



Symphony Housing Group
Valuing Difference Framework
2012

Purpose of the Framework

This framework has been developed by lead officers for Equality and Diversity from across Symphony Housing Group. It sets out the Group's strategic aims while still allowing member organisations the flexibility to 'Value the Difference' locally and continue to meet our legal obligations. Developed from the Single Equality Statement the framework provides information and guidance to staff, tenants and partners about Symphony Housing Group's approach to equality and diversity.

The principles of this framework will be applied to everyone working (paid or voluntary) with us including our staff, our customer and our partners.

It will allow us to meet our legal obligations to the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and our statutory obligation to the general Public Sector Equality Duty under the same Act; this duty requires us to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people, in all our services and activities.

As we engage with some of the most disadvantaged sections of the community we also recognise that we have both a service led and a moral obligation to respond to both socio-economic and the wider social diversity needs of today's society.

We will achieve this by meeting the objectives under the 5 Strategic Equality aims:



Beyond Compliance

Beyond Compliance

We aim to ensure we meet and where possible surpass our legal and statutory responsibilities including our commitment under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Objectives:

- Comply with legislation, statutory and regulatory requirements
- Challenge, identify and respond to key risks regarding delivering equality and diversity
- We will positively promote the diversity of our communities and foster good relations



Tailored Services for all

Tailored Services for All

We aim to provide, wherever possible, tailored services to meet the needs of local residents and deliver excellent service standards wherever we work.

Objectives:

- Adapt service provision to meet the identified needs of customers, service users and their communities
- Proactive gathering and use of up to date customer information
- Develop community initiatives to improve residents' quality of life



Promotion & Knowledge

Promotion and Knowledge

We aim to increase awareness and support residents, staff and contractors by developing skills and sharing good practice and learning.

Objectives:

- Shape what we do based on best practice
- A commitment to learning throughout the Symphony Housing Group
- We will understand and respond to the diverse communication needs of our customers



Inclusive Workplace

Inclusive Workplace

We aim to ensure our working practices and environment support our diverse workforce and our staff feel valued, included and supported. This includes access to opportunities to maximise their individual and collective potential and supporting work-life balance initiatives.

Objectives:

- To recruit, promote and retain a diverse workforce which ensures that the right people are in the right jobs at the right time
- To nurture a learning organisation that improves overall performance thus helping the Group achieve its goals and helps everyone to realise their full potential
- To promote an open and inclusive culture where all staff are consulted and involved



Better in Partnership

Better In Partnership

We aim to work better with our residents, partners, consultants and contractors with whom we do business to reduce inequality within the communities we serve.

Objectives:

- The Board and our Senior Managers will champion and challenge the delivery of this framework
- To involve a diverse range of customers so they can influence what we do
- Work with our partners, suppliers and contractors to ensure they deliver services to our customers in the spirit of the 'Valuing Difference Framework'

Achieving Valuing Difference



Delivery

We will use this Framework to:

- Enable each member and service area to develop their own approach and plans to meet the 5 strategic aims
- Inform and promote the use of the Valuing Difference toolkit
- Embed the equality analysis (EQUATE) process across Symphony Housing Group
- Focus on outcomes and not outputs for stakeholders

Monitoring our Performance

Each member organisation is responsible for monitoring their own progress and performance in relation to the Framework, to ensure tangible outcomes to services are achieved for residents, staff, partners and other stakeholders.

These outcomes will be regularly communicated and reported to staff, residents, partners, Senior Management Teams and member organisation Boards.

As part of this framework an annual update on outcomes will be submitted to the Group Management Team and Group Board to highlight how the aims and objectives have been met by the Symphony Housing Group member organisations.

Who is responsible?

All employees have a responsibility to ensure that equality considerations are central to all aspects of service provision in the organisation.

Every member of staff should be familiar with this Framework so that they are able to provide services in a way that does not directly or indirectly discriminate or create disadvantage; and to ensure that strategic aims and local objectives are met for residents, partners and other stakeholders.

Managers will work to increase awareness of equality and diversity issues throughout Symphony Housing Group, including ensuring that appropriate personnel receive the correct support and that training is provided.

The Symphony Housing Group Equality and Diversity task group exists to ensure that each member organisation meets the aims and objectives of the Framework. The task group consists of member organisation representatives, who meet on a regular basis to monitor the implementation of the Framework, challenge and determine future actions and work together in supporting and sharing best practice within Symphony Housing Group.

While local Senior Management Teams and Boards have a responsibility to ensure all member organisations are meeting the Framework aims, it is the Group Chief Executive and Symphony Housing Group Board who are ultimately responsible for ensuring that we meet our legal and statutory obligations in this area.