



Women's Pioneer Housing

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I. Introduction

- I.1 At Women's Pioneer Housing (WPH) we champion equality and diversity and, in particular the role that women's housing plays in tackling gender inequality.
- I.2 Our aim as an organisation is to make a positive difference to women's lives. We know that women face significant disadvantages and discrimination in our society. Having a secure, affordable suitable home is central to any woman's ability to achieve her potential. We also know that the situation is worse for particular groups of women who face additional disadvantages including older women, BAME women, women with disabilities, lesbians, young women, care leavers etc. We are committed to taking action to meet women's diverse housing needs in accordance with our vision.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy sets out how we will seek to understand and meet women's diverse housing needs, in line with the practice and spirit of the Equality Act 2010.

3. Informing our understanding

3.1 We will conduct research (ourselves or in conjunction with others) to assess women's diverse housing needs. We will consider the specific needs of those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

3.2 We will research why women have particular difficulties accessing suitable accommodation such as economic disadvantage, domestic abuse, sexual or racial harassment and which women are most affected.

3.3 We will also research the types of homes and services most suited to different women's needs e.g. security requirements, the demand for accessible, lifetime homes, and the need for language translation services. .

3.4 We will engage proactively with our residents, and use customer feedback to inform our understanding of the needs of the women we house.

3.5 We will liaise with statutory and other agencies in our local communities to understand their assessment of the housing needs of women in our local communities.

3.6 We will work with other housing organisations to share knowledge, experience and best practice.

4. Meeting the challenge

4.1 We will, use a range of different communications channels including networking, events, reports and social media to raise the profile of women's housing issues. We aim to influencing policy and housing provision to better recognise and meet women's diverse housing needs.

4.2 We will seek to meet those needs through the development of our own homes and services and will seek to work in partnership with or influence other housing providers to do the same.

4.3 We will assess the equality implications of all our housing policies and procedures in line with the Equality Act 2010.

4.4 We will promote a positive culture with regard to equality and diversity across WPH, amongst staff, residents, contractors or others we work alongside. We will always

challenge any discriminatory statements or behaviours by our staff, residents, partners or contractors.

- 4.5 We will take action, including positive action where necessary in accordance with the law, to tackle discrimination and promote equality and diversity in the provision of our homes and services.
- 4.6 We will deal promptly and effectively with domestic abuse, sexual or racial harassment, homophobic abuse and all aspects of hate related abuse.
- 4.7 We will regularly monitor the equality and diversity impact of our policies and procedures and review our policies and procedures to enable continuous improvement.

Examples of how this will work in practice

- 4.8 All our housing services will be developed in line with equalities principles to meet the diverse needs of the women we house, this includes for example
 - ensuring that our allocation policy provides fair access to housing e.g. giving priority to women in greatest need such as women with disabilities in unsuitable homes or women at risk of domestic abuse or harassment
 - ensuring that our health and safety policies and procedures have regard to the specific needs of women with illness and disability e.g. providing personally tailored evacuation plans for women with mobility problems and vibrating pillow alarms for women with hearing difficulties.
 - ensuring that language translation is provided when necessary
 - developing and implementing effective victim-centred harassment and domestic abuse policies. We will seek to reflect best practice e.g. maintaining our DAHA* accreditation.
- 4.9 Our homes will be developed and maintained in accordance with equality principles this will include for example
 - designing our new homes taking account of women's diverse needs e.g. building homes that are safe and secure, ensuring that walkways and corridors are well-lit, and building new homes to lifetime homes standards.
 - adapting our existing homes where possible to take account of the needs of the women we house e.g. introducing additional security features and aids and adaptations to our existing homes.

- 4.10 Our resident engagement strategy will enable the full and active participation of all our residents e.g. by using interpretation services, accessible buildings and a range of media to consult and engage residents.
- 4.11 Our Board and our employees will be recruited, managed and developed in accordance with a HR policy which promotes diversity and equality. All will receive training in equality, diversity and related issues e.g. dealing with domestic abuse. We will set clear expectations for our Board and our staff and ensure these are met.
- 4.12 All our contractors will be procured and managed so as to promote equality and diversity. We will recognise the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in respect of achieving best value in all our procurement activities. We will make sure that our values are reflected by all external suppliers working on behalf of WPH and that they uphold the principles of this policy in all their dealings with our customers.

5. Governance

- 5.1 The WPH Board and Chief Executive have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and compliance with the equality legislation. They have corporate responsibility to provide leadership for ensuring that this policy is reflected in all aspects of WPH's work.
- 5.2 Board members will be regularly briefed on equalities issues and will receive monitoring reports on key areas of activity.
- 5.3 The Head of Corporate Services has responsibility for delivering WPH's HR strategy on equality and diversity and is the equality and diversity champion for the business.