



Everyone Matters

Listening Locally. Understanding Diversity. Delivering Excellence.



Southway – The Fair Way

Single Equality Scheme 2011 – 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) key principles is that “every tenant matters”. This Single Equality Scheme (SES) indicates that we endorse this approach and see it as an integral part of the work we do here at Southway.

This Single Equality Scheme incorporates the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, which replaces the focus on individual equalities duties, with the new duty to advance equality and protect people from discrimination on the basis of Protected Characteristics (previously called “grounds”).

Southway recognises its responsibility under the Equality Duty and will consider the needs of all individuals in our day to day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to our employees.

This SES incorporates the Southway Policy approach on Equality and Diversity.

This SES replaces the Equality and Diversity Strategy adopted in 2008.

2. BACKGROUND

Southway Housing Trust was formed in 2007 with the aim of providing high quality affordable homes to tenants who live in south Manchester. As a key player in the provision of social housing in the south of the city, Southway Housing Trust acknowledges it has an important role in providing services which are inclusive and accessible.

The action plan linked to this Single Equality Scheme introduces some of the measures we will use to ensure equality for all our tenants, residents, customers and our staff. The SES is one of the core documents that forms part of our Everyone Matters framework.

The SES action plan covers a two year period from 2011 -2013. Progress will be measured by the Equality and Diversity Officer Group on a quarterly basis, with reports to Board on an annual basis.

Equality and Diversity Champions have been established in each service area in order to promote and monitor equality & diversity throughout all our work. These champions form the E&D Officer group which is chaired by the Chief Executive.



3. WHAT IS EQUALITY?

Equality is about treating people fairly, it's not about treating people the same. It is underpinned by legislation designed to prevent unfair discrimination.

The management of equality is vitally important to Southway Housing Trust as it enables us to:

- further improve customer service
- address the expectations of staff and service users
- ensure legislative compliance
- attract, retain and develop a diverse range of staff
- ensure employees make their unique contribution to the Trust

Respect for individuals is at the core of our culture and influences the way that we treat people, our staff and customers, and the way we provide services.

4. EQUALITY ACT 2010

Discrimination laws have helped the UK make progress on equality. However, because they were developed over more than 40 years, they had become extremely complex. Prior to the 2010 Equality Act there were nine major pieces of discrimination legislation, around 100 statutory instruments setting out connected rules and regulations and more than 2,500 pages of guidance and statutory codes of practice.

The Equality Act, in force from October 2010, has two principal goals. The first is the harmonisation of discrimination law and the second is strengthening and extending the law.

The Act:

1. Introduces a new Equality Duty on the public bodies and others, such as Southway, carrying out public functions
2. Ends age discrimination
3. Requires transparency
4. Extends the scope of Positive Action
5. Strengthens enforcement



The main provisions of interest to Southway are:

- the 'Protected Characteristics'
- the definitions of unlawful discrimination
- the disability related aspects
- the provision of goods, facilities and services
- positive action and the genuine occupational requirements
- employment related matters and pay reviews
- the duties to advance equality
- procurement

The Equality Act puts a general duty on all organisations carrying out a public function, which requires them to seek to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations, tackle prejudice and promote understanding

5. PURPOSE OF THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (SES)

This Single Equality Scheme is underpinned by the Equality Act. It will help us improve services (as detailed in the action plan) to all our tenants and remove any existing barriers for customers, potential customers, staff and Board members.

This Single Equality Scheme details how Southway Housing Trust intends to meet its duties to provide equal treatment in the key areas of:

- The development and delivery of services for our customers, tenants and residents
- Employment.

The underlying principles which support this scheme are contained within our strategic objectives and within the corporate Business Plan and our Vision and Objectives.



6. OUR CORPORATE VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Our approach to equalities is embedded in our Corporate Vision and Objectives.

Our Vision:

We will be warm, welcoming and accessible to every customer.
We will provide excellent customer services
We will provide affordable high quality secure homes.
We will help create a cleaner and greener environment.



