

Disability Equality Action Plan 2008-11

Introduction

The Group's Disability Equality Scheme will have the following essential elements:

- A statement of how disabled people have been involved in developing the scheme
- An action plan
- Information about performance of the association on disability equality
- An assessment of the impact of the housing association on disability equality
- Ongoing and inclusive review of the effectiveness of the action plan and revising the scheme

At the heart of our Scheme will be our disability action plan. It will enable us to meet the following **five** core objectives:

1. To promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
2. To eliminate disability discrimination
3. To eliminate disability harassment
4. To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
5. To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment

Stage 1 – Developing the Action Plan

- Reviewing existing plans and gap analysis (November 2007)
- In-house consultation to complete action plan (November 2007)
- Consultation with residents on priorities for improvement (November 2007)
- Approval by GST (December 2007)

Stage 2 – Launching the Action Plan

- In-house launch and briefings to staff (January 2008)
- External launch with partners and residents (March 2008)
- Communicating to CSC, JBHA and group Board (January 2008)

Stage 3 – Review of the Action Plan

- Annual staff consultation on service delivery and employment approach (from June 2008)
- Annual resident consultation on plan and progress (from June 2008)

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Karen Harvey						
Governance	Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify any barriers to disabled people in becoming Board or Committee members ▪ Positively encouraging the recruitment of disabled people ▪ Monitor and report on Board and Committee membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased accessibility to Board positions 	Company Secretary	August 2008	1 / 2 / 4
	Understanding role and responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure Board and Committee members are aware of any core legal or regulatory changes with regard to disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on disability included in Board and Committee papers, minutes, briefings 	Company Secretary	June 2008 and ongoing	1 / 2 / 4
	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roll out disability awareness training to existing Board and Committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance at training sessions 	Company Secretary	March 2008 and ongoing	1 / 2 / 4
	Groupwide reporting requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce reports on progress against disability equality action plan to Board and/or Committee on progress ▪ Produce key performance indicators (KPIs) which help Board and Committee to monitor progress against Group's Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports and KPIs to parent and subsidiary Board and Committee 	Company Secretary	September 2008 and ongoing	1 / 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Karen Harvey						
Employment	Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further improvements with the disability 'tick' symbol. ▪ Provide regular disability awareness training to managers/ employees involved in interview process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness /access to employment 	Head of Human Resources	June 08	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
	Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure Worklife Plus (WLP) Scheme (eg. Flexible Working) is available and appropriate for disabled staff ▪ Record and monitor the number of staff who identify themselves as disabled ▪ Make adjustments as required and monitor and record effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved retention of disabled people ▪ Effective and responsive aids and adaptations process 	Head of Human Resources	Immediate	5
	Buildings (facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit offices to ensure that disabled staff can make full use of working environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to offices for disabled staff ▪ Record of audits carried out 	Office Services Managers/ Facilities Officer (FH)/ Head of Human Resources	June 08	1 / 2 / 4 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Karen Harvey						
Employment	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all staff receive regular disability awareness training ▪ Monitor staff awareness through appraisal system ▪ Make adjustments to training courses to ensure attendance of disabled staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved awareness of disability ▪ Improved access to training courses 	Head of Human Resources / HR Training & Development Business Partner	Immediate	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5
	Staff support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support disabled staff through WLP scheme, by providing Employment Assistance Programme, regular eye tests etc ▪ Understand what support disabled staff need through consultation ▪ Monitor experience of disabled staff and support through appraisal system 	Improved methods of supporting disabled staff	Head of Human Resources	January 09 January 09	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Asset Management – David Collick						
Asset management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meet the needs of disabled residents, where their needs are identified in new build projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss the notification procedure with Lettings ▪ Implement recommendations following discussions ▪ Communicate procedures on regeneration schemes, which enable early identification of disabled residents' needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion on notification procedure by Lettings and New build ▪ Agreed action taken ▪ Staff aware of procedures to identify needs on regeneration schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Lettings/ Head of Development ▪ Head of Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involvement of disabled residents and design specialists in new build development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider specifically consulting disabled residents on the design of new build housing through focus groups and post completion surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussion with Mark Townsend, followed by procedure review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Development/ Resident Involvement Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 / 4 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective	
Asset Management – David Collick							
Asset management	Involvement of disabled residents and design specialists in new build development (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use professional advisors to assist with the review of the design brief ▪ Use published good practice on wheelchair design guides ▪ Ensure all properties meet the levels of accessibility set out in Part M of the Building Regulations ▪ Follow guidelines in the Design Brief on accessibility and Lifetime Homes principles wherever possible ▪ Communicate the wheelchair housing section in the Design Brief to the department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continued use of good practice in seeking guidance and applying building regulations ▪ Issued reviewed Design Brief ▪ Awareness of staff about accessibility guidelines in the Design Brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Development ▪ Head of Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing action March 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 / 2 / 5 1 / 2 / 5 	
	Accessibility and DDA compliance for communal spaces		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and confirm the Group's policy in relation to communal spaces DDA compliance ▪ Review reinvestment programme to ensure compliance is achieved 	Compliance with DDA as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Development / Head of Service Development ▪ Director of Reinvestment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 08 June 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 / 2 / 5 1 / 2 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Asset Management – David Collick						
Asset management	Accessibility and DDA compliance for community centres	Appointment of Community Centre Strategy officer whose remit includes assessment of facilities against DDA requirements	Production of DDA assessment element of strategy with action plan	Director of Southern Housing Foundation	Strategy and action plan to be complete by Jan 10	1 / 2 / 5
	Carry out risk assessments and DDA audits of the estate environment	Develop an approach to risk assessing and DDA auditing of the estate environment	Framework for risk assessments and DDA audits in place	Group Maintenance Manager / Regional Surveyors	March 09	1 / 2 / 5
	Carry out reinvestment works that aim to meet the needs of existing and future disabled residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review policy and procedure to ensure current disabled resident needs are identified on reinvestment projects. ▪ Review policy and procedure that may facilitate future works for disabled residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policy and procedure review ▪ Improved process to establish disabled residents' current and future needs in reinvestment works 	Director of Reinvestment	June 08	1 / 2 / 5
