

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



SEE THE
DIFFERENCE



Manchester is a culturally diverse city. This diversity is reflected in the homes and places we manage, the customers we serve and the people we employ.

Purpose

We exist to provide quality homes and to work with our partners to shape services that improve people's lives and attract further growth and investment into the places where they live. We have an important role to play in helping to meet objectives that result in safe, inclusive and healthy places, and increasing economic activity.

We believe successful places need successful people and our actions will therefore always support our people first and foremost

Vision

Our vision is that equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental in everything we do. We aim to understand, reflect and meet the needs of the diverse places we serve by providing services that are accessible, inclusive and non-discriminatory. We will do this through our ways of working, by our commitment and by having a skilled, diverse and inclusive workforce and a governance body that reflects the places we serve.



Scope

This strategy outlines our priorities aligned to the seven areas of our corporate strategy and supported by an action plan. The action plan has been developed and informed in association with the Housing Diversity Network by reviewing our existing performance on equality, diversity and inclusion and with an aspiration to achieve recognised best practice.

Stakeholders

Our residents and customers are key stakeholders. Our strategy and plan aim to ensure that we better understand and meet their needs and requirements and facilitate fair and equal access to our properties and services.

Our employees are both stakeholders and central to achieving the aims of the strategy. As an employer we will monitor the diversity of our workforce and ensure we have lawful, flexible, fair, equitable and accessible recruitment and selection processes and employment policies in place.

Our Board has overall strategic responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion and requires assurance through our governance reporting structures that our strategy and plans are adequate and effective and that we will comply with legal and regulatory requirements.

Our leadership team will collectively own the strategy, ensuring engagement with it, that it is actioned within the organisation and that it leads by example through the demonstration of its own behaviour and attitudes.

Our partners are a key element of many areas of One Manchester's work and we will ensure they are aware of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and seek to work only with those who share our values and act upon them.

Our suppliers are regarded as a part of the One Manchester delivery model. We will publicise our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and ensure that our suppliers have a similar approach to fairness, equality of opportunity and accessibility in their roles as employers and service providers.

Our regulators will seek evidence that we have complied with our legal and regulatory duties in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion that services provided to our customers are fair, equitable and accessible and that we have listened to and learned from any customer feedback.

Current position

Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of One Manchester's work and is fundamental to our vision, purpose, behaviours and ways of working. This strategy provides an overview of how we will enact our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as we deliver our strategic aims and provide a guide for activity to embed equality, diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

As a registered provider of housing, One Manchester has legal and regulatory duties to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion within our governance, our role as an employer and our role as a service provider.

Legislation:

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful for organisations like One Manchester, who provide properties and services, to discriminate, harass or victimise an

individual who possesses a protected characteristic. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Regulation:

Homes England, our regulator, requires within the 'Consumer Standard' that we:

- provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of our tenants in all of our standards
- treat all tenants with fairness and respect
- demonstrate that we understand the different needs of our tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs

Strategy

Our equality, diversity and inclusion strategy is embedded within our seven strategic themes:

Strategic positioning:

For One Manchester and our customers to have a voice in, and a share of, Greater Manchester's growth and success.

We will understand the experiences, opinions and aspirations of our diverse residents and places and represent them within the city and region by:

- collecting diversity data on our customers and processing, storing, securing and using it in line with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations
- carrying out a customer survey at least once a year to understand our customers' views and priorities
- engaging with representative groups to seek their opinions and perceptions
- instigating, participating in and utilising relevant research by external bodies that assists us in understanding the experiences, opinions and aspirations of our diverse places
- we will have a well communicated and visible commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion externally including presence in and sponsorship of appropriate events relating to equality, diversity and inclusion



We will support our customers to engage with the city and region and speak for themselves by:

- working to increase community engagement with all of our customers
- supporting resident and community groups with human, financial and other resources
- identifying a diverse range of media through which the customer voice can be heard and supporting customers to use them
- working with customers to maintain a catalogue of personal stories and case studies to highlight relevant issues and work

Place:

Invest in people and manage our places effectively, so that they develop, grow and thrive.

We will invest in our places to help them develop and grow by:

- working with our customers to allocate money from our Community Soup fund to invest in a range of activities that supports our diverse customers
- work with our customers to hold place-based events and activities that promote equality, diversity and inclusion and community cohesion



We will manage our places and help them thrive by:

- having clearly published, robust and accessible policies on discrimination, harassment, victimisation and abuse
- encouraging reporting of discrimination, victimisation, harassment and abuse by increasing trust in the organisation through regular place-based personal contact
- working with partner agencies to address and prevent instances of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or abuse
- having a well publicised, fair, robust and accessible complaints policy
- learning from customer feedback, where possible making improvements and publicising the things we have changed

Transforming services for customers:

Providing intelligent, efficient and reliable services to customers that meet their different needs now and in the future.

