Paisley Housing Association

Equality & Diversity Strategy

August 2025- 2028

Contents

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1. Our Vision, Values & Strategic Objectives

1.1 Vision

Our strategy is driven by a commitment to fostering a safe, happy, healthy, and thriving community. This dedication to both place and people inspires us to be our best. We embed this vision into our long-term goals, ensuring a deliberate focus on creating a positive and lasting impact.

1.2 Our Purpose

Our primary goal is to provide modern homes that are attractive, safe, energy-efficient, accessible, and affordable. We strive to deliver services that are easy to access, responsive to local needs, cost-effective, and highly rated by our community.

Our purpose is to have strong, productive partnerships who are key to driving our success in delivery, innovation, growth, and community impact. We are committed to remaining a resilient organisation, modern, financially strong, well-governed, and an employer of choice.

1.3 Our Values

Our values underpin all our activities, working practices and strategies as explained below;

Integrity – We are open, honest and accountable.

Respect – We offer tolerance and compassion.

Positive – We have a can-do attitude.

Community - We are community focused and collaborative.

2. Purpose of the Equality & Diversity Strategy

We are committed to ensuring that our staff, tenants, residents, Board members, and subsidiary have equal opportunities, regardless of background.

Equality and diversity are embedded in our vision, values, and strategic goals, shaping a culture of inclusion. This strategy reaffirms our commitment to promoting equality both as a Registered Social Landlord and as an employer.

Our goal is to integrate equality and diversity into everything we do, delivering excellent services while positioning Paisley Housing Association and its subsidiary as an employer of choice.

Through this strategy, we aim to;

- Treat all customers and colleagues fairly and with respect.
- Recognise, understand, and respond to the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- Foster strong and inclusive community relationships.
- Take proactive steps to eliminate harassment, hate crimes, and discrimination.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, best practices as a landlord, and responsible procurement of goods, facilities, and services.

3. What is Equality and Diversity?

Diversity is defined as ‘difference.’ Within any given population, individuals possess a wide range of characteristics, backgrounds, and experiences. A diverse organisation acknowledges and embraces these differences, ensuring that all individuals are valued and provided with equal opportunities to participate fully in society.

Equality refers to the commitment to promoting fairness and ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities, regardless of their background. It involves recognising existing inequalities and actively working to remove barriers that prevent full participation.

At Paisley Housing Association, we believe that equalities work extends beyond equal opportunities. Our commitment to equality ensures that:

- Equality is embedded in all policy development and organisational practices.
- Employment, housing, and related services are genuinely accessible to all.
- Individual needs are recognised and respected without discrimination.
- Discriminatory practices are identified, challenged, and eradicated.

Overall, equality and diversity are about creating a framework in which individuals are treated fairly, with respect and dignity, while acknowledging and accommodating their unique needs. By fostering an inclusive environment, we contribute to a more equitable and representative society.

4. Our Commitments

In developing our Equality and Diversity Strategy, we have gone beyond merely meeting legislative and regulatory requirements. Our approach is driven by the core values of our organisation, aiming not just for compliance but for excellence in promoting equality and diversity.

Our Strategy reflects a commitment to;

- Delivering Inclusive Services, ensuring our services are accessible, appropriate, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of our customers, shaped by their feedback.
- Empowering our workforce, equipping staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to reach their full potential, achieve organisational objectives, and integrate equality and diversity into all aspects of their work.
- Comprehensive training and development, providing extensive equality and diversity training for our staff, Board members, and Customer Involvement Groups to support our organisational goals.
- Challenging discrimination, actively tackling discrimination, victimisation, bullying, and harassment while providing robust support for those affected.
- Promoting positive behaviour and encouraging inclusive and respectful conduct from staff, customers, contractors, and partners. Where necessary, we will act against those who fail to meet expected standards.
- Promoting a respectful environment, valuing diversity by ensuring fairness and respect in service delivery, recruitment, employment terms, and pay equality.
- Leveraging influence for change, using our influence and purchasing power to promote equality, challenge discrimination, and reduce disadvantage.
- Monitoring and accountability, tracking service usage, workforce diversity, and community demographics to identify and address disparities.
- Continuous improvement in conducting self-assessments, Equality Impact Assessments, and setting ambitious equality objectives and targets. We will regularly review our progress and adjust our strategies to address inequalities effectively.
- Compliance and best practices in meeting all statutory obligations while learning from best practices to enhance our approach.
- Engagement and consultation in actively consulting staff, customers, stakeholders, partners, and contractors to shape policies and improve services, with a focus on addressing the needs of underrepresented groups.
- Strong leadership and resource commitment, embedding equality and diversity into every aspect of our organisation by providing clear leadership, commitment, and dedicated resources.