	Involve and consult with existing disabled residents and design specialists before redevelopment, improvement and major works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise current consultation process to ensure inclusive consultation processes • Review use of design specialists in the reinvestment projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of consultation process carried out • Review of use of design specialists carried out 	Director of Reinvestment Director of Reinvestment	June 08 June 08	2 / 4 / 5 2 / 4 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Asset Management – David Collick						
Partnering & procurement	Setting standards and expectations for contractors in their approach to disabled residents	Include reference to vulnerability/disability in tender documentation	All contractors equipped to deliver resident focussed service	Group Maintenance Manager / Group Procurement Executive	Sept 08	1 / 4 / 5
	Monitoring standards and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish bespoke satisfaction survey for adaptations works ▪ Review experiences of disabled people through standard monthly contract/service monitoring reviews of partnering contracts 	Continuous learning process	Group Maintenance Manager / Group Procurement Executive	Sept 08	1 / 5
	Use of specialist agencies	Establish tender list for specialist contractors	Consistent adaptations service	Group Maintenance Manager / Group Procurement Executive	Sept 08	1 / 4 / 5
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Lettings	Develop an Accessible Housing Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Record all units where disabled adaptation takes place ▪ Record all new units where up to lifetime homes standard 	Disabled adapted properties available on ArcHouse for staff at the point of letting	Head of Lettings	March 2008	1 / 2 / 5
	Adopt social model of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train housing staff on implications ▪ Adapt lettings application forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff trained ▪ Standard forms changed 	Head of Lettings	March 2008	4 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Lettings (cont.)	Monitoring disabled applicants and residents	Ensure all staff record disability of residents on ArchHouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance on how to record disability ▪ Standard reports available on service use/ outcome by disability 	Head of Lettings	March 2008	1 / 2
	Work with partners to identify disabled applicants before matching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree protocols with LAs for needs of disabled applicants ▪ Record when properties are refused as not suitable for disabled applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved matching of disabled people to adapted/ suitable properties ▪ Reduced number of refusals because property is not suitable 	Head of Lettings	March 2008	1 / 2 / 5
Sales	Monitoring disabled applicants and residents	Ensure all staff record disability of residents on ArchHouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance on how to record disability available ▪ Make standard reports available 	Marketing Manager	January 2008 & ongoing	1 / 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Sales (cont.)	Developing marketing strategies that meet the needs of disabled residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a marketing strategy with Local Authorities which takes account of and promotes access to home ownership to disabled people ▪ Monitor applications and sales by disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased number of disabled applicants and purchasers 	Marketing Manager	January 2008 & ongoing	1 / 2
	Consultation with disabled residents on sales process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement accessible marketing information ▪ Implement a satisfaction survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor & report satisfaction with sales service 	Marketing Manager	October 2008	1 / 2 / 5
Services to residents	Communication and providing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement Accessible Communication strategy ▪ Train staff on disability and communication issues ▪ Monitor & report on disabled residents communication needs ▪ Monitor satisfaction of disabled residents with communication methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved staff and resident awareness of communication methods ▪ Improved methods of communicating with disabled residents 	Head of Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sept 08 ▪ March 09 	1 / 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Services to residents (cont.)	Repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up disabled flags on repairs system ▪ Agree repairs standard for vulnerable and disabled residents ▪ Review approach to aids and adaptations ▪ Identify most common repairs and complete as a package ▪ Offer annual repair MOTs for disabled households ▪ Monitor take up of service by disability ▪ Monitor satisfaction levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved access to repairs service ▪ Enhanced service for vulnerable /disabled residents 	Group Maintenance Manager	Sept 08	1 / 2 / 5
	Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with residents on whether rent methods are fully accessible to disabled residents ▪ Monitor satisfaction with payment methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve methods of payment if required 	Resident Involvement Manager	March 09	2 / 5
	Service monitoring	Include disability as a standard measure for all service monitoring	Report on disability as part of standard monitoring	Head of Service Development	June 08 and ongoing	2 / 5
	Service offer for disabled residents	<p>Produce a service offer for disabled residents based on consultation with disabled residents</p> <p>Inform staff and residents</p>	Develop a set of indicators to monitor the success of the service offer	Head of Service Development	October 08	1 / 2 / 3 / 5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Services to residents (cont.)	Harassment and anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop specific strategy and training on dealing with disabled residents who experience or are perpetrators of harassment and anti-social behaviour ▪ Monitor and report on disabled residents who are victims or perpetrators of harassment and anti-social behaviour ▪ Monitor and report on satisfaction of disabled residents with process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved approach to dealing with disabled residents who experience or are perpetrators of harassment and anti-social behaviour ▪ Publicise and promote approach to residents and staff 	Anti-social Behaviour Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ June 08 ▪ From April 08 	2 / 3
	Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consult with residents on whether the complaints service is easy to use and use consultation to define improvements ▪ Monitor and report on disabled residents satisfaction with process ▪ Monitoring types of complaint and identify any trends/issues relating to service barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve complaints process and satisfaction of disabled residents as required ▪ Publicise and promote approach to residents and staff 	Complaints Service Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May 08 ▪ May 08 ▪ Aug 08 	2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Services to residents (cont.)	Estate inspections/monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage staff to invite and involve disabled residents in estate monitoring ▪ Develop ways of monitoring disabled resident involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to monitor involvement ▪ Increased number of disabled residents involved in estate inspection ▪ Increased awareness of what affects and matters to disabled residents 	Regional Directors/ Housing Services Manager	March 08 and ongoing	2 / 5
	Mapping provision in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop understanding of what support services are available at a local and national level ▪ Provide this information to local and service centre staff ▪ Make connections with the Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linked database available on the Intranet to all staff ▪ Increased awareness by operational staff of needs of disabled people and what support exists 	Head of Service Development	October 08 and ongoing	5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Sustaining tenancies	Signposting support advice	Promote knowledge of supporting people systems and support services amongst relevant operational staff	Staff briefing and training takes place	Supported Housing Managers	October 08	
	Support packages	Ensure where support packages are in place they are recorded and reviewed	Review and monitoring system in place	Supported Housing Managers	Ongoing	1/2
	Financial inclusion	Ensure any Financial Inclusion services delivered by the Foundation identify needs of disabled residents and tailors support	FI operating processes and procedures that reflect support required	Director of Southern Housing Foundation	March 09	1 / 5
	Sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maximise opportunities and directly target resources on involving disabled residents in the SHF Core Project team process ▪ Monitoring of resident involvement in CPTs ▪ Consider the potential for ring fencing resources to support access to adaptations to homes ▪ Research employment/ training needs /aspirations of disabled residents as part of wider research into residents needs and aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved involvement of disabled residents in CPTs ▪ Specific project to assist the group in supporting access to adaptations in residents homes ▪ Delivering research report 	Director of Southern Housing Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 09 ▪ March 09 ▪ September 08 	1/2/5