Our Objectives:

People are confident and proud of the community they live in. They respect one another and are encouraged to realise their potential.

Our staff are trusted to do the right thing – they are enthusiastic, skilled and willing to go the extra mile for customers.

Our customer services are excellent and meet the needs and expectations of our customers. We listen to and respect our customers, dealing with enquiries in a helpful and friendly way.

We care about our communities; we develop strong partnerships to support them, helping to improve their neighbourhoods.

We are open and accountable to our residents; we consult and involve them before we make plans and decisions, making sure they are involved from the start.

7. CONSULTATION

We are committed to developing strong relationships with our partners, and working with all our key stakeholders to ensure that this Single Equality Scheme appropriately addresses the needs of all our customers.

We will consult with our Board, Tenants, residents and staff, to ensure this Single Equality Scheme achieves its aims.

We will identify new ways to involve groups that we have not, to date, successfully engaged with, including people in the protected characteristic groups.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

The broad roles and responsibilities within the organisation with regard to our equality obligations are indicated below.

Governance

The Board, which includes 12 volunteer Board members who are recruited for the specific skills and experience that they each bring, provides strategic leadership to the organisation. They, in conjunction with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), determine the organisation's strategic direction. The Board has ultimate responsibility for approving, implementing and monitoring this Single Equality Scheme.

Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The Chief Executive and each Director comprise the ELT. Each Director is responsible for ensuring the relevant aspects of the Single Equality Scheme are subject to an equality impact assessment and implemented within their Directorate.

The Chief Executive also leads on issues of equality and diversity.

Equality & Diversity Group

An Equality & Diversity group with members drawn from each Service area has been established to champion equality and diversity within the organisation. The Group is Chaired by the Chief Executive.

All staff

All staff are required to promote equality and diversity with regard to service development, and the way in which services are delivered.

Through equality and diversity training, staff are aware of their responsibility for ensuring that:

- they have a clear understanding of equality and diversity and what is expected of them;
- that all our customers are treated fairly and with respect;
- that their manager are informed about instances where discrimination may have occurred whether wittingly or unwittingly.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that our approach to equality and diversity is embedded within their service area, and that equality and diversity is high on their team agenda.

9. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The Equality Act seeks to outlaw unlawful discrimination against a person or group of people because of:

- age
- disability
- gender re-assignment
- marriage and civil partnerships
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion
- sex, and
- sexual orientation.

These are known as the 'Protected Characteristics', all of which were covered to varying degrees by previous legislation.

The Act strengthens the existing provisions relating to gender re-assignment. For example it will be unlawful to discriminate against a person who is in the process of changing from one gender to another as well as people who have completed the transition.

In addition, the Act recognises that unlawful discrimination can occur because of a combination of protected characteristics and so people will, for example, be able to make a claim because they are both female and disabled or black and gay.

Southway recognises the need to review our commitments to promote equality and related policies and procedures to ensure that all of the Protected Characteristics are covered. This includes data collection and monitoring, customer profiling and work on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

The Regulations

Southway recognises that an employer can be liable for a discriminatory act of an employee, carried out in the course of their employment, whether or not those actions were done with the employer's knowledge or approval.

For example, if one employee is being treated less favourably by another because of his/her religion then the offender's employer may well be liable for failing to ensure that the treatment did not take place in the workplace.

The Regulations protect job applicants, employees and potentially ex-employees. There is no qualifying period of employment.

Socioeconomic Status

Whilst this is no longer covered by legislation, we believe that it is linked to our general direction of travel and have consequently retained it within this scheme. Therefore we will, when making decisions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.

10. UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Southway will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of the protected characteristics.

The Equalities Act defines unlawful discrimination in four main ways:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Harassment and
- Victimisation.

Southway will make sure that board members, staff and contractors are fully aware of the different ways in which unlawful discrimination can occur and to take the necessary steps to ensure that policies, procedures and practices do not lead to unlawful discrimination.

