



TAI CANOLBARTH CYMRU MID-WALES HOUSING

Yn barod **amdani** **Equal** to the challenge

Single Equality Scheme Policy

Strategic Aim:	To promote the Association's core value of EQUALITY. " We believe in equal access to quality homes for all, and promise to try to address the inequality in the availability of affordable homes. "
Reference No:	Equality and Diversity Policy (v2) February 2012 Single Equality Scheme Policy December 2015
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Departments Affected:	All Departments
Approved By/Date:	Board of Management March 2016
Lead Officer:	Shane Perkins, Chief Executive
Statutory Compliance:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality Act 2010 - Welsh Language Act 1993 - Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 - Welsh Language Standards (Proposals) - Welsh Government Regulatory Delivery Outcomes

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Title: SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME

1. Introduction

1.1 **Mid-Wales Housing Association** believes that all customers have a right to equal access to life opportunities, including representation, services and employment. To achieve this it is committed towards removing barriers to opportunities and to narrowing the gap between people experiencing disadvantage and others. This Single Equality Scheme is the Association's public commitment of how it plans to meet the duties placed upon it by legislation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the Single Equality Scheme is to have due regard to:
- 2.1.1 Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
 - 2.1.2 Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and:
 - 2.1.3 Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
 - 2.1.4 Meeting regulatory delivery outcomes in particular – *“Our activities and services reflect the diversity of the communities where we operate, are free from discrimination and promote equality of opportunity”, AND – “We treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.”*
- 2.2 For the purpose of the Association's Single Equality Scheme the following are defined as protected characteristics:
- Age.
 - Disability.
 - Gender Reassignment.
 - Pregnancy and Maternity.
 - Race.
 - Religion or Belief.
 - Sex.
 - Sexual Orientation.
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership.
 - Welsh Language.

3. Values

- 3.1 The Association believes that, as a social enterprise, whilst what it achieves is very important, how it achieves those objectives is equally as important. Its corporate values dictate how it plans to achieve its objectives, and also play an important role in whether strategic stakeholders will wish to work with the Association in the future.
- 3.2 In redefining its mission the Association has identified four values it feels should guide how it delivers its objectives.

The Association's corporate values are:



Equality

“Fairness to all”

We believe in equal access to quality homes for all, and **promise** to address the inequality in the availability of affordable homes.



Excellence

“Delivering excellence”

We believe in positively changing the attitude towards social housing and **promise** to provide affordable homes to a high standard and to making the best use of our resources.



Community

“Community focused”

We believe in a local approach to community housing and **promise** to build homes tailored to the needs of the local community.



Caring

“Improving quality of life”

We believe in putting the needs of our tenants before profit and **promise** to solve people’s housing problems wherever possible.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 The Association values the diversity of individuals and will seek to ensure that the diversity in our society is reflected in its workforce, among its residents and Board Members. It believes that diversity adds value to the Association and enables it to further meet the needs of the diverse individuals and communities it serves.
- 4.2 The Association aspires to be an organisation where the diversity of individuals is fully respected, celebrated and encouraged and where equality and diversity permeates throughout the whole Association and all of its activities.
- 4.3 The Association aims to promote a positive environment and culture among its residents, staff and Board Members where everyone is valued and no one is treated less favourably unless there is an objective justification permissible under the Equality Act.
- 4.4 The Association will provide accessible services to all, without bias or prejudice.
- 4.5 The Association will ensure that everyone is treated fairly, has equal access to services and is not discriminated against, harassed or victimised. The organisation will respond effectively if incidents of discrimination including direct, indirect, harassment or victimisation are thought to have occurred. It will follow its policy relating to this which can be found on the Association’s web site.
- 4.6 The Association recognises that equal opportunities means treating everyone fairly based on their individual needs and that it is not necessarily about treating everyone the same. It will seek to make reasonable adjustments to its activities and to how it operates as a business, to ensure so far as is practicable, everyone is treated fairly.

