



Equality and diversity policy

2007-2010

Please note that this document should be read in conjunction with our One equality scheme 2007-2010, which is available on our internet pages at: www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk

Equality and diversity policy

7. Our commitment

Cross Keys is committed to equality and diversity. We strive to provide homes and services fairly to Peterborough's diverse community and to employ a workforce that reflects the community we serve.

At the heart of our equality and diversity policy is a commitment to valuing diversity, treating people with dignity and respect, eliminating discrimination and promoting community cohesion.

We value the individual contribution of people and we are committed to eliminating discrimination on the grounds of:

- Race
- Ethnic origin
- Disability
- Nationality
- Gender
- Gender reassignment/identity
- Sexuality
- Or any other matters which causes a person to be treated with injustice
- Age
- Class
- Appearance
- Religion
- Caring responsibilities
- Unrelated criminal activities
- Being HIV positive or with AIDS

In addition to legislative requirements, we expect Cross Keys' employees and contractors undertaking work on our behalf, to promote the spirit of our equality and diversity policy and to recognise that they have a duty not to discriminate against anyone while carrying out their duties.

7.1 Policy aims

Our equality and diversity policy applies to all aspects of Cross Keys Homes, in particular to:

- the recruitment, employment and retention of employees;
- our board membership and other issues arising from our governing document;
- membership and constitutions of our resident involvement groups;
- handling hate crime incidents and other forms of harassment;
- commissioning contractors, consultants and taking-up supplier services;
- carrying out our housing management functions; and
- implementing our action plan.

7.2 Cross Keys as an employer

We are committed to developing a workforce that reflects the community we serve, and valuing and developing the skills and abilities of people from different backgrounds. This commitment is backed by our support as an 'Age Positive' and 'Positive about disabled people' employer.

We will:

- value and respect the identities and cultures of our employees, and encourage all employees to reach their full potential
- make sure that all employees and job applicants receive fair and equal treatment in recruitment and selection
- ensure that all staff have fair and equal access to promotion and training opportunities
- make sure the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment and act promptly on all complaints of such
- provide a workplace that is accessible to disabled people and where possible, retain in suitable employment employees who become disabled or ill
- maintain records in recruitment, employment and training and use this information to identify areas of inequality
- establish a formal consultation mechanism for senior managers, union representatives and elected members of staff to discuss equality issues relating to employment
- provide training and guidance to our employees and board members to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy

This section should be read in conjunction with specific employment policies which detail Cross Keys' commitment to equality and non discrimination in employment.

These policies are:

- Recruitment strategy
- Recruitment and selection policy
- Induction policy and procedure
- Dignity at work policy
- Grievance procedure
- Disciplinary procedure
- Employee code of conduct

7.3 Equality in service delivery

We believe that all Peterborough's residents should enjoy equal opportunities to work for a better life for themselves and their families by delivering this scheme Cross Keys Homes will:

- ensure that the needs of Peterborough's diverse community are identified and taken into account in the planning and delivery of housing services
- work towards the elimination of harassment on our estates, supporting victims and taking action against perpetrators
- work towards increasing the representation of BME residents and residents from hard-to-reach groups in our formal consultation bodies
- ensure that information we provide is accessible to service users, in languages and/or formats that they can understand
- provide an accessible service by removing or altering physical barriers to access
- promote the value of diversity among staff and residents, recognising that people from different cultures and backgrounds add value to the housing service and the local community

7.4 Complaints

If you think we have not treated you fairly we will examine your complaint carefully. Should you follow our complaints policy. A leaflet is available from our offices and can be downloaded from our website at www.crosskeyshomes.co.uk.

Cross Keys will monitor complaints that it has not fulfilled its obligations under the Race Relations Act 2000, and seek to resolve them.

7.5 Responsibilities

We recognise that our equality and diversity policy will only be effective if staff and residents are aware of it and steps are taken to implement and monitor the policy.

Cross Keys' board has overall responsibility for the content of our equality and diversity policy and have given delegated authority to certain board members to drive equality and diversity, through their representation on the equality and diversity committee and to represent the board as equality and diversity champions.

The equality and diversity committee, led by the Chief executive as sponsor, is the responsible strategic driver for Cross Keys' equality and diversity work and for ensuring that Cross Keys' continues to reflect legislative, industry and good practice guidance.

The working group is responsible for delivering this scheme and its action plan and for reporting progress and matters arising to the committee and for involving residents in this work.

7.6 Communication

Cross Keys Homes' communications and marketing strategy clearly sets out our approach to providing clear, accessible and consistent communication.

Wherever possible, we will endeavour to supply information about our services, products and employment opportunities to customers in a range of formats on request.

Annually we hold a focus group to ask tenants for their views and ideas on communication.

7.7 Involvement and consultation

We are committed to ensuring continued, fair representation in the future involvement and consultation of working arising from this scheme. In order to do this, we will ensure that the following groups are reflective of Peterborough's local community and are able to make comments which are reflective of our tenants and the wider community.

The equality and diversity working group will use the following groups as their primary involvement and consultative platforms, while delivering this scheme and action plan:

- **Board** – executive voice on high level matters affecting Cross Keys equality and diversity work
- **Diversity forum** – tenant and resident involvement voice on work arising from the scheme and action plan and regular progress updates
- **Equality and diversity committee** – board, tenants, staff and external and expert stakeholders voice on strategic matters
- **Policy review group** – tenant voice on any revisions to the scheme
- **Resident liaison group** – resident voice on significant developments to be addressed outside of the diversity forum
- **Staff focus group** – employees voice on work-related equality and diversity matters

We will also develop other opportunities to gauge the voices of our tenants, the wider community and external stakeholders, to ensure that our work reflects local needs and priorities.

7.8 Partnership working

We are committed to continuing and building upon existing partnership working arrangements, which enable; awareness raising, information sharing and networking opportunities with other like-minded organisations; leading to good practice and innovation in equality and diversity.

We will continue to play a role in driving forward equality and diversity in the housing sector and will demonstrate this through our continued support and attendance at the following groups.

- National Housing Federation's equality and diversity east group
- National Housing Federation's black and minority ethnic contractors group
- Open Out Partnership – for tackling hate crime
- Peterborough Race Equality Council board representation
- Peterborough City Council's diversity group

7.9 Training

Effective training has and will continue to play a key role in the implementation of the scheme.

Cross Keys has been accredited with the Investors in People status. A suite of equality and diversity training was delivered to all staff and board members during 2007, including follow-up training for front line offices and managers. The involvement team are preparing arrangements for resident involvement groups to also receive training via a tenant participation specialist.

We will continue to identify further opportunities for training particularly for equality and diversity working group members to help them successfully deliver this scheme and action plan.