



Everyone

**BE**LONGS

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2023-26

# BE ONE

Where we are heading and why

**This strategy marks the start of a three-year action plan that is designed to make a positive and lasting difference for our customers, our colleagues and the communities in which we work.**

This is not a 'ready-made' strategy it has been written with input from all of our stakeholders – all with a shared vision to make the Trust a diverse and inclusive place to work - an organisation that carefully considers the homes and services that it provides for all of its customers.

This strategy arrives at a time when the national context for equality, diversity and inclusion could not be more prevalent, particularly in our sector as we await the arrival of the Social Housing Bill.

But regardless of the Bill or any other external drivers, the evidence is clear; a real commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion can improve the overall success of an organisation – and, as an extension of that, the satisfaction of our customers, our staff and our partners.



**Fiona Mcauley**  
Board Champion  
for EDI at the Trust

# BE POSITIVE

## The facts behind the plan

There is plenty of research that shows that people who live in social housing experience significant inequalities and disadvantages in comparison with people living in other types of housing.

**There are proportionately more people with disabilities living in social housing than in other tenures.**

We also know that there are differences between those living in social housing and the workforce and leadership of organisations that provide those homes.

**There are proportionately fewer women and those from non-white ethnic backgrounds working in housing and leading housing associations.**

This landscape provides us with an opportunity to welcome more colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds, who can bring different skills and perspectives to benefit both our effectiveness and our long-term relationship with our customers.

## Our purpose

**Working together to provide safe homes and thriving communities.**

If we fail to address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, we won't be able to fulfil this purpose. Instead we will consider:

- The way we provide services to individuals
- The way our staff are treated.

Beyond our day to day work we will also play a part in the communities where we operate, helping to:

- Encourage inclusion
- Tackle anti-social behaviour, which is rooted in prejudice and discrimination
- Build constructive relationships with organisations (both locally and further afield) who can contribute to this work.



## Our commitments

We know that taking a positive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion is essential to support our strategic priorities, which are to:

### BE FAIR

**Be a great landlord** – customers are treated fairly and treated well.

### BE INNOVATIVE

**Be a resilient organisation** – we need a wide range of skills, ideas and perspectives in order to thrive.

### BE INCLUSIVE

**Create great places to live** – we want residents to feel safe, respected and included.

## Threaded through all we do

**Equality, diversity and inclusion lie at the heart of providing a great customer service**, so this document should be read alongside our other people-focused strategies, such as our:

- Customer Voice Strategy
- Vulnerable Persons Strategy
- People Strategy

The action plans that are attached to each of these strategies will help us to achieve our EDI strategic aims too (see p.8 onwards).





# COMMITTED

## OUR PEOPLE

The overall success of an organisation is directly linked to a true and lasting commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

In particular, by attracting talented applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and communities we can recruit and retain a diverse workforce and board, which will bring different perspectives and ideas and benefit the organisation and its customers.

It's clear from research, and from our own experiences, that people who feel valued and respected in the workplace are more likely to perform effectively and want to stay with the organisation.

Most importantly, we believe in the Trust's value –

**We are respectful and celebrate our differences.**

A positive commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion - backed up by action – will ensure we live and breathe this value every day.



# BE INFORMED

## What are equality, diversity and inclusion?

We want Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) to be firmly embedded in our culture so that it becomes intuitive. Here is how we define our terms.

### Equality

**Equality means making sure that everyone has access to equal opportunities by removing barriers.**

The Equality Act 2010 ensures that it is illegal to treat people unfairly because of a protected characteristic.

#### Protected characteristics

- Disability
- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or beliefs
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment

### Diversity

**Diversity means including and involving people from diverse backgrounds.**

Being diverse can apply to our individual characteristics, which form part of our identity, such as our race, age, gender, religion and disability.

We also have characteristics that are not visible, such as sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership. We value this diversity and we want to celebrate our differences.