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Peter Day						
Resident involvement & inclusion	Investigate need for disability forum	Consult with focus group on need for forum	Making improvements based on consultation	Resident Involvement Manager	June 08	1 / 5
	Inclusion framework for disabled residents	Develop appropriate consultation models	Effectiveness of consultation models	Resident Involvement Manager	June 08	1/2/4/5
Policy and practice	Equality Impact Assessment framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an Equality Impact Assessment Framework for staff to follow ▪ Introduce training for key members of staff on EIA 	Policies and procedures include equality impact assessment	Head of Service Development	April 08 and ongoing	1 / 2 / 5
	Inclusion of disabled residents in policy review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an approach to include disabled residents as part of the review process ▪ Monitor disabled residents involvement in review process 	Increase number of disabled people involved in review process	Head of Service Development	March 08	1 / 2 / 5

Southern Housing Group Disability Equality Scheme – our definition

The Group sets out to provide access to excellent customer service for all its customers, and to be an employer who is positive about disability. We recognise particularly that disabled people may face barriers which prevent or make it difficult for them to fully access services or employment. We also recognise certain environmental or service conditions may have an inhibiting effect on a disabled person's ability to access or obtain a full service from us and we will seek to ensure that we identify and remove those either through physical or service adjustments. We recognise those barriers may also relate to culture, lack of awareness or assumptions made in design of services and will work with our staff and customers to identify and remove or mitigate them.

We recognise the definition in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which says you are disabled if you have: a mental or physical impairment where this has an adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities and the adverse effect is substantial and the adverse effect is long-term. We recognise that this will cover a wide range of conditions and physical or other impairments.