

MHP Gender Equality Scheme or GES

Regulatory requirements are placed upon all housing associations as a result of the Housing Corporation's disability and gender equality schemes and action plans.

Further guidance is available in Housing Corporation [Good Practice Note 8: Equality and Diversity](#) (revised 30 November 2007). See link below.

It is important and widely accepted that associations recognise the proven business case for monitoring and improving all aspects of their equalities performance, over and above any statutory requirements that apply to them directly.

Recent legislative changes (such as the Equality Act 2006 and the Disability Equality Duty in 2006) have placed direct requirements on the Housing Corporation as a public body and some of these requirements have now been 'passport' directly to housing associations in the form of the requirement to publish Equality Schemes and Action Plans for **gender by 2 April 2008** (and for disability by 4 December 2007).

This provides an opportunity for MHP to showcase how we have taken account of recent developments in gender law through reviews of our existing approaches and development of outcomes-focused action plans.

Corporation expectations

- Housing associations will develop gender equality action plans by April 2008
- Recognising the diverse nature of the sector, smaller (under 1,000 units) and specialist associations are expected to take a proportionate and timely approach to action plan implementation.

Assessing compliance

The Housing Corporation will use a variety of ways of measuring housing association compliance with these requirements:

- Larger housing associations (over 1,000 units) will be expected to certify they have met the requirements of Housing Corporation Circular 10/07 dated November 2007, either via an annual self assessment compliance statement (initially in 2008) or by other means;
- Where a risk assessment carried out by the Housing Corporation indicates a housing association may not be complying or the impact of non-compliance is particularly high, they will undertake a more detailed review in accordance with H Corpn normal regulatory engagement; and

- The Corporation will take account of and include any relevant findings from inspection reports in undertaking a risk assessment and may instigate a more detailed review in accordance with their normal regulatory engagement.

Broad outcomes on gender equality:

- making sure MHP are an equality exemplar as an employer
- ensuring that housing is accessible for men, women and those who are transgender
- developing greater understanding within the sector about those factors and the barriers that affect men, women and those who are transgender
- making sure that we involve appropriate stakeholders who understand the needs of men, women and those who are transgender in the development of new policy and strategy.

MHP will add to this outcomes list through stakeholder consultation and engagement to begin in January 2008.

The Corporation intend to positively influence the work of all housing associations by producing their own Gender Equality Scheme and through their actions. MHP's aim will be to deliver continual improvement in equality outcomes for women, men and transgender people.

Key issues for gender in housing

MHP are developing and will add to this list through consultation before 31 March 2008.

- Domestic Violence
- Harassment and anti-social behaviour
- Impact of employment
- Homelessness
- Access to affordable shared ownership housing
- Resident Involvement

Our priorities

OUTCOMES

MHP are developing and will add to this list through consultation before 31 March 2008.

Making sure that we are an equality exemplar as an employer

We will

- undertake equal pay audits to ensure that our arrangements for employment are free from unlawful gender bias
- develop practices that promote work-life balance and ensure provision for those who have caring responsibilities
- develop a culture that is inclusive for men, women and those who are transgender
- review and maintain a recruitment procedure that adheres to equality and best practice and removes barriers based on gender
- take appropriate measures to ensure that we have a corporate culture where sexual harassment is not tolerated.

Ensuring that housing is accessible for men, women and those who are transgender

We will:

- promote the inclusion of equality issues including gender into our corporate and regional housing strategies
- promote the effective use of housing stock for men, women and those who are transgender
- promote and develop guidance for a victim-orientated approach to harassment and anti-social behaviour based on gender
- promote and develop best practice in the provision of housing for victims of domestic violence
- examine the relationship between gender and other equality strands in housing outcomes eg through demographic profiling and analysis of complaints and reported incidents of harassment.

Impact

MHP are committed to taking all necessary steps in order to assess the impact of our policies on men, women and those who are transgender. Our Equality Impact Assessment process is currently out for consultation until 14 January 2008.

We will continue to develop system that provide the option for residents, service users and staff to declare diversity information for the six key diversity strands of: age, **gender (including transgender)**, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, as part of our approach to needs assessment. We also collect information on communication needs and will set out an action plan to reasonably use this information to continuously improve the way we deliver information and services to diverse households and communities.

Existing initiatives

MHP's existing Diversity Strategy 2005-08 includes gender equality. We recognise the compelling business and moral case for equality at MHP and within the housing sector. We aim to ensure that all of our relevant policies and procedures consider the impact they have on people from diverse communities.

Our current Diversity Policy is in draft and will go out for stakeholder consultation alongside our revised 2008-11 Diversity Strategy early in 2008. Our policy and our 2007-10 MHP Diversity SIP (Service Improvement Plan) addresses how MHP should meet the needs of women, men and transgender people. Importantly, this policy makes a distinction between our role and responsibilities and our aim to be an employer of choice, as well as our role as landlord, service provider and partner organisation.

[Housing Corporation Gender Equality Scheme 2007-10](#)

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