We want to create environments in the workplace and in our neighbourhoods and communities where people of different identities respect each other and interact free from bias.

### Inclusion

**Inclusion creates an environment where everyone feels valued and welcome.**

Inclusion is typically seen as an effort to provide people with a sense of belonging to their community or to their workplace.

The concept of inclusion emphasises the way people feel or the way they are made to feel.

Everyone is worthy of dignity and respect regardless of their identity or background.

### Equity

**Both Equity and Equality promote fairness. However, equality achieves this by treating everyone the same, whereas equity does so by treating people differently depending on their needs.**

Equity is more of a holistic approach. It considers measures that take into account various needs and requirements and, with them in mind, provides the opportunity to achieve equality.

It can be argued that in order to truly achieve equality, we need equity to give everyone the same chance of getting there.

### Intersectionality



We all have our own distinct mix of characteristics.

When these identities overlap, unique experiences, opportunities and barriers are created.

This is known as intersectionality.

Looking at diversity through a range of intersectional lenses helps us to:

- Build a better understanding of how experiences impact on people.
- Not assume that all experiences for a group are the same.



# BE HAPPY

## Our approach

During our initial one year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy in 2022-2023 we succeeded in meeting our initial objectives and actions.

Throughout the first year we:

Held a monthly EDI Forum with colleagues to improve our approach and drive our EDI Strategy.



Made sure we had support in our leadership teams (Board and Executive Team sponsorship).



Ran individual and community consultation events with customers.



Supported community groups and events such as the Macc Pride and their annual art exhibition as well as Space4Autism and Picnic in the Park.



Ran training sessions and events for customers and staff on topics such as neurodiversity and men's health and hosted celebrations on International Women's Day.



Introduced an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) template and training for all managers.



Carried out a data review to compare staff, board members, tenants and applicant profiles.



Introduced an Involved Customer Expense Policy to encourage participation from a diverse range of customers.



# BE STRATEGIC

Over the past few years we have been gathering the data we need to form the foundation for this work.

