

IMPACT HOUSING ASSOCIATION

SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2008 – 2011



Policy Statement

Impact is a Charitable Housing Association based in Cumbria. Through Partnership, we serve local Communities. We strive to meet Greatest Need.

To do so, we provide high quality Community Investment, Housing & Support.

This means creating communities that embrace change and welcome diversity. Diversity helps build communities by celebrating differences and combining our talents.

To achieve this, Impact is committed to removing discrimination both within our own organisation and the communities in which we provide services. This includes commitments that establish Impact as a community leader and a catalyst for change.

Impact will work in partnership with anyone who shares the same aims, including Cumbria's strategic partnerships, local authorities, other housing associations, trade unions and other partner organisations.

We as the Board of Impact Housing Association are committed to this vision of a truly diverse organisation, fully accessible to all - both for our staff and members internally, but more importantly for our tenants and other service users across the whole range of our services.

This single equality scheme sets out our approach – through our values and commitments, and also our action plans aimed at achieving improved equality of services across the whole organisation.

We will monitor progress against our single equality and diversity action plan on a regular basis, at both the relevant committee and at the Board, and publish how we are doing on an annual basis.

These commitments are based on our organisational values and are as follows:

Our Values Meet Greatest Need

We believe all should be treated fairly, with respect and dignity, and have genuine choices in the issues that affect their lives.

Our Values Provide Good Quality Housing

We believe that all people have the right to a decent home. People should not be disadvantaged simply through their inability to purchase.

Our Values Develop local Communities

We believe in the principles of partnership, local democracy and community empowerment.

Our Values Encourage Resident and User Involvement

We value and are committed to the involvement of our residents and service users- both in planning our work and delivering our services.

Our Values Work Towards Shared Objectives

We work through partnership.

Our Values Staff and Committee Commitment

We value the differences and similarities between people. We work positively and proactively to achieve our charitable objectives.

Our Values Environmental Sustainability

We treat our resources with respect and use them with conscious thought.

Our Values Efficient and Effective

We strive to be efficient and effective. We are accountable and welcome feedback. We are driven by our purpose.

Our Commitment We will endeavour to house and support those people in greatest need, having regard always to our values. We will deliver services that enhance people's independence. We will take on real challenges to further our values, creating opportunities and new investment.

Our Commitment We will maintain our stock to a high standard and use our resources to provide, as far as we are able, the housing that people want.

Our Commitment We are accountable to both our residents and their communities. We will help them to develop their self-confidence and to influence the services which they use.

Our Commitment We will consult our residents and service users on key issues which affect them. We will support their involvement in ways which respond to their needs, including user groups, residents' associations and the overall direction and of our organisation.

Our Commitment We will work in partnership with other agencies- locally and nationally, both statutory and voluntary- and in partnership with the local community.

Our Commitment We will develop a culture which values people from all sections of the community and the contribution that they can make to our work. We will develop highly competent staff and Board who have a high level of commitment to our organisation and to our shared ethos and objectives.

Our Commitment We will use our resources in a way which minimises harm to the environment. We will actively consider new projects to help the environment.

Our Commitment Through Best Value and other measures, we will ensure we make best use of our resources. We will constantly review what we do and strive for continuous improvement to ensure that we are economic, efficient and effective.

Executive Summary

What is an Equality Scheme?

An Equality Scheme is a document that sets out our commitments to embed equality and diversity across everything that we do. Equality schemes are a combination of policy and action planning.

Do we have to produce an Equality Scheme?

As a non-public body Impact has no legal obligation to produce equality schemes. However, under the duties passed onto registered social landlords from the Housing Corporation, Impact has an obligation to produce at least an action plan for each of the following equality areas:

Race equality (2003), disability equality (December 2007) and gender equality (April 2008).

This is Impact's first equality scheme in any of the equality areas, although we have ensured that we have complied with both our legal obligations and the Housing Corporation guidance on the different equality areas throughout their existence.

We adopted a Diversity Policy for the first time in December 2005 that built on our existing Equal Opportunities Policy, but took us beyond a minimum statutory compliance approach to enshrining diversity across our organisation.

What is Impact's Single Equality Scheme?

Impact's Equality Scheme brings all of our existing equality and diversity policies, schemes and strategies into a single document for 2008 – 11.