These commitments apply across all areas of our work, including our roles as an employer, service provider, contractor, funding body, and community leader. We expect our governing body members, staff, and tenant representatives to uphold these principles and will encourage our partners and contractors to do the same.

Through these commitments, we aim to integrate equality and diversity into all aspects of our organisation's operations, ensuring an inclusive and fair environment for all.

4.1 Priority Service Delivery

We are committed to delivering services that are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of our customers. Our approach includes:

- Accessible services, ensuring that all our services are available and easily accessible to every customer.
- Data-Driven service using customer equality and diversity profile information, along with other collected data, to tailor our services to match the needs of our diverse customer base.
- Regular updates and reviews to continuously updating customer profile information to better understand their needs and inform service delivery.
- Inclusive communication providing documents and communications in multiple, easy-to-understand formats to reflect the varied needs of our customers.
- Open customer engagement to establishing direct and ongoing communication with customers to ensure services are well-known, understood, and accessible, regardless of communication needs.
- Challenging discrimination to take a firm stance against discrimination in the community and within our wider operational areas, including supporting victims of hate crime, domestic abuse, bullying, harassment, and other forms of discrimination.
- Disability Inclusion, regularly reviewing our approach to disability aids and adaptations, ensuring that we meet the needs of customers with disabilities effectively.
- Community Collaboration in building strong relationships with voluntary and partner organisations and community groups to enhance service delivery.
- Welcoming and inclusive spaces, ensuring that Paisley Housing Association remains an open, welcoming, and inclusive organisation, with accessible premises for all.

4.2 Strategic Planning and Governance

To embed equality and diversity across our organisation, we will:

- Demonstrate Strong Leadership and maintain clear leadership and commitment to our Equality and Diversity Strategy and objectives.
- Monitor Governance and Staff Diversity to Collect and analyse profile information of our governing body and staff, setting diversity targets where appropriate.
- Training and Development to provide governing body members with comprehensive equality and diversity training to strengthen leadership on equalities issues.

- Policy and Impact Assessment, ensure that all policies, procedures, and strategies consider the diverse needs of our customers, staff, and stakeholders.
- Equality Impact Assessments**,** assess new policies or substantial service changes to evaluate their impact on customers before implementation.

4.3 Procurement

We expect our contractors and partners to uphold our commitment to equality and diversity by;

- Aligning with our objectives, ensuring that all contractors and partners support our equality, diversity, and strategic objectives.
- Performance monitoring, **i**mplementing effective systems to track contractor and partner performance regarding equality and diversity.
- Customer-Centred service delivery**,** using customer profile data to help contractors understand and respond to diverse customer needs.
- Diversity in Procurement, factoring in contractors' and partners' commitment to equality and diversity during tendering and selection processes.

4.4 Staffing and Employment

We are dedicated to promoting an inclusive workplace by:

- Fair recruitment and promotion, ensuring all staff are recruited and promoted based solely on merit, experience, ability, and potential.
- Inclusive workplace environment, providing a supportive work environment that accommodates employees' needs, including reasonable adjustments and adaptations where necessary.
- Respect and dignity, promoting a workplace culture that values diversity, respects differences, and upholds dignity and equality.
- Ongoing training, delivering effective equality and diversity training to all staff to reinforce our commitment.