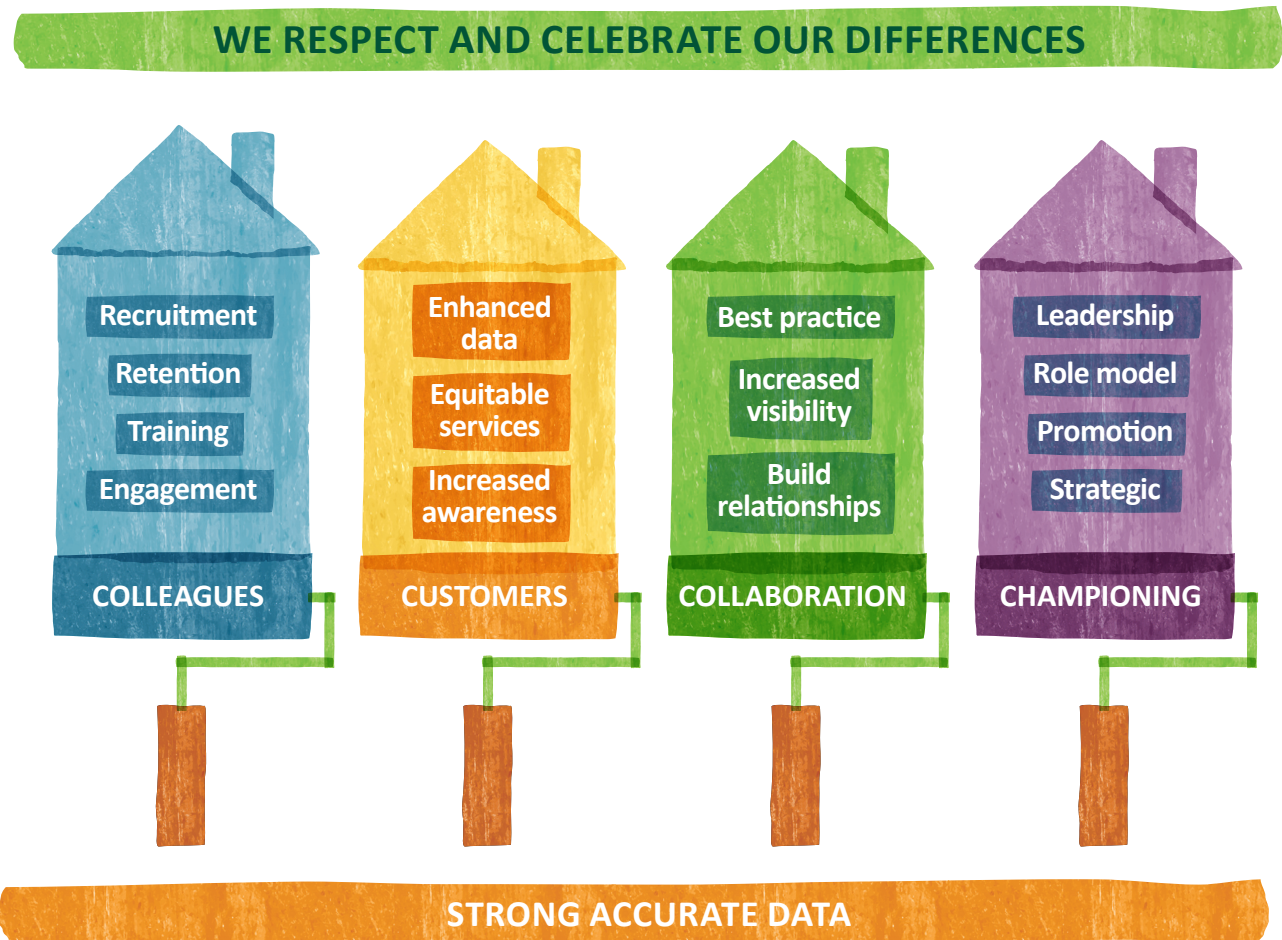
## More to do

While we have made significant progress, we know that we need to continue the momentum to keep on exploring the benefits of EDI to support our strategic objectives and to reinforce our values.

- We've taken time to consider the framework we need to support our objectives and meet our EDI aspirations.
- We have consulted with staff, stakeholders, our customers, and the wider community.
- We have analysed our data to establish what our priorities and approach should be.

To reach our new goals we have developed:

- **Four key strategic themes** which will help us to improve things for our customers and our colleagues.
- **A three-year action plan** to ensure we are accountable and can measure our progress.



# BE INCLUSIVE

## CUSTOMERS

Working together to provide safe homes and thriving communities.

### Our aims

- To be seen by our customers as fair and empathetic.
- To provide equitable services.
- To use our data to make sure that our services meet customers' needs.

We have consulted with our customers to understand how they perceive the Trust in relation to our EDI efforts and approach. They told us that they want us to be a landlord who is unbiased, empathetic and open minded to an individual's circumstances.

Through an extensive customer profiling project we have managed to capture complete EDI data for 80% of customers and partial data for 20% (August 2023).

We have carried out some initial analysis of how this data compares to our wider community and staff profiles, but there's more to do.