Impact's Equality Scheme:

- Defines Impact's policy around diversity and equality;
- Ensures that we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements around the six equality strands:
 - Disability
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Sexuality
 - Religion / belief
 - Age
- Outlines the following ten strategic priority areas for achieving equality:
 - Service delivery
 - Accessibility
 - Employment and staffing
 - Resident and service user involvement
 - Procurement
 - Complaints and service userfeedback

- Lettings
- Harassment (inc. Domestic Violence)
- Governance
- Development and Regeneration

Developing our Single Equality Scheme

The Housing Corporation (HC), through GPN8 makes it clear that housing associations need to adopt an outcome-focused approach in their work to promote equality and diversity. The HC recommends that the following cyclical model should be used:

- Needs Analysis
- Planning
- Implementation
- Monitoring

To ensure that Impact complies with the model we will need to undertake the following steps:

Needs Analysis – Impact needs to ensure that it has a clear understanding of the needs of the communities that we serve. We need to determine whether resources allocated are sufficient to meet these needs. In particular we need to have an understanding of the diversity of needs and housing aspirations of the communities that we serve. This is not only to identify specialist accommodation that may be needed, but to ensure that as far as possible our mainstream housing can meet the needs of the range of people who want to live in it – including vulnerable people. As the largest provider of supported housing within Cumbria, we are well placed to understand these needs.

Planning – After we have carried out a needs analysis we will need to take any necessary action to meet the needs identified that are not already being met. If we do identify any outstanding, we will produce a plan that sets out the targets to be met and a timetable for meeting them. It is important that targets are SMART.

GPN8 expects HA's to:

“Set its own targets based on a needs analysis of its residents, service users and staff and on the principle that every resident and applicant has the right to the same high standards of provision of services”.

Implementation – GPN8 outlines some of the main issues associations are likely to have to address in order to implement their equality and diversity plans. Examples include:

- Under service delivery, associations should ensure that all residents receive equally good services; *Impact is committed to providing equality of services to all, whilst at the same time recognising that every individual is different, and has different needs and aspirations. Through the developing Equality Impact Assessment framework, we will ensure that all existing customers, and*

potential customers experience a fair and equitable service. In situations where we don't fulfil this promise, we will provide redress, through our customer service feedback and complaints procedures.

- Under access to information, associations should ensure that all communities and vulnerable adults have access to the full range of information they provide – *Impact has a full range of simple to understand brochures that set out the range of services offered in each part of the organisation. The main brochures are translated into the most popular languages in use in Cumbria. We make use of Languageline – so can obtain further translations of any language not permanently available. We also stock the jointly produced guide to Cumbrian services, supplied by the Cumbria Multi Cultural Service in the five most popular languages in Cumbria.*

Our public offices, documents and website are all fully accessible.

- Under asset management associations should ensure they have an accurate up-to-date record of all adapted properties – *We have a paper and electronic database of our adapted properties.*
- Under dealing with harassment, associations should ensure they have a policy and procedure in place to deal with all forms of harassment – *Impact has clear policies and procedures for dealing with harassment.*
- Under procurement, associations should ensure their contractors' service delivery is consistent with their own equality and diversity commitments – *Impact has recently, as part of our customer service initiative, provided a modified version of the same training for all of our contractors. That training set out our expectations for contractors in a number of areas including equality and diversity. We monitor contractor's equality and diversity policies as part of them becoming a contractor on our approved list.*

Monitoring – GPN8 notes that a housing association will need systems in place to monitor its progress against targets before it begins to implement its equality and diversity policy and action plan.

It is for each housing association to determine its own action plan based on measurable outcomes. Impact will ensure that the issues mentioned in GPN8 are included in the scoping of the monitoring procedures, as part of determining the key strategic priorities for this Single Equality Scheme, and also the outcome-focused action plans.

The scheme will be reviewed six monthly at Board to check progress against actions. Board will also agree a refreshed action plan annually, for the following year. More regular thematic reports will be considered regularly at the appropriate committees throughout the year.

Impact's commitment to Equality and Diversity

Throughout our organisational life Impact has committed to working with those in greatest need, which frequently are individuals and groups within local communities facing social exclusion. This is often to do with issues of equality and diversity. Due to this our commitment to develop our staff in these areas has been extensive since 1996. This was the year that we made an organisational commitment to an inclusive staff development programme that included practitioners, managers, and the launch of a new appraisal and line management scheme. Alongside this programme were a series of enhancement modules one of which was called “Living and Working with difference”, and all staff attended this module between 1998 and 2000.

We have run internal “Bullying and Harassment” training events continuously since 2001.