Definitions

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than others are or would be treated, and the treatment is because of a protected characteristic.

An example might be refusing to provide housing advice to someone because of the person's sexual orientation.

Indirect discrimination occurs when a service provider applies to a person a provision, criterion or practice, which on the face of it has nothing to do with that person's protected characteristic, and applies (or would apply) that provision, criterion or practice equally to everyone.

An example might be not letting properties to people under a certain age because it is believed such people generally act in an anti social manner

Harassment related to a protected characteristic occurs when a person engages in unwanted conduct which is related to a protected characteristic, and which has the **purpose** or the **effect** of violating the dignity of another person, or creating for that person an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

An example might be displaying a topless calendar in a canteen, where this makes the workplace an offensive place to work for any employee.

Victimisation occurs when someone faces discrimination because she or he has made an allegation of unlawful discrimination or because of assisting or supporting a complainant.

An example might be refusing to consider someone for a promotion because they gave evidence on behalf of a colleague who made a complaint of unlawful race discrimination.

In addition, it is unlawful to put pressure on another person to carry out an unlawful act of discrimination. An example might be asking an employment agency not to send any men as a temporary replacement for a receptionist.

11. DISABILITY RELATED ASPECTS

The protected characteristic of disability applies to a person who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Southway will make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to take up or continue to work for the organisation or to gain access to services that we provide. This includes, where it is reasonable to do so:-

- Changing the way things are done
- Making changes to the built environment
- Providing auxiliary aids and services

12. OUR POLICY APPROACH

Our Equality and Diversity Policy approach is to ensure full compliance with all legislative, regulatory requirements and to deliver best practice.

In doing this we will embed the principles and approaches set out in this SES into our day to day operations, the way we plan and deliver services and the way we recruit , manage and support our staff.

We take seriously our key role in promoting good relations within our communities and will do this in the way we work with partners and support, inform and challenge tenants and residents living in our neighbourhoods.

Where there is a strong and clear case for taking positive action, we will consider this if the outcome addresses under-representation of a group on the Board, in the workforce or with regard to a service provision.

12.1 Employment

All our vacancies are advertised through a variety of media in order to encourage a diverse range of applicants, and employees are recruited solely based on merit. We are committed to staff development, and in furtherance of this we fund external development where appropriate to the services we provide.

A key aspect of this duty entails recording, monitoring and reporting the composition of our workforce in relation to each of the equality strands, and where there is underrepresentation, take positive actions to create balance.

We have an array of family orientated policies, which include but are not limited to; home working, flexible working arrangements, special leave for maternity, paternity, compassionate and adoption situations.

12.2 Service Provision

At Southway we treat all our customers fairly and with respect. We aim to deliver services according to the individual needs of our customers.

We monitor our services to make sure that all groups are able to access the services they require and that the service outcomes are of the right quality for all our customers.

Our partnerships are important to us, and we work with and consult our tenants, residents and key stakeholders in the design and delivery of services. We regularly monitor our performance through customer satisfaction surveys, and continually review service provision based on the responses received. In areas where through equality impact assessment, an adverse or negative impact on any of the equality groups is indicated, we work to remedy the situation.

We will aim to make sure that our tenants have the information, advice and support they require to achieve a good quality of life in their Southway home. This includes shaping services around the needs of particular groups and individuals, for example as set out in our Older Peoples Strategy, and working with other agencies to make sure vulnerable people have access to the support and advice that they require, for example, through the provision of equipment and adaptations in partnership with the Manchester Equipment and Adaptations Partnership (MEAP).

12.3 Domestic Violence

The trust has an antisocial behaviour policy which incorporates domestic violence. Detailed procedures are in place to guide staff on the appropriate responses to these circumstances, making effective use of legal remedies where appropriate.