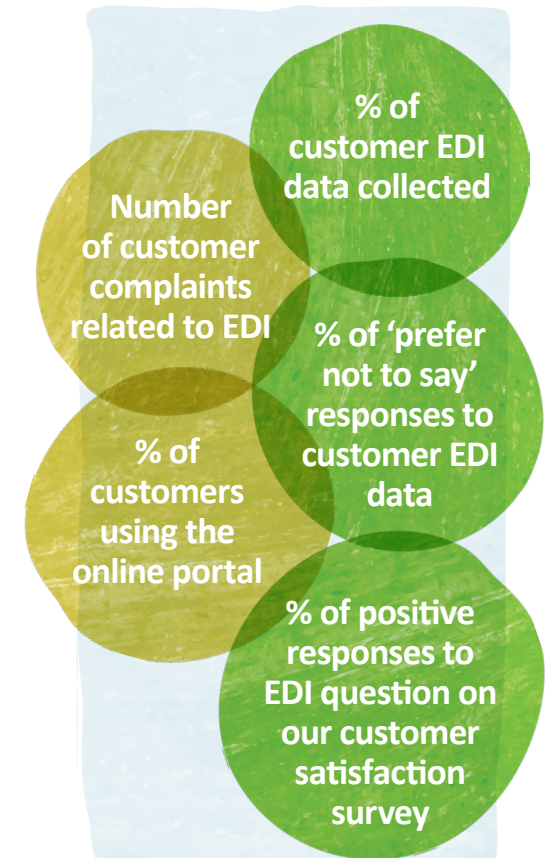
### We will:

- Continue to improve our EDI data
- Further embed our Equality Impact Assessments and continue to gather customer feedback

### What we'll do

- Use our data to influence our decisions.
- Take regular opportunities to review customer data through contact centre, repairs and customer visits.
- Provide a self service function on the website to allow customers to update their information.
- Engage with customers to help reduce data gaps including the reduction of 'prefer not to say' responses.
- Promote the ways we use our customer data to improve services.
- Work proactively with our customers to ensure that the services we provide are user-friendly and inclusive of their needs.

### How we'll measure success





# BE PROUD

## COLLEAGUES

We want every employee to feel proud to work for the Trust. We want to be recognised as an employer of choice, providing a great place to work.



### Our aims

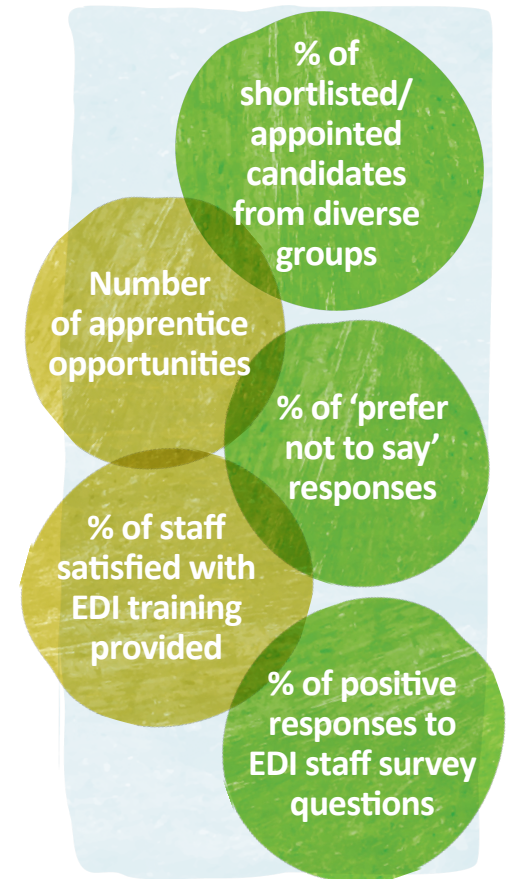
The Trust's vision is:

- To be an 'employer of choice', attracting and retaining the best talent.
- To encourage a high performing culture and remunerate staff based on individual and team performance.
- To be an inclusive employer that celebrates differences and embraces diversity.
- To have motivated staff that feel supported and can thrive.

### What we'll do

- Regularly review data at employee lifecycle touch points such as recruitment, promotions, disciplinaries, leavers to establish any impact on particular groups and improve services/ experiences for colleagues.
- Develop an improved recruitment process, which is inclusive and accessible for all our candidates' needs.
- Regularly review our recruitment data to understand trends and issues in recruiting diverse talent.
- Explore apprenticeship opportunities for all vacancies.
- Review job descriptions to check for language biases.
- Provide staff with training and resources they need to deliver diversity excellence including the development of an EDI training framework.
- Promote services such as mental health first aiders, flexible working policy and employee assistance programme.
- Engage with staff to reduce the data gaps we have with regards to sexuality and religious belief.

