

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 – 2025

1. Introduction and Aims

- 1.1. Hastoe's purpose is to work with rural communities to build and manage high-quality, energy efficient and affordable homes that meet a local need. These homes enable local people to remain within their communities and help keep rural services sustainableⁱ.
- 1.2. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy supports this purpose with the following aims:
 - To improve our knowledge of resident diversity to enable us to offer services that are inclusive.
 - To improve our knowledge of workforce diversity and positively promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
 - To have a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve.
 - To understand and assist in tackling rural inequalities and discrimination
- 1.3. We recognise that we deliver services to diverse communities across a wide geography and we want to ensure that our services are delivered in an inclusive way that do not discriminate against any specific group or people with protected characteristics.
- 1.4. Our purpose is to work with rural communities and this strategy reflects this purpose and has a focus on issues that specifically affect rural communities.
- 1.5. We also want to ensure that we have a workplace that is inclusive and diverse. Diversity within a workforce improves the performance and productivity of organisationsⁱⁱ. Diverse leadership teams make better decisions and having different people with different perspectives and backgrounds leads to better designed servicesⁱⁱⁱ.
- 1.6. However, we also understand that the data we hold in relation to both our residents and staff requires review and update so that we can understand our current position and enable us to make improvements where required.
- 1.7. The first year of this strategy will focus on data collection and understanding where we are as an organisation, with actions reviewed in years two and three to reflect what this data tells us.

2. Background

- 2.1. Our previous approach to EDI has been in ensuring compliance to legislation and regulation; specifically, the Equality Act 2010, but we now require a new approach to effectively promote and embed EDI in the delivery of services and in the workplace.
- 2.2. Hastoe are members of the Housing Diversity Network and have used the services of the HDN to understand how we are best placed to support our staff and communities in embracing and celebrating diversity and where we need to focus to improve access and inclusion.
- 2.3. In addition to these internal drivers, there has been a change in approach externally with a greater focus nationally in the importance of EDI.
- 2.4. The government's Social Housing White Paper^{iv} puts renewed emphasis on the importance of effectively engaging with residents, from complaints to building safety, with a focus on embedding the needs of tenants in the culture of all landlords. To achieve this, we will need to better understand the diversity of our residents to ensure effective access to services and enable residents to engage with us.

3. Aims and Actions

3.1. The aims of the strategy are:

- To improve our knowledge of resident diversity to enable us to offer services that are inclusive.
- To improve our knowledge of workforce diversity and positively promote EDI.
- To have a workforce that is reflective of our communities.
- To understand and assist in tackling rural inequalities and discrimination.

3.2. The focus in year one of this strategy will be to better understand the diversity of our communities and workforce. Once we have this data we will review the strategy to ensure that the aims and actions are reflective of the findings from the data we collect.

To improve our knowledge of resident diversity to enable us to offer services that are inclusive.

3.3. The diversity data we hold in relation to our residents is incomplete and out of date. As such, it is difficult for us to know of, or take any steps to address, any inequalities in service delivery and engagement of our residents. The actions that we will take to address this are:

- To improve the data we hold on our customers by undertaking a customer survey in 2022/23.
- To segment the results of the Customer Satisfaction survey in 2022/23 on equality strands.
- Consider increasing resident representation at Board level in 2023/24 to better engage with residents in decision making and the strategic direction of the organisation.

To better understand the diversity of our workforce and positively promote EDI

3.4. In common with the diversity data we hold in relation to our customers, the data we hold in relation to our workforce is incomplete. In addition, we don't understand how our people perceive EDI in the workplace. The actions that we will take to address this are:

- To improve the data we hold on our workforce by undertaking a survey of all staff and Board members in 2022/23.
- To engage the Housing Diversity Network in delivering staff workshops to understand the perception of EDI at Hastoe in 2022/23.
- To use the outcome of the staff workshops and data collection exercise to develop an action plan in 2023/24.
- To use the National Housing Federation's EDI tool to see how representative our workforce is of our communities in 2022/23.
- To use the diversity data collected to understand how reflective our Board and Executive team are of the wider staff base.

To have a workforce that is reflective of our communities

3.5. It is important that we have a workforce reflective of our communities so that we can effectively design and deliver services to meet the needs of our communities.

3.6. This is a longer-term aim of this strategy and we will reflect on how we achieve this once we have collected diversity data from both our staff and customers.

To understand and assist in tackling rural inequalities and discrimination

- 3.7. Our purpose is to work with rural communities to build and manage high-quality, energy efficient and affordable homes that meet a local need. This enables local people to remain in their communities and assists in the sustainability of rural services.
- 3.8. This purpose supports the aim of assisting in tackling rural inequalities as the cost of private renting and home ownership continues to increase in rural areas, and the provision of private rented homes reduces in communities that attract high levels of tourism. In addition, people who live in rural areas face higher costs to access services.
- 3.9. Research has demonstrated that racism is a specific issue in rural Britain^y. As a rural housing provider we want to assist, alongside local partner agencies, in tackling racism and discrimination against all groups with protected characteristics.
- 3.10. Delivering the following actions will support this aim:
- Influence the National Housing Federation in focusing on rural inequalities in conjunction with other smaller rural housing associations.
 - Create a Welfare Fund to assist tenants who are struggling financially.
 - Increase the promotion of our Community Grants with a focus on tackling rural inequalities.
 - Ensure that complaints of discrimination and harassment from people or groups with protected characteristics are treated seriously and given the highest priority under our antisocial behaviour policy and procedures.

4. Governance and Oversight

4.1. The following governance arrangements are in place:

Board	Executive	Audit Committee
Approve 3-year strategy and review progress annually. Approve the Budget Review the Corporate Plan Review the results from the customer satisfaction survey Review the results from the staff satisfaction survey.	Recommend the 3-year strategy Recommend a Budget Review the results of the customer satisfaction survey and agree an action plan. Review the results of the staff satisfaction survey and agree an action plan. Publishing this strategy on an annual basis	Approve the internal audit plan. Deep-dives into areas of risk.

Take the lead in EDI, demonstrating inclusivity and promoting diversity in Board recruitment and behaviours.		
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ⁱ [CORPORATE PLAN \(hastoe.com\)](http://hastoe.com)

ⁱⁱ https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Organization/Our%20Insights/Delivering%20through%20diversity/Delivering-through-diversity_full-report.ashx

ⁱⁱⁱ [Equality, diversity and inclusion of housing association staff in England](#)

^{iv} [The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

^v <https://www.le.ac.uk/ebulletin-archive/ebulletin/news/press-releases/2000-2009/2004/10/nparticle-59d-xp4-s3c.html>