Southway Housing Trust is determined to ensure that its response to this type of behaviour is swift, effective and recognised by its staff and partner agencies as mainstream action. It is for this reason that Southway Housing Trust will insist on the careful and robust use of this policy which sets out the principles of the organisation with regard to actions to stop harm to individuals, households and communities.

12.4 Employment of suppliers, contractors and consultants

We only work with suppliers, contractors and consultants who share our commitment to equality and diversity. We ensure that those with whom we work have equality policies and procedures in place to which they adhere, and which comply with our approach to equalities.

12.5 Lettings & Allocations

We provide an inclusive service and build fairness and equality into all our policies. Our allocations and lettings policy is based on housing need. We ensure through this policy that housing need of BME, disabled people, men, women and those who are transgender are considered fairly. A comprehensive equality impact assessment underpins the Allocations Policy to ensure that any form of discrimination in the allocation of homes is removed. This approach ensures that there is no bias against any minority group.

12.6 Resident Involvement

Through our resident and tenant consultation mechanisms we ensure that residents are involved in the development and delivery of services.

We continue to develop mechanisms which will assist us to engage with hard to reach groups. We set targets to ensure that the profile of our resident and tenant involvement groups are diverse.

We will promote good relations and awareness of E&D through our regular publications, and through local events and meetings.

12.7 Asset Management

We aim to ensure that our homes adequately meet the needs of our tenants. In the regeneration of our neighbourhoods we strive to ensure that barriers are removed and that the environment is a place where people want to live work and invest. We work with our partners to make this a reality in the lives of our tenants and residents.

13. COMMUNITY COHESION

Cohesive communities are those where diversity is valued and appreciated, and where there is a sense of belonging. In these communities all have equal opportunities and positive relationships between diverse groups are being developed within neighbourhoods.

Some of the key factors which positively contribute to community cohesion are:

- Equality of Opportunity
- Equal access to education and training
- The opportunity for employment
- Financial matters
- Social considerations such as Housing
- Health
- Amenities
- Integration



These key factors are the principles upon which our Vision and Objectives were established. Southway remains committed to working with partners and our communities to promote and support community cohesion.

14. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a systematic means of determining whether a policy affects all groups equally. Its purpose is to identify actual and potential inequalities and respond to them.

In practice this means:

- Building key EIA questions into mainstream policy development and review processes.
- Conducting EIAs based on monitoring data, surveys, and consultation.
- Completing an EIA form when policies are being reviewed or updated
- Ensuring that responses to key assessment questions are evaluated, and used to influence and inform planning and decision making throughout the organisation.

Services, policies and procedures, are subject to an Equality Impact Assessment as part of our continuous improvement processes. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring services are inclusive, and measures will be put in place to mitigate any adverse impact found. Services will be improved in a way which enables and encourages access and increased participation by all our customers.

15. ACCESS TO SERVICES INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

We work hard to ensure that the services and the information we provide are accessible to all.

Access to services

Our office is wheelchair accessible and we also have disabled parking on site. This ensures there are no barriers to the building for those who have physical disabilities. There is a hearing loop in our reception area and a portable hearing device used at meetings. We have access to BigWord telephone interpretation services for those individuals whose first language is not English.

Information and communication

We are aware that some of our tenants may need to access information in different formats. We are able to address this by providing information in alternative formats such as Braille, translation, large print or upon request. Our website is enabled with the BrowseAloud facility, which enables sight impaired customers to use the website more easily.

16. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Our key achievements over the last year have included:

- Browse aloud software activated on the Southway website
- Staff “Respect” guidance book produced
- Southway Stories now available in a range of translations
- Information trailer up and running
- Mental Health Awareness guidance produced for staff
- Access to 11 different languages available on the internet
- Service leaflets are now available in a range of translations
- Refusals procedures improved
- A number of staff trained in British sign language
- Equality and Diversity and customer care training for all staff as part of the Everyone Matters framework
- Equality and Diversity champions established across all services
- Establishment of the Excellence in Customer Care project team.
- Gaining an ‘A - outstanding performance’ grade following an equality and diversity audit inspection by TIAA



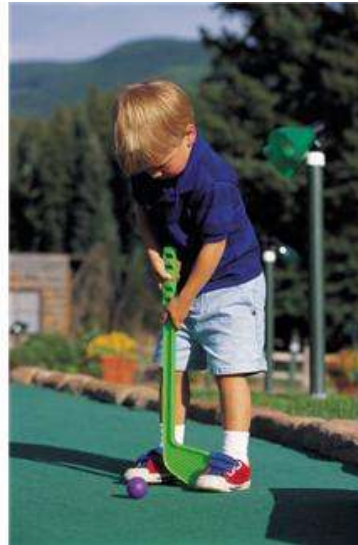
This Single Equality Scheme incorporates key actions which will ensure that we achieve our aims in relation to equality and diversity. The Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring that the Board receive an annual report regarding our progress on actions contained within the SES action plan. Annual results will also be made available to our tenants, residents and partners.



SOUTHWAY HOUSING TRUST SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2013

<u>What We Do</u>
Monitor staff and Board by all E& D strands.
Appoint and promote staff on basis of skills/ability
Provide flexible working policies that support all staff in balancing work and family life
Provide enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption provision
Maintain Equality & Diversity Staff Group
Provide regular E & D monitoring reports to the Board
Appointed staff Champions for Equality & Diversity
Carry out annual staff survey to ensure E&D information is up to date and request feedback on diversity issues
Monitor recruitment of job applicants by all E & D strands and encourage applicants from all members of the community
Provide Equality & Diversity training for all staff and Board
Provide Big Word Translations
Use Ethnic Media Press
Provide translation services and translate key documents
Report to Board on Key E & D KPI's
Carry out programme of impact assessments
Provide reasonable adjustments to assist new and existing staff (training, hearing loop equipment etc)
Support staff to learn sign language
Monitor recruitment by disability
Offer publications in Braille or Audio
Monitor age profile of work force
Monitor job applicants by age
Guarantee a job interview to any disabled person who meets the minimum criteria for a vacancy.
Monitor Board membership by age

Monitor job applicants by sexuality
Work with Police to report hate crime
Promote a culture of respect and dignity in the work place and in service delivery
Discuss with disabled employees what both parties can do to ensure the employee makes use of their abilities and develops their skills.
Have a harassment and bullying in the workplace Policy and make sure staff are aware of it
Monitor job applicants by religion
Provide catering at staff and customer events that respects special dietary requirements relating to religion or religious beliefs
Make reasonable adjustment for employees who become disabled.



1 = High Priority

2 = Medium Priority

3 = Low Priority

Priority	What is Required	Lead Officer
1	Promote E & D balance at all levels in staffing and Board Membership.	NL/RT
1	Develop Guidance for staff on the protected characteristics, unlawful discrimination and the Equality Duty	RT
3	Monitor recruitment by all equality strands including transgender	RT
2	Raise staff awareness of E & D legislation issues including transgender, via training.	RT
1	Continue to work with minority groups to remove barriers to involvement and consultation	MW
1	Carry out E & D Impact Assessments which consider all equality strands	LS
2	Provide training on equality which includes transgender issues	RT
2	Strengthen Domestic Abuse awareness and procedures	DS
3	Provide support for civil partnerships in relation to customers and staff.	RT/DS
2	Have due regard to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.	RS
2	Cultural awareness training for all staff	RT
2	Promote vacancies at Sheltered Schemes	DS
3	Monitor awareness of Equality through Team Performance Statement outcomes.	SMT
2	Promote job vacancies particularly where there is under representation.	RT
1	Ensure signage in reception is suitable for those with literacy problems.	LB
1	Ensure television in reception broadcasts useful organisational information.	LB
3	Maintain Positive About Disabled Standard	RT
2	Work with Jobcentre Plus (Access to work) to identify support needs	RT
1	Assess property attributes that could assist older people and people with disabilities as part of stock condition survey	JG
1	Maintain a list of adapted properties for letting	JG