In 2004 as part of our adapting our former Equal Opportunities Policy to become a new Diversity Policy, we commissioned a new two-day Diversity training programme for all staff. To date 200 staff attended these programmes (over 14 events). 127 of those staff currently remain with the association. We are currently developing an updated version of this programme. Both a refresher, for those who have already attended the initial event, but also for the 74 staff that have joined the association since we last run the programme.

We have however not stood still. In 2006 we devoted the morning of our staff day, to Disability Awareness Raising, based on our awareness of the new duty. This involved representatives for the local Allerdale Disability Association, Action for Blind, Cumbria Deaf Association, and MIND.

We plan to undertake more awareness events for all equality strands over the next 12 months.

Staff have continued to attend Diversity related training events over the last two years to ensure that our organisational knowledge, keeps track of developments in societal and legislative changes.

Equality and Diversity and Legislation

Overview of Legislation

Since the 1970's laws have been introduced to tackle discrimination. The legislation was introduced piecemeal to address the needs of different equality strands.

Equality Strand	Legislation	Amendments	Scope
Gender	1970 Equal Pay Act 1975 Sex Discrimination Act	2006 Equality Act introducing public gender duty	Employment, goods and services
Ethnicity	1976 Race Relations Act	2000 RRA (Amendment) introduced public race duty	As above
Disability	1995 Disability Discrimination Act	2005 – public disability duty	As above
Sexuality	2003 Employment Equality Act (Sexual Orientation)	2006 Equality Act extending to goods and services	As above
Religion / belief	2003 Employment Equality Act (Religious Belief)	2006 Equality Act extending to goods and services	As above
Age	2006 Age Discrimination Regulations		Employment only

Public Duties

From April 2007 all public authorities have a public duty to promote equality around ethnicity, disability and gender. This public duty takes two forms:

- General Duty – sets out overall aims for promoting equality.
- Specific Duty – particular actions that the organisation needs to fulfil the general duties.

Impact as a non-public body is currently only required under our regulatory requirements to fulfil the general duty. However, as an organisation committed to equality and diversity we may wish to commit to specific actions that go beyond the requirements of the general duties.

What do we have to produce?

The regulatory requirements, require a minimum of a three year action plan to promote equality and collect data on employment and service delivery that currently covers race, disability and gender. This scheme and action plan will fulfil that requirement and also include the remaining equality areas of sexuality, religion & belief and age as we believe as an advocate of diversity that our policies and approach should include all of the different diversity strands.

This approach fits closely to the Housing Corporation, Good Practice Note 8, that requires that:

“Housing Associations should have an equalities and diversity policy that covers all aspects of equalities, which includes eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and promoting good relations on grounds of race, colour, national origin, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment status, being married or a civil partner, pregnancy or maternity leave, sexual orientation, disability or age”.

Public bodies have the option of joining up the different equality strands into a single equality scheme. This can only be done if the specific duties for each of the three initial strands are met. These include:

- Gender – a commitment to eradicate any pay gap between men and women in the organisation;
- Disability – the involvement of disabled people in planning and delivering services;
- Race – promoting good relations between ethnic communities.

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)

The CEHR was established by the Equality Act 2006. The commission has taken on the former work of the Equal Opportunities Commission (covering gender), the Commission for Racial Equality (ethnicity), and the Disability Rights Commission (disability). In addition to this, CEHR will also assume responsibility for promoting equality and combating unlawful discrimination around sexual orientation, religion or belief and age. The CEHR will also have responsibility for the promotion of human rights.

Race Equality Scheme

Housing Associations are not public bodies and are not directly bound by the duty to promote race equality. However, the Housing Corporation, in its capacity as regulator, places specific obligations on housing associations that in some respects mirror the duty to promote race equality. Most recently this is set down in the document published in November 2007, Good Practice Note 8 – Equality and Diversity.

In this document the Housing Corporation reinforces their expectations that “*Housing Associations must demonstrate when carrying out all of their functions their commitment to equal opportunities. They must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups*”.

In addition, Impact complies with the statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing published by the Commission for Racial Equality. The practical advice suggests that housing associations can avoid unlawful racial discrimination and harassment, and promote good race relations by complying with the guidance that covers:

- Governance and the role of governing bodies;
- New and improved housing – rented and non-rented;
- Sales and lettings;
- Homelessness and housing advice;
- Neighbourhood regeneration and integration;
- Tenancy and housing management;
- Racial harassment and anti-social behaviour;
- Contractors and procurement; and
- Involvement of residents and tenants

Ethnicity in Cumbria

In the 2001 census the Black and Minority Ethnic population of Cumbria consisted of:

- 0.07% Black ethnic minority groups
- 1.3% White minority ethnic groups (this included Irish people and Gypsy Travellers)
- Total BME population in 2001 - 2%.

