

# EQUALITIES, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

**2022-2025**

**The Wrekin**  
Housing Group

Adopted June 2022

**THIS DOCUMENT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT**

We are able to offer versions translated into Polish, Punjabi, Urdu and Audio Transcriptions on request.



# 1. Introduction, Vision and Values

**This is the first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for The Wrekin Housing Group. It sets out our vision and commitments, as a major employer and a housing and care provider, for developing and maintaining a more inclusive workplace, delivering fair and efficient services, within an equitable and supportive society. Wrekin opposes all forms of discrimination and promotes parity of opportunity for all.**

We believe in a fairer future for everyone and that by working together with our staff, our customers, our communities and our partners we can achieve more.

We believe that everyone has the right to live and work without fear or prejudice; and that everyone should be enabled to make a positive contribution to society in their own unique way, in communities where they feel safe, where they belong and where difference and diversity is respected, valued and celebrated.

The Wrekin Housing Group is a socially minded organisation, employing more than 1200 staff, providing more than 13000 homes and delivering high quality care services across the geographies of Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, Staffordshire and the Black Country.

Our vision is **making a difference to people's lives**. Our organisation values underpin all that we do:

- ❖ Inspire positive change
- ❖ Everyone matters
- ❖ Communicate clearly
- ❖ Grow Together

**Equality** - ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.

It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Equality recognises that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination.

*Equality and Human Rights Commission*

**Diversity** – recognising, understanding and valuing difference.

Diversity acknowledges the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision making, with a workforce that is representative of our customers and the communities that we serve.

By encouraging and embracing different life experiences, skills, abilities, knowledge and ideas we have the potential to be a stronger and more resilient organisation.

**Inclusion** – taking deliberate action to create an environment and culture where everyone feels included.

Inclusion ensures everyone is valued and can participate and that their contribution, experience and perspective is welcomed.

An inclusive environment is one where everyone can feel they belong, where they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstance.

This strategy will embed EDI into the DNA of The Wrekin Housing Group and be reflected across all of our policies, procedures, strategic planning and working practices.

Everyone has a part to play in creating and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and ensuring it is at the heart of everything that we do.

## 2. Our Priorities for Action

This strategy identifies a number of priority themes that will shape and focus our EDI activity and action plans over the next 3 years.

These themes build on the work undertaken over the past 12 months and will continue to be refined and refreshed to support our EDI journey.

-  **Leadership and Governance**
-  **Data and Insight**
-  **Communications**
-  **Service Delivery, Policies and Procedures**
-  **Customers, Communities and Partnerships**
-  **Recruitment and Retention**
-  **Learning and Development**

Annual work programmes and delivery plans will accompany the strategy and be reviewed regularly. Delivery plans will include key milestones and timescales, target outcomes, financial and non-financial resources and links to other plans and strategies.

## 3. Leadership and Governance

Our leadership and governance structures will be inclusive, effective and diverse, proactively seeking different views and opinions in strategic decision making.

Our leaders will welcome constructive challenge and encourage a culture of openness, belonging and inclusivity to create an environment and organisation where discrimination and prejudice are not tolerated.

## 4. Data and Insight

We will continue to work hard to better understand our staff, tenants and customers and to capture and use data, insight and knowledge to help understand where there may be barriers or unconscious bias; to ensure that our workforce is representative of the communities we serve; and to influence and improve working practices, business planning, service development and operational delivery.



## 5. Communications

We will clearly communicate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across our internal and external platforms.

We will continue to develop our EDI communications plan to raise awareness and understanding and to celebrate diversity, culture, heritage, acceptance and inclusion.

We will strive to ensure we have a range of communication channels that are accessible, flexible and effectively reach intended audiences.



## 6. Service Delivery, Policies and Procedures

We will continually challenge our practices and procedures to ensure we do not discriminate and that we are fair to all whenever possible.

By better understanding our customers, communities and workforce we will endeavour to ensure our services are accessible and equitable.

We will use data and tools such as Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to challenge and adjust our policies, procedures and service delivery to ensure we meet the diverse needs of our customers and employees and embed equality and inclusivity in to all that we do.

We are committed to developing and delivering high quality services that consider the needs of all our customers and potential customers and welcome feedback in support of our commitment to continuous improvement.



## 7. Customers, Communities and Partnerships

The services we deliver should aim to meet the needs of the customers and communities that we serve.

