

HDN Midlands Diversity Group Meeting

Thursday 14th March 12:30 – 3:30 Walsall Housing Group

Agenda:

1. Introductions etc
2. Notes from last meeting and matters arising
3. Gender & Ethnicity pay gap
4. Sharing key workforce statistics on Diversity
5. Ravinder Kaur – presentation on Race and Gender initiatives
6. HDN update
7. A.O.B & Date/Location of next meeting

Attendees:

- Kate Foley – Castle Vale Housing
- Tom Piotrowski – Fortis Living
- Tuesday Willmot - Bromford Group
- Laura Jones – Nottingham Community Housing (Chair)
- Ravinder Kaur – WM Housing
- Ruby Khakh – Midland Heart
- Wal Warmington – HDN
- Imtiaz Vohra – P.A. Housing
- Sioux Breeze-Derrigan – Rooftop Housing Group (minutes)
- Hyacinth Austin – WH Group

Apologies:

- Stewart Hastie - Bromford Group
- Emily Taylor - EMH Group
- Jo Chown - Connexus
- Kathryn Stonehouse - EMH Group
- Jo Patel - Wolverhampton Homes
- Jin Takhar - Wolverhampton Homes
- Kate Warburton - National Housing Federation
- Saima Farooq - Waterloo Housing
- Amanda Evans - Housing Plus Group
- Jon Prashar – Places for People
- Chantelle Miller – Tuntum Housing

2. Minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters arising:

- Laura confirmed that she was happy to Chair the meeting for 1 year and nominations for the following year would be discussed at the final quarterly meeting of this year.
- Wal/Carla to re-send the contact list for the group to all members.
- Tom to send his training interventions presentation (December meeting) to all group members.
- Following a range of discussions at the December's meeting and outstanding issues from the first Midlands Diversity Group (MDG) meeting, they had been incorporated into today's agenda.

- The group agreed that agenda standing items should be:
 - Update from HDN
 - Update on practice and sharing good practice

3. Gender & Ethnicity pay gap

Group discussion around Pay Gap Reporting (statutory for housing associations with over 250 employees), which included most representatives at the meeting. Many of the group had produced figures but few had as yet to publish them.

Generally, it was felt that there is an expectation to reduce the figures we report on but it is an area that that is difficult to influence and that we had to be realistic about what was achievable year on year given some of the root causes of the pay gaps.

Reporting of figures sat with HR in most organisations.

Reasons for gender pay gaps – shared by the group:

- Occupational segregation
- The limited number of women in senior roles (Head of Service and above)
- The number of care and support roles which adversely affect average pay calculations
- Organisations that don't have big numbers of care and support services generally seemed to have performed better (lower pay gaps)
- Numbers of Men/Women Directors – some group members had 17 Directors, of which only three were women, some groups had a Leadership team made up of 100% men.
- Employees TUPED into the organisation, if significant and mainly women can impact on pay gap

That was a consensus that senior managers need to really buy into the issue, men need to champion the disparity, its not just for HR to deal with and if it is, it is less likely to succeed.

Getting the message across that 'this is what we look like' and that it doesn't reflect the society we live in – particularly in relation to women in senior positions.

Recruiters, Head Hunters and Agencies – are they buying into EDI and the values of our organisations? They may talk about diversity but what do their recruitment figures tell you?

Actions being undertaken within the group:

- Reviewing Pay Structures
- Reducing the number of Job Families
- Comparison of same size organisations to identify best practice (bench marked against top 20 report in Inside Housing)
- Exploring ways of recruitment to reduce occupational segregation – open days, videos, promoting job share
- Some organisations are taking out the care roles out of the equation to see how they affected the figures.
- Setting up EDI steering groups
- Retraining managers on recruitment and selection techniques
- Application of the Rooney rule for women (and BME) for senior posts

There was a discussion about whether Organisations around the table used risk maps – the majority said yes. Next if yes was the pay gap info featured in risk maps? – mixed response to this.