4.5 Performance Monitoring

To measure our success and continuously improve, we will;

- Enhance customer engagement, develop new ways to consult and engage with customers, particularly those who may be harder to reach.
- Set clear performance Indicators, establish a robust framework for measuring progress against the objectives in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- To regularly update the Board on performance outcomes, with recommendations for further improvements.

- Monitor our satisfaction levels to analyse customer and staff satisfaction surveys to measure perceptions of service quality and fairness across diverse groups.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Equality and Diversity are the collective responsibility of all employees, governing body members, and stakeholders. Every individual within the organisation is expected to integrate these principles into their daily work and contribute to embedding an inclusive and fair environment. Key areas of responsibility for implementing the Equality and Diversity Strategy are outlined below:

5.1 Board Members

- Hold ultimate responsibility for Equality and Diversity within the organisation.
- Monitor compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Establish and oversee the Equality and Diversity Strategy, ensuring that objectives are met.

5.2 Group Chief Executive & Executive Management Team

- Implement the Equality & Diversity Strategy and Action Plan.
- Regularly review progress against the Equality Action Plan.
- Ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are conducted to identify and mitigate any adverse impacts on protected characteristics.
- Allocate sufficient resources to support the implementation of the Strategy and adopt an organisational culture that upholds its principles.
- Promote a workplace culture that values diversity, respects differences, and upholds dignity and equality.

5.3 Managers

- Foster a culture of inclusion and communicate the importance of Equality and Diversity within their teams.
- Ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy and its associated Action Plan.
- Ensure compliance with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy within their service areas.
- Proactively challenge discrimination in service delivery and workplace interactions.

5.4 Staff

- Adhere to the principles, aims, and objectives outlined in the Equality and Diversity Strategy.

- Promote equality and diversity in their daily roles and ensure their actions do not contribute to unfair or discriminatory treatment.
- Report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment to their line manager or the relevant Director.
- Use tenant profiling data to proactively address and meet the diverse needs of customers.

5.5 Tenant and Registered Groups

- Comply with and promote the principles and objectives of the Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Ensure that all actions and engagements uphold fairness and inclusivity, avoiding discriminatory practices.

5.6 Contractors, Stakeholders and Partners

- Operate in accordance with our Equality and Diversity principles and objectives.
- Comply fully with all relevant Equality and Diversity legislation.
- Demonstrate policies and procedures that align with the organisation's Equality and Diversity Strategy, ensuring services are delivered equitably.
- Maintain a workforce trained in Equality and Diversity issues.
- Promote inclusivity and ensure their practices do not contribute to discrimination or unfair treatment.

5.7 Equality and Diversity Working Group

The Equality and Diversity Working Group within the Association plays a crucial role in championing equality, ensuring compliance, and driving best practices across the organisation. The group will:

- Act as Equality and Diversity Champions, promoting equality and inclusion across all nine protected characteristics.
- Monitor the Equality Action Plan and provide regular progress reports to the Board, Executive and Senior Management Team.
- Establish and maintain links with external organisations representing the nine protected characteristics, ensuring the organisation remains aligned with best practices.
- Identify and assess changes in equality and diversity legislation, evaluating their impact on the organisation's objectives and targets.
- Develop and coordinate a comprehensive equality and diversity training programme for staff, governing body members, and other key stakeholders.

5.8 Customers

Paisley Housing Association is committed to ensuring that all customers:

- Are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect always.
- Experience an inclusive and welcoming environment, free from discrimination.
- Are provided with equitable access to services, tailored to meet diverse needs.
- Feel empowered to report any concerns regarding discrimination or unfair treatment.

6. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

6.1 Equality Act 2010

This strategy aligns with the Equality Act 2010, which consolidated and strengthened previous equality legislation. The Act introduced protected characteristics, ensuring individuals are safeguarded against discrimination. The Equality and Human Rights Commission defines the protected characteristics as follows:

- Age – Refers to a specific age (e.g., 32 years old) or an age range (e.g., 18-30 years old).
- Disability – A person is considered disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that significantly impacts their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- Gender Reassignment – The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership – Covers individuals legally married or in a civil partnership. Civil partners must receive the same legal treatment as married couples.
- Pregnancy and Maternity – Protection applies during pregnancy and up to 26 weeks after birth, including protection from discrimination due to breastfeeding.
- Race – Refers to a person's race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and ethnic or national origins.
- Religion and Belief – Includes religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as the right to non-belief (e.g., atheism).
- Sex – Refers to being male or female.
- Sexual Orientation – Covers whether a person's sexual attraction is towards the same sex, the opposite sex, or all sexes.