Between 2005 and December 2006, 239 people in Cumbria undertook the British Citizenship ceremony. They were from 42 countries with the Philippines, Turkey and India having the highest number of people undertaking the ceremony.

National Insurance data since 2002 indicates a steady growth in the diversity of Cumbria's working population. The table below gives the breakdown of the numbers of non-British nationals with a National Insurance number:

Year	No. of Nationalities	Main Nationality	Total non-British nationals and % increase on previous year	
2002/3	20	South African (90 people)	790	
2003/4	32	South African (140 people)	1050	+33%
2004/5	33	Polish (460 people)	1730	+65%
2005/6	30	Polish (1200 people)	2970	+71%
			Total increase since 2002: +276%	

Ethnicity in Impact

Impact undertook a staff diversity survey originally in 2005/6 to establish a “baseline” position on the 6 equality strands. At that time for ethnicity what we found was the following:

- 96% - white British; 1% white Irish; 1% other white background and 1% not specified.

Looking at the same information for our staff profile in 2007 showed a slightly different situation.

At 31st March 2007, Impact employed 186.5 full time equivalent staff. Of these 3.57% were of non-white, non-British origin. Almost double the figures at the end of 2005.

Based on the numbers of staff employed at 31st March 2008, the number of ethnic minority staff (non-white / non-British) had increased to 3.97%.

Cumbria Multi-Cultural Service and Impact “Drop-In” Centre

In 2006 following an analysis of usage of our Cyber cafe facilities at the Eden Foyer in Penrith it emerged the majority of users were East Europeans working within the food processing, tourism and agriculture sectors. Working in partnership with the Cumbria Multi-Cultural Service (CMCS - based in Barrow), we established a “drop-in” service staffed by members of the CMCS and a Polish member of our own staff team. This service is now the main point of contact for migrant workers in East Cumbria, for information and advocacy services and continues to provide a weekly “surgery” and also a contact point for the evolving Polish language website developed with service users, and other local agencies.

This service is recognised as an example of good practice by the Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership.

AWAZ

AWAZ are an independent organisation registered as a Community Interest Company. AWAZ represent the interests of Black and Minority Groups in Cumbria. AWAZ is a membership organisation open to anyone in the county from a Black and Minority Ethnic community. The word AWAZ comes from the Persian word for Voices.

AWAZ's aims are to:

- Influence local authorities, statutory sector organisations and voluntary and community organisations on race equality.
- Raise the profile of Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Cumbrian public life.
- Develop a network of local Black and Minority groups who can support one another.
- Influence local media representation on race equality issues.

Impact has a service level agreement with AWAZ which covers:

- Input into our Equality and Diversity policies
- Feedback on our Equality Impact Assessments
- Consultation with Black and Minority people on satisfaction with Impact's services
- Support to particular services to resolve areas of race inequality.

Impact's Race Commitments:

- We will improve our monitoring and review processes so that we fully understand the communities that we serve.
- We will work in partnership to ensure appropriate service delivery.
- We will focus on meeting the needs of the ever more diverse communities, particularly within Cumbria the emerging east European migrant communities.
- We will continue to develop our focus on increased resident and service user involvement and consultation with minority ethnic groups in better understanding the needs of local communities.

The detail of what we will be doing over the next 3 years to ensure that our race equality duty continues to be met are set out within our Impact's Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11, attached at the end of this scheme.

Disability Equality Scheme

This Impact Equality Scheme incorporates our duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

The general duty for disability equality requires us to:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people.
- Promote positive attitudes to disabled people.
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.
- Take into account a disabled person's disability even if it means treating the disabled person more favourably.

The specific duty passed on by the Housing Corporation as part of the regulatory requirement, states that we must as a minimum produce the following:

- A three year disability action plan;
- Publish the results against the action plan every year;
- Involve disabled people in all stages of the scheme;
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments of policies and procedures to make sure that disabled people are not being unfairly treated.

Social and medical models of disability

One of the key goals is to challenge the view that the inequality faced by disabled people is down to their medical "problems". The medical model has fed negative stereotypes held by non-disabled people such as:

- Focusing only on what a person cannot do.
- Making assumptions about what is best for the disabled person.
- Thinking that disabled people lack intelligence.
- Feeling embarrassed among disabled people.
- Bullying and harassing disabled people.