One Manchester recognises the diversity of our customers and the lives they lead and will transform customer services by:

- ensuring a range of access routes to our services
- ensuring our website and self-service options are accessible to all customers who wish to use them
- ensuring we seek ongoing feedback on our services from a diverse range of customers to facilitate continuous improvement that is inclusive of all
- extending the hours of operation for key services to accommodate the range of our customers lifestyles
- understanding and utilising the best communication methods for our diverse customers
- promoting our equality, diversity and inclusion work to our customers to encourage trust and engagement

Social innovation and partnership:

Linking together our knowledge and skills with those of our places and partners, in new and imaginative ways, to improve services and opportunities for our customers.

One Manchester recognises that existing societal structures and behaviours have resulted in varying levels of inclusion, opportunity and growth within our diverse places. In order to increase equality, diversity and inclusion in our places we will:

- give practical and financial support to those seeking to start their own businesses
- seek to utilise goods and services from local businesses within our supply chain
- ensure our customers are active partners with us in research or joint working with external agencies
- be open to suggestions from our employees and customers in relation to better ways of working and providing new and different services in a more innovative way.

Growth and diversification:

To provide good quality homes that are affordable for customers to rent or to buy.

One Manchester will:

- identify the housing needs and preferences of our diverse places
- produce materials that use diverse and inclusive images and language to promote our homes
- monitor our lettings and sales to establish whether they are representative of our places, seeking to understand and address inequalities
- build or purchase a range of homes to accommodate diverse needs including homes for people with disabilities, homes for people who are vulnerable and require additional help, support or reassurance, larger homes to accommodate large or extended families and smaller homes for the increasing numbers of single or small households
- recognise that some communities may be overrepresented in the private rented sector or poor quality, overcrowded home ownership and seek to improve their situation through our approach to diversification.

Financial resilience:

To generate and protect our income so that we can reinvest it into services and products that help our customers.

One Manchester recognises that diversity of experiences and viewpoints makes for better decision making and will have a leadership and governance community in place that is broadly reflective of the places we serve.

We will ensure strong governance through:

- monitoring the diversity of the Board and leadership team
- seeking the highest calibre board members and employees and appointing the most appropriate individual, taking into account background, experience, skills, knowledge, qualifications and suitability for the role



- recognising gaps in our diversity and addressing those gaps by ensuring vacancies are promoted and communicated in appropriate ways and channels that are likely to raise awareness with under-represented groups
- One Manchester will take a long-term view working with under-represented groups in order to capacity build to increase the likelihood of successful recruitment to Board membership

Organisational capacity:

Ongoing investment in our people and systems to ensure they are fit for purpose to deliver on our promises.

Employees who can be themselves at work are likely to be more productive and have reduced absence, so we will seek to ensure a diverse and inclusive environment for existing employees through:

- a well communicated, visible and evidenced commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- ensuring lawful, fair, equitable, diverse and inclusive employment policies and practices are in place to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation in and outside of the workplace
- clear and well publicised grievance, whistleblowing and disciplinary policies that highlight discrimination, bullying and harassment as unacceptable.
- collecting, securely storing, processing and using equality, diversity and inclusion information

about our employees in line with the principles of the general data protection regulations in order to identify and resolve any inequalities in the satisfaction or treatment of our employees

- using a diverse range of venues for meetings that are accessible from a physical, mental, religious and cultural perspective
- seeking to provide a range of foods at organisational events that cater for all
- ensuring our office accommodation is adaptive and accessible and meets the needs of individuals with physical and mental impairments
- demonstrating and publicising our commitment to making reasonable adjustments to working environments, equipment and systems



- recognising, promoting, publicising and celebrating appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion-related events – Pride, Idaho, International Women’s Day etc.
- delivering learning and development activities for all employees which focus on improving knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion in and outside of the workplace
- membership of the Housing Diversity Network and their mentoring programme

We will employ the best people for roles we have available, conscious of the fact that having a diverse workforce with a range of backgrounds, experiences, views and ideas and that is representative of the places where we work will make us a more effective organisation. In order to achieve this, we will:

- promote the housing sector as an attractive career option for individuals from all backgrounds and we will highlight the range of roles available and the positive impact we make to our customers and our places
- monitor the diversity and inclusivity of our workforce identifying under-represented groups
- use recruitment materials that contain inclusive images and language
- advertise vacancies in order to encourage applications from under-represented groups

- reduce inequalities through identifying work placements and volunteering opportunities within the organisation and externally, paying particular attention to under-represented groups
- regularly review our recruitment, selection and assessment activities to ensure they are fair, equitable, accessible and fit for purpose, seeking an appropriate balance of background, fit to the organisation, experience, skills, knowledge, qualifications and sector experience depending upon the role
- explain selection and assessment processes to applicants and encourage them to identify any special arrangements or adjustments that may need to be made for them
- ensure that recruiting managers have received training on recognising and effectively managing their own unconscious bias in the recruitment, selection and assessment process
- monitor the progress of applications for roles in relation to the diversity strands and investigate and seek ways to address any patterns if they emerge
- provide feedback upon request to applicants who have undertaken a selection and assessment process