

Equality and Diversity includes you



B3 LIVING Better
Homes
Communities
Business

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Equality and Diversity includes you

At B3Living, we are passionate about equality and diversity. This means we will treat you fairly. We will provide equally good services and employment opportunities to you as to anyone else in our diverse community.

Equality and diversity shapes how we work as a landlord. We will gather information about residents and use what we find out to offer a personalised and flexible service.

For example, this could mean collecting rent in a number of ways, using different payment methods.

Equality and diversity shapes how we work as an employer. We make sure our staff treat all

our customers with respect and respond to your individual needs. We also recruit staff fairly and provide development opportunities.

Equality and diversity shapes how we work in our local community. We build partnerships with organisations that can support residents' health, wellbeing, aspirations or community.



This includes you

Our strategy emphasises our commitment to equality and diversity and explains what we do to ensure that we treat everyone fairly and with respect.

It includes:

Staff - how we are employed and what is expected of us when dealing with residents, contractors and each other.

Residents - how you can access services and give feedback on what we do, and how we expect residents to treat each other and our staff.

Business partners - how our contractors work with you and with us. We expect our partners to share our commitment to equality and diversity.

The wider community - we support local organisations and projects helping to build stronger communities. We also contribute to charities working overseas such as through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC).

Our goals are to provide better services, to understand people's needs and respond to them. We want to help build better communities, to bring people together to celebrate differences and to break down pre-conceived ideas.

Governance

Equality and diversity is at the heart of our work.

Equality and diversity is in the top 10 priorities for the organisation. The Board monitors our work with this in mind.

We aim for Board members to attend equality and diversity training in their first year of office, and a refresher at least once every three years.

We have a Board member Equality and Diversity Champion. Their role is to support and challenge the organisation in order to fulfil our aspirations and meet best practice.

All Board reports include equality and diversity considerations.

The Board reviews the equality and diversity policy regularly, and receives six-monthly equalities reports.



Employment

Recruitment and selection

We choose the best person for the job. To make sure everyone has a good chance, we include local papers, Proud Employers¹ and local disabilities groups in our recruitment advertising.

Our working culture

We promote an open and inclusive culture where diversity is welcomed.

We do not tolerate discriminatory behaviour or harassment at work.

Our Employee Promises set out our commitments.

We participate in *The Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For* survey. We have earned three stars in the Best Companies scheme and were number number 4 in the 2013 Top 100 not for profit employers list. This demonstrates that our employees are committed and are treated fairly.

All employees receive Equality and Diversity training at the start of their employment. We have anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies and procedures. We are committed to training and developing all staff and we are innovative and flexible in our approach to this.

We complete equal pay audits. These ensure employees receive comparable pay for different jobs and are fairly rewarded under the Equality Act 2010. We support staff with specific needs, for example by providing adapted workstations, and sign language interpreters at meetings.



We have a staff consultation group, regular Breakfast Club and Tea with John informal gatherings for staff, a group for staff who work part-time, a



LGB&T staff group and an ethnic minority staff group. Our B Inclusive Group oversees equality and diversity work within the workforce and responds to any ideas or concerns that arise.

Our Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People accreditation shows that we are positive about employing disabled people and are eager to know about their abilities.

We are also a Stonewall Diversity Champion, promoting equality and justice for people who are lesbians, gay or bisexuals.

Monitoring

We ask Board members, staff and residents to share their diversity information so that we

understand who we are serving and how that changes over time.

We use this information to check that we are treating people fairly, for example in how we recruit and select staff, and in the satisfaction results from resident surveys. This information is treated as strictly confidential. Employee training, awards and benefits are also monitored to ensure fairness. Similarly, we monitor rent arrears and evictions to ensure that we are treating all tenants fairly and to identify whether any group of residents is more likely to need support from us.

Residents' views at the centre

We offer a range of ways for residents to give us feedback so that we can improve our services. This includes satisfaction surveys, complaints and resident meetings and events.

We encourage all residents to join in by varying the times and days of resident meetings, using accessible venues, providing transport to meetings, providing interpreters when required and providing specific groups such as our Disabilities Forum, Youth Panel and LGB&T meetings. We use our monitoring data to invite people to the groups which are most likely to be relevant to them.

We have a diversity steering group, made up of residents (including board members) and staff, which helps us assess the equality and diversity impact of proposed changes to policies or services.

We have diversity open forum meetings, designed to give residents, staff and board members the opportunity to develop their own awareness of diversity-related topics, through hearing from a wide range of speakers. Recent diversity open forums have included speakers on Irish Travellers, diabetes, paganism, Sikhism, dyslexia and Samaritans.