These negative stereotypes show that improving access is only one part of the story.

The table below contrasts the two models. The questions in the left hand column area adapted form questions asked to disabled people as part of their assessment up until the 1980's

Medical Model	Social Model
Can you tell me what is wrong with you?	Can you tell me what is wrong with society's attitudes towards you?
What complaint causes your difficulty in holding, gripping or turning things?	Are there problems in the design of everyday objects that give you problems in holding, gripping or turning things?
Does your disability mean that you need to live with your carers?	Are community services so inflexible that you need to rely on carers?

Does your disability make it hard for you to use public transport?	Does inaccessible transport make it difficult for you to use the available public transport?
Does your disability affect your ability to work?	Do you have problems at work due to the environment and the attitudes of others?

The Disability equality Scheme firmly places public bodies within the social model. The key priorities in the scheme, and the action plan at the end, show what we need to do to make it happen.

Each year we publish an Equality Report which will show what actions we have taken to address the Specific Duty, and also annually update our action plan.

What is a disability and how many disabled people are there in the UK?

Disability is any condition that affects a person in their day to day life. In the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) this is called impairment.

The DDA now recognises around 400 impairments including:

- Mobility impairments (requiring aids such as sticks or wheelchairs to move about).
- Sensory impairments (hearing or sight loss).
- Mental ill health (including depression, stress Alzheimer's disease and schizophrenia).
- Cognitive developmental impairments (including learning disabilities, dyslexia, and autism).
- Muscular impairments (including spinal injuries).
- Asthma
- Cancer
- HIV / AIDS
- Phobias
- Arthritis
- Acquired brain injuries

This list shows that those claiming disability benefits are a minority of disabled people.

Using the DDA criteria in 2002 the General Household survey was able to suggest that 11 Million people in the UK have rights as disabled people.

The DDA does not extend to the following groups:

- Substance addiction;
- Sexual offences.

Disability in Cumbria

The 2001 census showed that out of 209,027 households, 76,365 had someone with a long term limiting condition. This means that 36.5% of Cumbrian households had someone with a condition that would be recognised under the Disability Discrimination Act.

From information received back as part of our 2006 STATUS survey, we know that 49% of our tenants have a disability, or a long-term illness. We also know that 40% of our tenants are limited in some way by their disability. We also know that 8% of our tenants are wheelchair users.

In 2006 the Cumbria County Council Quality of Life Survey asked the Cumbria public about their level of satisfaction with the community and services in the county. 22% of respondents said they had a long-term illness or disability that restricted their daily activities.

The findings from the Quality of Life Survey highlighted the following issues for disabled people:

- **Safety**
 - Nearly a third of people with a long-term illness or disability felt unsafe outdoors at night (29%) compared with a fifth of all respondents (21%).
- **Employment and voluntary work**
 - 19% of people with a long-term illness or disability said they were in full-time employment compared with a county-wide average of 40%;
 - 44% of people with a long-term illness or disability said they had done two to five hours of voluntary work during the past year compared with 36% for the county-wide average.
- **Housing**
 - Fewer people with a long-term illness or disability own their own home (69%) compared with the survey average of 76%.
 - 17% of people with long-term illness or disability said they rent their home from a social housing provider compared with the county-wide average as reported in the survey of 9%.
- **Education**
 - 18% of people with a long-term illness or disability had a formal qualification compared with the survey average of 32%.

Disability in Impact – Involving Disabled People

We have already commenced the involvement process with disabled service users. This has included a small group of disabled tenants identified from the STATUS survey. We contacted a sample of the people who had said they were disabled to ask them if they would be interested in getting involved looking at the issues involved in being a disabled tenant of Impact.

A small number of these people said they would, and a staff member of the Audit and Performance Team, met with them to see what their issues were. We used as a “prompt template” issues we as staff had extracted from the Access / Customer Service and Diversity KLOE’s, to encourage a dialogue about what might be issues form them. In addition to this staff have met with two groups of tenants with learning disabilities, and their support workers / carers from partner organisations. This enabled us to more broadly use the template into more pictorial resources, to simplify a range of questions - again based upon some of the key aspects of the Access / Customer Service and Diversity KLOE’s.

We will feed this information into the wider consultation with the Cumbria Disability Network (see below).