Colleagues were signposted to the 'London & Quadrant fair pay report' – suggesting this is worth a look at:

<https://www.24housing.co.uk/news/lq-lead-housing-diversity-in-fair-pay-report>

Another recommendation was the Government publication:

<https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/public/assets/pdf/understand-your-gender-pay-gap.pdf>

There was a brief discussion on the Ethnicity pay gap – a number of organisations had done this work but were in the main keeping it out of public view. Unsurprisingly the findings varied with some pay gaps larger than gender gap and others were smaller or similar. There was a consensus that more work needed doing to establish what the causes were – but the results posed some potentially difficult questions for us to talk to our organisations about.

4. Sharing statistics on Workforce Diversity

There was a discussion in the group about whether it would be helpful to get a basic understanding of where each organisation was at in terms of some basic/common diversity metrics – given that we share similar issues in terms of workforce representation. The examples suggested included: whole workforce stats such as % of men & women, BME & white, disabled, LGBT+. Then to take a closer look at under represented groups in managerial/senior positions e.g. women, BME, disabled & LGBT etc.

There was a consensus this would be helpful and a willingness to share such data – subject to some checks with other colleagues.

- The group wondered if HDN could develop a toolkit to support this area of work?
- Ruby to share the workforce representation template used at Midland Heart with group (broken into categories of 1) Frontline worker 2) Frontline Manager 3) Leaders – operational and strategic.
- The rest of the group would then aim to populate their data for comparison purposes by the next meeting so we could review and discuss.

5. Presentation on Gender Initiatives at WM – Ravinder Kaur

Highlights from the session were:

- Community engagement work – holding talks at schools and colleges
- Taking on apprentices from deprived areas within their communities
- Breaking down stereo types
- Frequently review job specifications to make sure they are up to date and relevant. That the language used in recruitment practices is not gender biased. Using gender decoding sites to support this approach (see examples below)

<https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/gender-bias-decoder/>

<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>

<https://www.beapplied.com/job-description-analysis-tool>

- Check marketing – who will be able to access the information. Images need to be inclusive. Using own employees and customers on recruitment material
- Double checking agencies rejection lists – look at the people they have rejected and why?

- Train all recruiting staff in Unconscious Bias

Actions

- Unconscious Bias as an agenda item for next meeting?
- Future Practice slots to include Best Practice in relation to Equality Impact Assessments
- Ravinder agreed to share her presentation with group on email

6. HDN Update

- Tuesday 19th March is #Housing Diversity Day – contact Carla for further information
- HDN is looking for at least 2 organisations in the Midlands for the next Achieving and Harnessing Board Diversity programme following the success of the two in the North. Through mentoring, coaching and training, the programme aims to identify the next generation of influencers from all walks of life and develop them into candidates for a board-ready talent pool to make their authentic contribution.
- 24 Housing Diversity Conference – 16th May, Birmingham
- Homes 2019 June 25th – 27th at Manchester Central, HDN at a fringe event on Diversity
- HDN Mentoring Conference – 20th June 2019. If you would like to find out more or come to this conference contact Carla@housingdiversitynetwork.co.uk
- HDN/ BMENational /NHF EDI conference – 17th October 2019, London – consultation on Housing's Diversity Manifesto was started at last years conference and should be launched at this conference. NHF website will have more information on this.
- London (and SE) and Midlands are to be joined by the newly formed North Diversity Group (coordinated by HDN's lead person in the North, Mushtaq Khan.

7. A.O.B & Date/Location of next meeting

Date and location on next meeting:

13th June, Rooftop Housing Group, Evesham

Discussion around family friendly events near Evesham:

Crothorne Walkabout on May 5th & 6th (<http://www.crothornewalkabout.co.uk/>)

Fladbury Walkabout on July 6th & 7th <http://www.fladburyvillage.co.uk/walkabout/>