### How we'll measure success



# BE ENGAGING

## COLLABORATE

We want to work with partners and stakeholders to enhance our outward facing brand and fulfil our objectives.

### Our aims

We want to engage with other organisations to help us access advice and support, share lessons learnt and best practice. We also want to support and engage with local community groups and charities to reinforce our commitment to inclusion.

- To work closely with key stakeholders that share our focus on diversity.
- To engage with and provide allyship to community groups and projects.

### What we'll do

- Work in partnership with local schools to develop talent pipe lines and offer work experience.
- Engage with and support community groups and events.
- Ensure that the people that we work with can demonstrate their commitment to EDI as part of the contract process.
- Invite community organisations to deliver lunch and learn sessions for staff and customers.
- Consult with community groups to help inform service delivery.
- Encourage staff to participate in volunteering activities within our communities.
- Consider how we are perceived by our partners and other stakeholders by surveying them every three years.

### How we'll measure success

- % of work experience placements offered
- Number of community events attended/supported
- Number of hours volunteered
- Improvement of positive EDI measure from stakeholders



# BE AMBITIOUS

## CHAMPION

We have an ambition to learn from the best and share our proudest moments with our partners and customers.



### Our aims

Our corporate strategy has a strong commitment to equality, but we've also made public pledges on how we want to champion EDI throughout our people practices as an employer.

They include our commitment to:

- the Disability Confident Employer Scheme
- the Living Wage initiative

These pledges provide us with strong frameworks to work within and the guidance to help us make sustained progress and lasting change. However, we recognise that we need to enhance this approach by reviewing our membership of programmes and forums which may aid our work in promoting EDI.

### What we'll do

- Make sure everyone in the Trust has EDI objectives and a commitment to supporting EDI initiatives.
- Analyse and use data to inform decision making.
- Consider positive action for involvement opportunities for customers to ensure diversity.
- Role model our values, embrace EDI and ensure it is embedded throughout our culture
- Review our Equality Analysis process to ensure it is efficient and supports high standard Equality Impact Assessment, including consultation where applicable.
- Develop a suite of leadership training such as unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and difficult conversations.
- Explore pledges and accreditations that could support our commitments to EDI such as SHARP, House Proud and Age Friendly.
- Increase our membership of the internal EDI Forum including the creation of diversity champions for each protected characteristic.
- Commission an external provider to conduct a gap analysis and implement any recommendations.

### How we'll measure success



# BEYOND

## OUR THREE-YEAR ROAD MAP

### Year 1

#### ESTABLISH AND UNDERSTAND

- Set aspirational targets and agree actions.
- Consider our people processes through an EDI lens making recommendations for improvement where appropriate.
- Improve confidence and engagement through training, events and involvement for customers, stakeholders and colleagues.
- Understand how our we can use the data we have to deliver change.

### Year 2

#### EMBED

- Create a culture where we are confident to challenge ourselves, and others, and willing to be challenged in return.
- Review measurements against our action plans.
- Ensure all colleagues are committed to EDI.
- Implement improvement recommendations to our people processes.
- Make an inclusive workplace culture part of our brand, embedding EDI into everything we do.

### Year 3

#### LEAD

- Be able to demonstrate best practice in EDI.
- Be recognised as an inclusive employer.
- Be viewed as a fair and respectful landlord by our customers and stakeholders.
- To have an established suite of resources to share with customers, staff and stakeholders to explain our services.



PEAKS & PLAINS  
Housing Trust



---

**Ropewalks, Newton Street, Macclesfield, SK11 6QJ**

[www.peaksplains.org/edi](http://www.peaksplains.org/edi)

[trust@peaksplains.org](mailto:trust@peaksplains.org)