In addition to the above, when we commenced the Access Audits, we engaged with the Allerdale Disability Association, and we undertook joint access audits at all of our public access sites across Cumbria. This work was recognised as good practice, in the Disability Rights Commission document on guidance for Housing Associations on implementing the Disability Equality Duty (DED)

Cumbria Disability Network

The Cumbria Disability Network is an independent organisation representing disabled people in Cumbria. Cumbria Disability Network is a membership organisation open to any disabled person in the county. The organisation’s aims are to:

- Influence local authorities and statutory sector organisations on disability equality.
- Raise the profile of disabled people in Cumbrian public life.
- Develop a consistent countywide coverage of local disability groups.
- Influence local media representation of disability equality issues.

Impact Housing Association has a service level agreement with Cumbria Disability Network that covers:

- Involvement of disabled groups in our Equality and Diversity policies.
- Feedback on our Equality Impact Assessments.
- Consultation with disabled people on satisfaction of our services.
- Support to particular services to resolve areas of disability inequality.

The details of Impact’s disability plans are set out within Impact’s Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11 attached at the end of this Single Equality Scheme.

Gender Equality Scheme

The Gender Duty

This duty is made up of two elements; the general duty, and the specific duty. The Impact Equality Scheme incorporates our duties under the Equalities Act 2006 relating to gender equality. The Gender Equality Duty promotes equality for:

- Women
- Men
- Trans-gendered people

General Duty

To meet the general duty while carrying out all of our functions organisations must have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA)
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

This requires organisations to take action on the most important gender equality issues within their functions. The promotion of equal opportunities between women and men requires the recognition that the two genders are not starting from an equal footing and identical treatment will not always be appropriate.

Under the duty organisations also have to eliminate discrimination and harassment towards current and potential transgender service users from December 2007.

Specific Duty

Under the discharged duties from the Housing Corporation, Impact Housing Association is also required to meet the “specific duties” and will therefore:

- Prepare and establish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting its gender equality objectives.
- In formulating its overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gaps.
- Gather and use information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services.
- Consult stakeholders (i.e. residents, service users, employees and other, including trade unions and equality groups), taking account of relevant information to determine our gender equality objectives.
- Carry out Equality Impact Assessments.
- Identify priority areas for gender equality.
- Publish a 3-year action plan.
- Review the action plan annually

In addition to the above the Housing Corporation specifically require that *“Housing Associations should ensure that adequate provision is made for the victims of domestic violence”*.

Each year we will publish an Equality Report which will show what actions we have taken to address the specific duty. We will also annually update our action plan to address the specific duty.

Gender in Cumbria

In 2006 Cumbria County Council carried out a local Labour Market Survey which looked at the 2004 Household Survey and information for the Office of National Statistics. It found that three trends that indicate that Cumbria’s gender inequality is wider than England as a whole and the North West Region.

1. A lower proportion of women who are self-employed compared to men;
2. A lower proportion of women are in full-time work compared to men;
3. A lower proportion of men are in part-time work compared to women.

Gender in Impact

We know from our employment data that Impact employ’s roughly twice as many women as men. We also know that there is a corresponding proportional spread of two women to one man in each of our salary grades – except at the manager level, where it is a 50:50 split, and at Director level, where there are four men and one woman.

We will monitor this breakdown to ensure that we have an appropriate gender mix at all levels, as and when turnover allows. We will also undertake an analysis of our statistics compared to the Cumbria County Council survey, to address any gender inequalities that emerge about full time and part time working.

Grade	Male (No.)	Male (%)	Female (No.)	Female (%)
SMT	4	80	1	20
Manager	2	50	2	50
Snr. Officer	1	11	8	89
Officer	13	43	17	57
Snr. Asst.	4	43	40	91
Assistant	23	26	66	74
Driver	7	100	0	0
Cleaner	4	40	6	60
Totals	68		140	

(Based on staff profile at 30 April 2008)

We will work closely with the Unison representatives within Impact to consult with staff about their experience of gender discrimination.

Domestic Violence in Cumbria

Impact is the foremost housing association in the provision of domestic violence support within Cumbria. We provide the only domestic violence refuge within the County, and are also the main provider of safe houses. In addition we provide domestic violence, floating support workers across all local authority districts (excluding Barrow in Furness).

In addition, working in partnership with the Cumbria Domestic Violence Forum, Impact bid for funding from the Northern Rock Foundation to establish the "Let-Go" project. This project covering the Eden and Carlisle areas provides a range of advocacy, support and training services on behalf of the Forum partners. These include the Police, Probation Service, Social Services, and NHS Trusts etc.