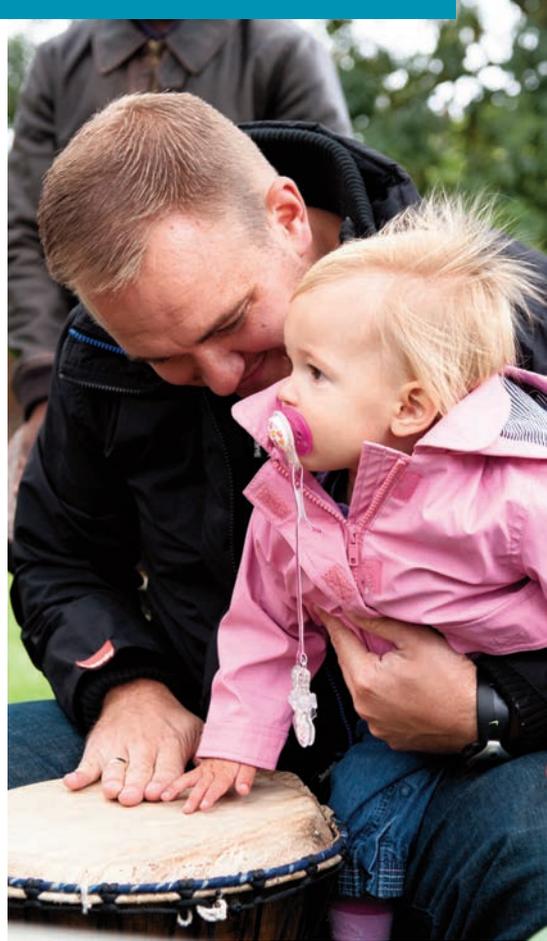
Better communities

We have a very wide range of partnerships with more than 50 organisations. For example, we work with the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) to support community groups, including the Broxbourne Ethnic Minorities Association (EMA), an umbrella organisation for a number of local community groups including the Society of Caribbeans and Africans (SOCA).

We are members of Herts Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

Transgender Partnership and we work with Cortex, the Hertfordshire Transgender Support and Social Group. We promote financial inclusion, for example through our work with the Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) to provide money advice, including making sure that people are getting all the benefits to which they are entitled.

We work to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB). We work with other organisations to tackle ASB and will seek to address any underlying causes of ASB as well as the ASB itself. We have specific policies and procedures for tackling hate harassment and domestic violence.



Accessibility

Our main office, Scania House, is fitted with hearing loops and a 2-level reception counter. We also have surgeries in Waltham Cross to make it easier for residents living in the south of the borough to talk face-to-face with staff. We use interpreters to help us communicate with residents. We provide letters and rent statements in large print and our

HOME newsletter in large print, audio CD and by email. We have staff learning British Sign Language.

Meeting your needs

We provide support to help residents maintain their tenancies. This can include help with claiming benefits, referral to support organisations and assisting with enrolment onto college courses. We provide life skills training through our Skills4U programme, which includes budgeting and minor repairs. We provide intensive support for families with multiple needs. We provide minor and major adaptations to tenants' properties, and work with Hertfordshire County Council Occupational Therapists to ensure that we provide the most appropriate adaptation for each individual's needs.

We provide retirement housing (sheltered accommodation), which provides wide-ranging

support including, for example, enabling people to take up opportunities in further education and ensuring each tenant has an individual support plan which is reviewed at least annually.

Diversity Strategy Action Plan

Our action plan is based on ideas from staff and partners and examples of good practice from other organisations. It includes recommendations arising from our Diversity Network Accreditation, which we achieved in March 2013.

A full copy of the action plan can be obtained on request. We are open to new ideas and suggestions.

We will:

- Use Residents' Day to promote diversity
- Continue to provide regular diversity training for employees and Board members

- Continue to make our facilities (e.g. meeting rooms) available to community groups and expand this provision where possible
- Support the End Racism This Generation campaign, including working with partners to challenge myths and stereotypes
- Regularly carry out an anonymous staff survey which includes questions related to diversity
- Regularly survey residents about their experiences in dealing with B3Living from a diversity perspective
- Tell residents why we monitor diversity information and how we use the information we collect. Use HOME, residents' meetings and our website to do this.
- Consider ways of giving feedback to tenants who participate in engagement activities on how their views were listened to and acted upon.



- Work with Broxbourne Council to know the demand for specific properties, e.g. wheelchair accessible homes, and plan developments accordingly. Consider making ground floor properties wheelchair accessible.
- Encourage vulnerable people to feel confident making phone or online rent payments. For example, accompany individual tenants the first few times, have a coffee morning where people can make dummy payments and/or use home visits to show people how to do this.



- Ensure Independent Living schemes are inclusive for all residents and potential residents in the right age range, including people from any ethnic background, sexual or gender orientation.
- Continue to include diversity issues in our mystery shopping and expand this.
- Publish equality and diversity assessments via the website to increase transparency and engagement with stakeholders on equality actions.
- Make sure the procurement process includes equality and diversity standards.
- Review what we monitor and why.





Help with understanding this information

English

If you need help to understand the information in this document, please phone 01992 453 700.

Turkish

Bu belgedeki bilgileri anlamak için yardıma ihtiyacınız varsa, lütfen 01992 453 700 numarayı arayınız.

Italian

Se avete bisogno di aiuto per capire le informazioni contenute nel presente documento, siete pregati di telefonare allo 01992 453 700.

Lithuanian

Jei turite klausimų del informacijos siame lankstinuke, prasom kreiptis 01992 453 700.

Greek

Εάν χρειάζεστε βοήθεια για την κατανόηση των πληροφοριών που περιέχονται σε αυτό το έγγραφο παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε στο 01992 453 700.

Arabic

إذا كنتم بحاجة الى المساعدة لفهم المعلومات الواردة في هذه الوثيقة يرجى الاتصال بالهاتف رقم: 01992453700.