

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY PERFORMANCE ANNUAL REPORT

1. Equality and Diversity Performance

This section of my report constitutes the annual Equality and Diversity Performance report to the Board. Since our last Board meeting, progress continues to be made to deliver our 'major push on Equality and Diversity' which was included in the company's seven key themes for the current financial year.

2. Increasing HR resources

You will be aware that Constance Hall joined NCH in September 2009 as Head of Business Improvement and agreed to cover the post of Head of Equality and Diversity in December 2009. Janet Glass resumed her role as Head of Business Improvement at the beginning of July and Constance is now focussing on equality and diversity while she completes the performance management review.

We are now recruiting to the post of Equality and Diversity Officer (2 year fixed term contract) and Equality and Diversity Research Officer (permanent contract) which became vacant at the beginning of July. Based on the lessons learned from past experience, it was agreed that both posts would initially be advertised on a six month secondment with the aim of developing our in-house capacity and skills in this specialist area of work. Taking into account annual leave, it is anticipated that the successful applicants will be in post by mid September. In the meantime, Constance is being supported by the Business Improvement Team.

3. The Single Equality Scheme

We are in the process of reviewing our current Equality and Diversity Strategy with the aim of developing a new Single Equality Scheme. The scheme will develop our approach to delivering services and employment across all six equality strands, these are: age, disability, gender race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

To ensure customers receive a seamless service our new Scheme will dovetail into the Single Equality Scheme which Nottingham City Council launched in May 2009 and the Council's housing strategy which is being developed. We will be consulting employees and tenants to develop the scheme and complete the Equality Impact Assessment for this project. In particular, we will be involving customer forums; the Tenant Liaison Committee, Homes for US and the BME Forum to develop the strategy. The Single Equality Scheme will be presented to the Board in November. The Scheme will cover six areas; knowing your communities and equality mapping, place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational

commitment, customer engagement and satisfaction, responsive services and customer care, a modern and diverse workforce.

The timescale may appear to be long; however successful delivery of the Scheme requires a change management approach (including culture, values and behaviour) which is an incremental programme and a mammoth task for an organisation of this size.

4. Diversity and Community Cohesion Champions and Steering Group

The Diversity and Community Cohesion Champions Group has been meeting quarterly. The meetings are chaired by the Chief Executive and they have created an opportunity to monitor our performance against our new Equality Statutory performance indicators and targets and a forum for managers and employees to cross fertilise ideas on equality and diversity performance across the whole organisation.

Amanda Schofield and Constance Hall met with the Board's Diversity Champions, Ade Aderogba, Janet Storar and Valerie Schneider to discuss their role and to agree the Equality and Diversity Service Improvement Plan. We are now arranging another meeting to discuss progress and to receive the input into the Single Equality Scheme referred to above.

5. Customer Profile Reports

Customer profile reports are now available for all NCH estates. The report includes a break down of residents in respect of all six equality strands. A Customer Profiling Group has been set up to take forward our work on understanding customers' needs. The first meeting will take place in September 2009. We currently have records available for 84% of employees and we are working to achieve a target of 95% by 31 March 2010.

6. Performance Measurement and Monitoring

Performance measurement and monitoring is a key aspect of delivering our equality and diversity strategy. We now have all the baseline data available for the last financial year and managers are now finalising the targets to ensure that our statutory requirements are met. The targets are based on the recommendations of the Statutory Duties for Race and Disability and have been extrapolated to all six equality strands. We will be working with HR to develop our work around gender during the year and our plans will be included in the new Scheme. The Diversity Champions Group is responsible for monitoring performance against the targets.

7. Employee Diversity Forums

The Employee Engagement Survey to be completed in July 2009 is consulting staff on the merit of introducing employee forums to support staff that may be marginalised in the workplace. We have already established an Ethnic Minority Forum for employees and it would be good practice to ensure that we encourage other forums that represent the six equality strands. These

forums will only be established where employees indicate that there is a need. In the meantime, the Employee Care Forum will continue to address the needs of all employees.

We are also considering hosting a series of training courses, coaching and workshops for employees to raise awareness and develop our capacity to provide excellent services for customers and to be an Employer of Choice.

8. Equality Impact Assessment Workshops

A series of workshops to consult customers on policies and procedures was held in February 2009. The workshops were well attended and their feedback has been used to ensure that all residents have fair and equal access to our services. The information received was used to complete the equality impact assessments and to amend policies where appropriate. A 3 year rolling programme is now in place to complete impact assessments. Property services are now working towards completing their EIAs for new policies and strategies which will include our approach to delivering Decent Homes.

9. District Audit Report

We are working closely with the EME Forum and the Head of Equality and Diversity to address concerns arising from the District Audit Report. Their advice and support has been invaluable to deliver our communication strategy with employees on this matter.