Impact hosts the project, employs the staff team and manages the service on behalf of the Forum.

Impact is committed to the benefits of a strong domestic violence support service for the people of Cumbria.

Developing links with Transgender people

Transgender people have a strong need to change the gender they were born with. This includes:

- Partial surgical procedures
- Full bodily gender reassignment.

The campaigning organisation Press for Change who estimate that there are 5000 transgender people in the UK, and they have worked with over 800 transgender people between 1998 and 2005.

Some descriptions of transgender behaviour also includes cross-dressing. If this behaviour is included it increases estimates to 1 in 100 people falling within the transgender category.

Impact along with other members of the Cumbria Equality and Diversity Partnership, work with Gay Cumbria to establish the barriers faced by transgender people in the County, and create a safe place for transgender people to have a voice in public voice.

Impact also has a service level agreement with Gay Cumbria which covers:

- Involvement of gay, lesbian and transgender groups in consultation on our equality and diversity policies;
- Feedback on our Equality Impact Assessments;
- Consultation with gay lesbian and transgender people on satisfaction with our services;
- Support to particular services to resolve areas of gender inequality.

Impact's commitment to gender issues:

- We will focus on removing barriers and set targets for achieving equality in both, representation in the governance structures of Impact and at all levels within the organisation's staff structure.
- We will ensure that adequate provision is made for the victims of domestic violence, and services will be provided for gender groups as appropriate.
- This will include advice and support that recognises the particular barriers to communication with the victims of domestic violence.

The details of Impact's gender plans are set out within Impact's Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11 attached at the end of this Single Equality Scheme.

Sexuality Equality Scheme

Legal Requirements

Unlike ethnicity, disability and gender there is not as yet a General and Specific Duty for public services to eliminate discrimination against lesbian, gay or bi-sexual people (transgendered people are covered under the Gender Equality Duty).

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (2003), gave all lesbian, gay and bi-sexual employees rights against discrimination. The Sexual Orientation Regulations (2007) extend these rights to the provision of goods and services. This means that we have a legal duty to ensure that people of all sexualities are not discriminated when they work for us or use our services.

These requirements are likely to be further reinforced within the forthcoming Equalities Bill, presently working its way through parliament.

In the Impact Equality Scheme we will extend to sexuality the activities we are doing to meet the Specific Duties under ethnicity, gender and disability.

Sexuality in Cumbria

Although the 2001 census did not record the sexuality of respondents, it did record 366 same sex households in Cumbria. In 2006 there were 117 civil partnerships in the county, 63 female and 54 male.

This lack of stable data on sexuality reflects a national issue, suggesting that there is an under-estimation of the numbers of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual people in local communities. The North West Regional Development Agency's estimate is that between 5 – 7% of people are lesbian, gay or bi-sexual. This would translate into 25,000 to 30,000 people in Cumbria.

Sexuality in Impact

Based on our 2005 staff diversity survey we know that at that time Impact employed:

Heterosexuals – 89%
Lesbian / Gay - 2%
Prefer not to answer – 9%

Gay Cumbria

In 2006 a new Cumbria wide organisation was formed to represent the interests of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered people. Gay Cumbria has established a website and has begun to provide a number of support services. In 2008 we have signed a service level agreement with Gay Cumbria to support their organisation. In return, the agreement will ensure that they will:

- Involvement in our Equality and Diversity schemes
- Feedback on our Equality Impact Assessments

- Consultation on satisfaction with our services
- Consultation with lesbian, gay bi-sexual and transgendered staff
- Support to particular services to resolve areas of inequality.

Gay Cumbria will be supporting us on its sexuality monitoring for all services, with whom we have developed a service level agreement – mirrored on the Cumbria County Council SLA.

In 2007 we also undertook some joint work on best practice for gay, lesbian and bi-sexual people who are homeless or in the social housing sector.

Each year we will publish an equality report which will show what actions we have taken to address equality for lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people.

Impact's commitment to sexual orientation

- Our employment practices will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- Our lettings policy takes full account of recognising the rights of same sex partner relationships, such as equality in tenure rights in accordance with current legislation.
- We have adopted a rapid response to allegations of harassment – including victims of harassment on the grounds of sexuality.

The details of Impact's sexual orientation plans are set out within Impact's Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11 attached at the end of this Single Equality Scheme.

