways in which they are delivered. Broad range of ways to get involved utilised	December 2021	Paul Roberts

18	Work with Procurement Team to ensure EDI are embedded in tenders	All tenders consider the impact on EDI for the Group along with suppliers working practice.	September 2021	Paul Roberts
Theme 5 Data Collection, Analysis and Purpose				
	Action	Desired Outcome	Due Date	Lead Officer
19	Undertake tenant, staff and community profiling	Data in place to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Equality Impact Assessment process • Identify if the Group is representative of community • Identify actions needed to address gaps and barriers and improve representation 	July 2021	Paul Roberts
20	Deliver programme of Equality Impact Assessments across all service areas	Confident that all services are fully accessible	March 2022	Shahida Latif-Haider / Penny Waller
21	Identify range of inclusion / diversity metrics routinely reported and monitored by Board.	Ability to measure progress against agreed inclusion indicators and to use them as a driver for the allocation of resources needed to drive improvements	June 2021	Paul Roberts
22	Produce subject specific reports to document position and progress against inclusion issues and challenges – e.g. pay gaps (gender, race, disability etc)	Routine reporting of Group's position on specific issues	Annually	Paul Roberts