5. Policy Objectives

The Association’s policy objectives outline what it wishes to achieve. These have been agreed by the Board as part of its wider Business Planning process, and include consideration of:

- Market research into the socio-economic characteristics of its tenants and the Mid-Wales region;
- Securing the greatest impact in terms of service delivery/delivery outcomes;
- Market research into the priorities and needs of its customers and key stakeholders.

There are three distinct areas which the Association wishes to concentrate on.

5.1 Improving Services

5.1.1 Anti-Social Behaviour: the Association will ensure that the way it delivers this service ensures procedures for dealing with harassment/“hate crimes” is robust and that it responds quickly to allegations. In doing so it will consider the Welsh Social Landlords’ Anti-Social Behaviour Forum’s report: “Tackling hate incidents - a toolkit for social landlords in Wales”. It will ensure that the mechanisms for reporting incidents of ASB are inclusive, and do not inadvertently disadvantage victims who may have a difficulty due to a protected characteristic (e.g. visual impairment).

5.1.2 Welsh Language: the Association will continue to improve the capability of its staff to deal with enquiries through the medium of Welsh, recruiting fluent Welsh speakers in order to achieve its objectives. It will continue to implement its Welsh Language Scheme (approved by the Welsh Language Commissioner).

The Association reviews its delivery of services through the medium of Welsh on an annual basis. It has adopted the use of Board Champions and one of these is a Welsh Language Champion.

It will work with the Welsh Language Commissioner, to ensure that any standards agreed for the housing association sector in Wales, are implemented in a timely and practical manner.

5.1.3 Ensuring Equality of Access to Services: a relatively high number of the Association’s tenants are either elderly, disabled or both. It will continue to examine how it can ensure access to information and services can be made easier for individuals with these characteristics, whilst also monitoring any developing demand for services from other individuals with protected characteristics. It will use customer profiling data to tailor service where appropriate, and will continuously monitor the protected characteristics of its service users, so that it can adjust how it provides services to best suit their needs. The Association reviews how it delivers services to those with protected characteristics on an annual basis. It has adopted the use of Board Champions and one of these is an Equality & Diversity Champion. It has obtained the “Positive about Disability” accreditation.

5.2 Improving Representation

The Association encourages a wide representation on its governance and consultative bodies. However, it recognises that the level of representation from those with protected characteristics could be improved.

5.2.1 The Board: the Association will ensure that it continues to advertise for Board Members through media and organisations more likely to be seen by those with protected characteristics. It will also continue to ensure it encourages Welsh speakers to apply to become Board Members. When seeking to recruit

Tenants to the Board it will try to encourage tenants with protected characteristics to stand for election. It routinely seeks applications via the Community Housing Cymru “Come on Board” project which is intended to help deliver increased Board diversity. The scheme encourages individuals interested in becoming a Board Member to register that interest centrally with Community Housing Cymru.

- 5.2.2 **Consultative Groups:** the Association will expand its network of consultative groups to take account of the views of those with protected characteristics. Existing consultative groups, including tenant groups, will be encouraged to seek balanced representation from individuals with protected characteristics to help ensure that we take account of the views of all our tenants/residents/leaseholders and customers. The Association will expand its “on-line” presence, with a view to encouraging greater participation by individuals for whom attending events may be more difficult.

5.3 **Improving Research**

The Association will continue to research the characteristics of those accessing its service with the characteristics of the wider community, in particular comparing the profile of its service users with regional data. It will use this evidential base to inform decisions about the provision and nature of the services it provides. This research will include equality monitoring and customer profiling on an on-going basis.

This research will be used to inform the prioritisation of service delivery and wider Business Planning. It will also be used to inform individual Equality Impact Assessments undertaken during the year.

6. **Training**

- 6.1 The Association will ensure that any new member of staff (or Board Member) is aware of their obligations under this Policy, the Equality Act 2010 and its Welsh Language Scheme, as part of the routine induction process.
- 6.2 It will arrange regular Equality & Diversity Awareness courses and Welsh Language Awareness courses, for all staff and Board Members.

7. **Procurement**

- 7.1 The Association will ensure that compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the ability to provide a bilingual (Welsh/English) service are a consideration when it procures goods and/or services.