Age Equality Scheme

Legal requirements

Unlike ethnicity, disability and gender there is not a general and specific duty for public services to eliminate age related discrimination. However, in keeping with GPN 8, Impact will apply the same principles set out for other legal requirements in the three equality areas mentioned above.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (2006), gave people of all age groups rights against discrimination at work. The regulations cover:

- Mandatory retirement.
- Dismissal and redundancy.
- Recruitment and selection.
- Terms and conditions of employment.
- Promotion and training opportunities
- Statutory sick pay and maternity pay.
- Harassment in the workplace.

Impact has already adopted a Retirement Policy setting out our approach to retirement issues. All of our other Policies and procedures are age neutral, although we will do further Equality Impact Assessment work to ensure that this remains the case, as part of our action planning process.

Impact's commitments to age issues

- In our employment practices we will not discriminate against applicants on the basis of actual or perceived age.
- We will not perpetuate stereotypes of people based on age.
- We will validate satisfaction levels alongside performance indicators such as quality of home and service standards.
- We will ensure that services are not unfairly allocated on the basis of age.

Each year we will publish an Equality Report that will show what actions we have taken to address age equality.

The details of Impact's age plans are set out within Impact's Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11 attached at the end of this Single Equality Scheme.

Religion / Belief Equality Scheme

Unlike ethnicity, disability and gender there is not a general and specific duty for public services to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of a person's religion or deeply held beliefs. However, it keeping with GPN 8, Impact will apply the same principles set out for other legal requirements in the three equality areas mentioned above.

The Employment Equality (Religious Belief) Regulations (2003), gave people of all religious faiths rights against discrimination in the workplace. This does not include political beliefs, but does include agnostics or atheists.

The Equality Standard assesses our ability as a housing association to meet the needs of people's religion or belief.

Impact will need to identify those local organisations that can assist us to gain clarity about the full range of issues that we need to be aware of that will inform our approach to dealing with staff of differing religions and beliefs.

We have already commenced this process. Four staff recently attended a Muslim / Islam Culture awareness raising event to identify key issues in working with people who have Islamic beliefs.

We will engage with AWAZ to broaden our understanding and knowledge, and any other organisation that can enhance that understanding that is representative of prevalent religions and beliefs in Cumbria.

Impact's commitment to religion or belief issues:

- We will consider how we can work with local religious agencies and other community organisations to promote understanding and mutual respect between religious groups.
- We will ensure that we have clear strategy, policy and procedures in place for responding to incidents of harassment on the basis of religion or belief in a prompt and appropriate way.
- We will provide guidance and information to staff to ensure that they are aware of any sensitivities that may arise and to give a better understanding of the needs of individuals and the communities they serve.

Each year we will publish an Equality Report which will show what actions we have taken to address equality for religion / belief.

The details of Impact's religion or belief plans are set out within Impact's Single Equality & Diversity Action Plan – 2008-11 attached at the end of this Single Equality Scheme.

Key Strategic Priorities

The Impact Single Equality Scheme has 10 strategic priorities that apply to all six equality strands. The table below lists each key strategic priority and the key activities that we will be carrying out.

Priority	Key activities
Service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equality Impact Assessments ▪ Customer profiling ▪ Monitoring uptake and outcomes ▪ Setting targets and objectives and plans for achieving them ▪ Procurement and supply diversity ▪ Complaints and user feedback
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information in alternative formats ▪ Accessible buildings – aids and adaptations ▪ Accessible services ▪ Access to our community / shared areas
Resident and service user involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring resident, service user and staff groups reflects the diversity of all equality areas ▪ Service level agreements with user groups (AWAZ, CDN, Gay Cumbria)
Complaints and Customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Customer feedback – satisfaction surveys – that take account of access needs (inc. complaints) ▪ Developing appropriate SMART measures against customer service standards, that can be monitored
Lettings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extending monitoring to include equality themes in addition to race and disability. ▪ Equality in tenure rights ▪ Allocations & Evictions
Harassment (inc. Domestic violence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incident reporting / information sharing; ▪ Re-provision of refuge facilities / safe houses ▪ Continuation of “Let-Go” services, beyond Northern Rock funding period
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of governance arrangements ▪ Board membership representative of local community equality profile
Staffing and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment and selection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training ▪ Flexible working ▪ Employment monitoring ▪ Reasonable adjustments
Development and regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Lifetime Homes” ▪ New schemes are aimed at satisfying demand and need, that has emerged from customer input and demand, and the requirements of community partners
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplier relationships ▪ Contractor relationships ▪ Support including Training and awareness raising for contractors