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a general duty on organisations providing public services. Paisley Housing Association is committed to;

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advancing equality of opportunity across all communities.

- Fostering good relations between different groups.

As a registered social landlord, we are responsible for addressing long-standing disadvantages in areas such as housing allocation, rent policies, tenant engagement, complaints, and repairs.

6.2 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 established the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which sets out expectations for social landlords. Introduced in April 2012, the Charter includes a specific equalities outcome:

"Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services."

Paisley Housing Association is committed to meeting this Equality Standard, as required by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

6.3 Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 guarantees fundamental rights, including;

- The right to own and enjoy property.
- Respect for private and family life.
- Respect for the home, including protection against discrimination related to housing and tenancy.

6.4 Scotland Act 1998

The Scotland Act 1998 provides a broad definition of equal opportunities, covering:

"The prevention, elimination, or regulation of discrimination based on sex, marital status, racial background, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious or political beliefs."

7. Equality and Diversity Objectives

This Equality and Diversity Strategy align with our Group's vision, values, and objectives, setting out specific commitments to enhance our performance, compliance, and service delivery in line with the Equality Act 2010. These objectives:

- Strengthen our approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

- Ensure a clear focus on achieving measurable outcomes.
- Provide clarity and accountability in our commitments.
- Demonstrate our ongoing dedication to equality and diversity across all areas of operation.

7.1 Key Objectives

1 Customer Focused Services

- Gather and maintain comprehensive customer data to understand diverse needs.
- Use customer insights to shape and tailor our services effectively and inclusively.

2 Leadership Commitment to Equality and Diversity

- Ensure our Board, Executive Management and staff actively champion equality and diversity.
- Embed equality principles at all levels of governance and decision-making.

3 Inclusive Engagement to Customers

- Provide accessible, meaningful ways for all customers to engage with us.
- Use customer feedback to continuously review and improve our services.

4 Accessible and Responsive Services

- Ensure our services, policies, and procedures meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- Regularly assess and adapt services to enhance accessibility and inclusion.

5 Diverse and Representative Employees & Leadership

- Foster an organisation that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.
- Promote a culture of inclusion and equality across governance, leadership, and staffing structures.

These objectives guide our strategic approach, ensuring equality and diversity remain central to everything we do.

8. Achieving the Equality and Diversity Objectives

This Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan mark the beginning of our journey towards excellence in equality, diversity, and inclusion, with a clear vision of achieving this within three years.

8.1 Embedding Equality and Diversity in Our Culture

To integrate equality and diversity into the structure of our organisation, we will;

- Provide strong leadership and direction in this area.
- Establish an Equality and Diversity Working Group, comprising representatives from across the organisation, including our leadership team members.

8.2 Tenant Profiling Initiative

Building on the tenant profiling initiatives, we will expand our efforts to collect comprehensive data on tenants and household members, focusing on the nine protected characteristics. This data will help us:

- Plan and tailor services to better meet tenants' needs.
- Ensure future services promote equality, diversity, and good relations.
- Encourage tenant participation in shaping service delivery.
- Signpost tenants to relevant support services.

8.3 Monitoring and Accountability

To ensure continuous progress, we will;

- Implement the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, outlining specific actions to achieve our objectives.
- Monitor progress through the Equality and Diversity Working Group, which will provide regular updates to the Board and Executive Team.

This structured approach ensures that equality and diversity remain at the heart of our organisation, driving real and lasting change.

9. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This Strategy forms part of the core suite of business planning documents held and operated within Paisley Housing Association and its subsidiary. As such, this Strategy will be monitored and assessed to ensure operation

implementation, as well as to ensure it continues to remain strategically relevant and proportion,