We will treat all our customers with respect and as individuals and will speak out against any forms of discrimination or prejudice.

We are committed to working with local communities and partners to ensure we recognise, engage with and respond to different needs. We will promote and celebrate equality and diversity across the areas where our customers and staff live and work.

Our social value and inclusion commitments seek to remove barriers, create positive opportunities for people, build stronger communities and strengthen community cohesion.



## 8. Recruitment and Retention

The Wrekin Housing Group is a major employer in the sub region and we strive to be an organisation of choice – one that people want to work for.

We will continually review our recruitment and employment practices to ensure we are attracting, recruiting and retaining people from a diverse range of backgrounds, that reflect the communities we serve.

We will seek to remove unconscious bias from our recruitment processes, delivering regular training, guidance, advice and support to managers alongside robust monitoring and reporting.

## 9. Learning and Development

We will develop and deliver training and resources to all staff to improve awareness, knowledge and understanding of our EDI strategy, commitments and expectations.

We will ensure EDI is woven into all learning and development programmes, embedding inclusion and respect firmly within our organisational culture, extending above and beyond the legal responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010.

We will strive for continual learning across the organisation, sharing best practice in respect of EDI and ensuring that EDI considerations are a feature of all audits completed as part of our Annual Internal Audit Plan.

## 10. Implementation and Delivery

The Wrekin Housing Group Board and Leadership Team will oversee the implementation and delivery of the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and will ensure the principles are embedded within the Corporate Plan, associated strategies, plans, policies, procedures and the culture of the organisation.

Regular monitoring reports will be presented to the Executive Management Group and the Remuneration and Service Quality Committees.

The Executive Director of Business Solutions is the responsible officer.

A staff network, the Wrekin Allies, has been established and will continue to provide influence and challenge. Associated staff groups and support networks, Proud to be Me; Disability Positive; Heritage & Culture will continue to be encouraged, supported and facilitated, with access to the leadership team and decision makers as required.

We will continue to capture information to establish a baseline and will use data, insight and feedback to regularly measure progress and to inform our Year 1 Delivery Plan and metrics for success.

Regular staff and customer surveys, analysis of complaints, grievances, performance appraisals, exit interviews will all provide valuable insight into the success, or otherwise, of our EDI ambitions and commitments.

EDI isn't just a strategy – it's a way of working, a statement of intent, a commitment to doing all we can to ensure a fair and inclusive society, reflected through our workforce, our partners, our supply chain and our everyday working practices and service delivery.

## High Level Actions

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Launch and embed the EDI Strategy and Action Plan	Review strategy and action plan. Achieve HDN Accreditation; Stonewall Accreditation; Disability Confident Level 3	Review and revise strategy, measures, action plan
Establish and deliver EDI training and awareness programme for all staff.	Review effectiveness of EDI awareness across learning and development	Continue to develop EDI awareness raising and resources across all L&D
Undertake Recruitment review and implement revised policies and procedures.	Review and monitor revised and refreshed recruitment practices against EDI ambitions	Regular training and support for all managers in recruitment, retention, appraisal practices
Continue to establish baseline data to better understand our workforce and customer base and use as insight in service development and delivery.	Initiate annual Census days to encourage staff and customers to regularly review and update their personal details	Review data collection methods, continue to learn and improve from best practice across the sector
Support the further development of the Wrekin Allies and associated staff groups, Proud to be Me, Disability Positive, Heritage & Culture	Review and refresh the terms of reference, engagement and effectiveness of the staff groups relating to EDI	Review any changing needs of staff groups and forums
Develop a suite of measures and metrics to monitor progress	Review measures and metrics and consider any targets	Review and revise as necessary
Increase internal/external communications with EDI messaging and make accessibility improvements to the website.	Review our communications in line with EDI commitments, employer of choice, accessibility, reach etc	Refresh communications plan, measure reach
Engage and involve more diverse staff and customers in policy development and Equality Impact Assessments	Measure progress against EIA Action Plans, reverse engineering of key services	Review and revise
Engage and involve more diverse customers in service development and delivery	Increase the diversity of customers engaging in our Customer Voice activities and initiatives	Increase the diversity of customers engaging in our Customer Voice activities and initiatives
Increase opportunities for partnership working across the communities that we serve	Identify and deliver regular opportunities for partnership and community working.	Identify and deliver regular opportunities for partnership and community working.