1	Provide loop induction system available at Aspen House reception	AW
2	Provide refresher training on 'loop' system.	AW
1	Interview all disabled job applicants who meet essential criteria	RT
2	Establish 'Age in Workplace' Guidance	RT
1	Ensure we record E & D data of all tenants and monitor service provision against it	DS
1	Provide training for all staff on sexuality issues/awareness	LS - Lunchtime briefings
1	Equality training covering religion	LS - Lunchtime briefings
3	Support events in the community such as Eid etc	MW



Equality & Diversity KPIs 2011 – 2013

Diversity Area	Category	KPI Definition	Baseline Position 2009/10	Year End Position 2010/11	Target 2013
Disability MW	Service Delivery	% of tenants who are involved in consultation and involvement who have a disability.	23%	14%	30%
Disability FS	Service Delivery	% of disabled tenants satisfied with the service (STATUS survey)	Unknown	86%	94%
Disability RT	Employment	% of staff who are disabled	7.59%	7.29%	8.6%
Disability RT	Employment	% of applicants who have applied for employment with Southway who are disabled	1.78%	3.33%	5.0%
Disability SJ	Board	% of Board members who are disabled.	33%	25%	27%
Gender MW	Service Delivery	% those involved in Consultation and Involvement who are men	34%	36%	38%
Gender RT	Employment	% of women employed in the Property Services team.	5.67%	5.26%	9.4%
Gender RT	Employment	% of women employed in the Asset management team	12%	16%	10%
Gender SJ	Board	% of women on the Board.	25%	25%	40%
BME MW	Service Delivery	% of those involved in consultation and involvement who are from a BME group	11%	13%	15%

BME DS	Service Delivery	% of lettings made to BME applicants	30%	21%	25%
BME FS	Service Delivery	% of BME tenants satisfied with the overall service provided ((Status Survey)	Unknown	78%	86%
B ME RT	Employment	% of staff that are from BME groups	11.%	7.29%	14.%
BME RT	Employment	% of applicants who have applied for employment with Southway who are from a BME Group	2.6%	23%	6%
BME RT	Employment	% of BME staff that are involved in Corporate Working Groups	13.6%	14%	14%
BME SJ	Board	% of BME Board Members	8%	8%	8%
Sexuality MW	Service Delivery	% of the customers involved in consultation and involvement who are from LGBT groups	Unknown	Unknown	3%
Sexuality RT	Employment	% Applications received from LGBT job applicants in the last recruitment round	0	Unknown	2.1%
Sexuality RT	Employment	% of Staff from LGBT groups	22.5%	1.45%	1.3%
Sexuality SJ	Board	% of Board members from LGBT groups.	0	0	0
Religion FP	Service Delivery	% of tenants satisfied that service meets requirements of their Religion and Belief (Status Survey)	Unknown	85%	94%
Religion RT	Employment	% of employees satisfied that the requirements of their Religion and Belief are accommodated at work	100%	100%	100%

Age DS	Service Delivery	% of housing let to people aged 16 to 25.	49%	47%	n/a
Age DS	Service Delivery	% of housing let to people aged 60 and over.	5.5%	6%	n/a
Age MW	Service Delivery	% of people who are involved in resident consultation who are aged between 16 and 25	0	0	10%
Age RT	Employment	% of staff employed who are aged between 16 and 25 (including temps)	1.3%	3.0%	3.2%
Age RT	Employment	% of people who have applied for jobs with who are aged 16 to 25 in the last recruitment round	0	23%	7.1%
Age SJ	Board	% of Board Members below the age of 30.	0	8%	10%
Age SJ	Board	% of people below the age of 30 who applied for the last Board Member vacancy	0	8%	10%



