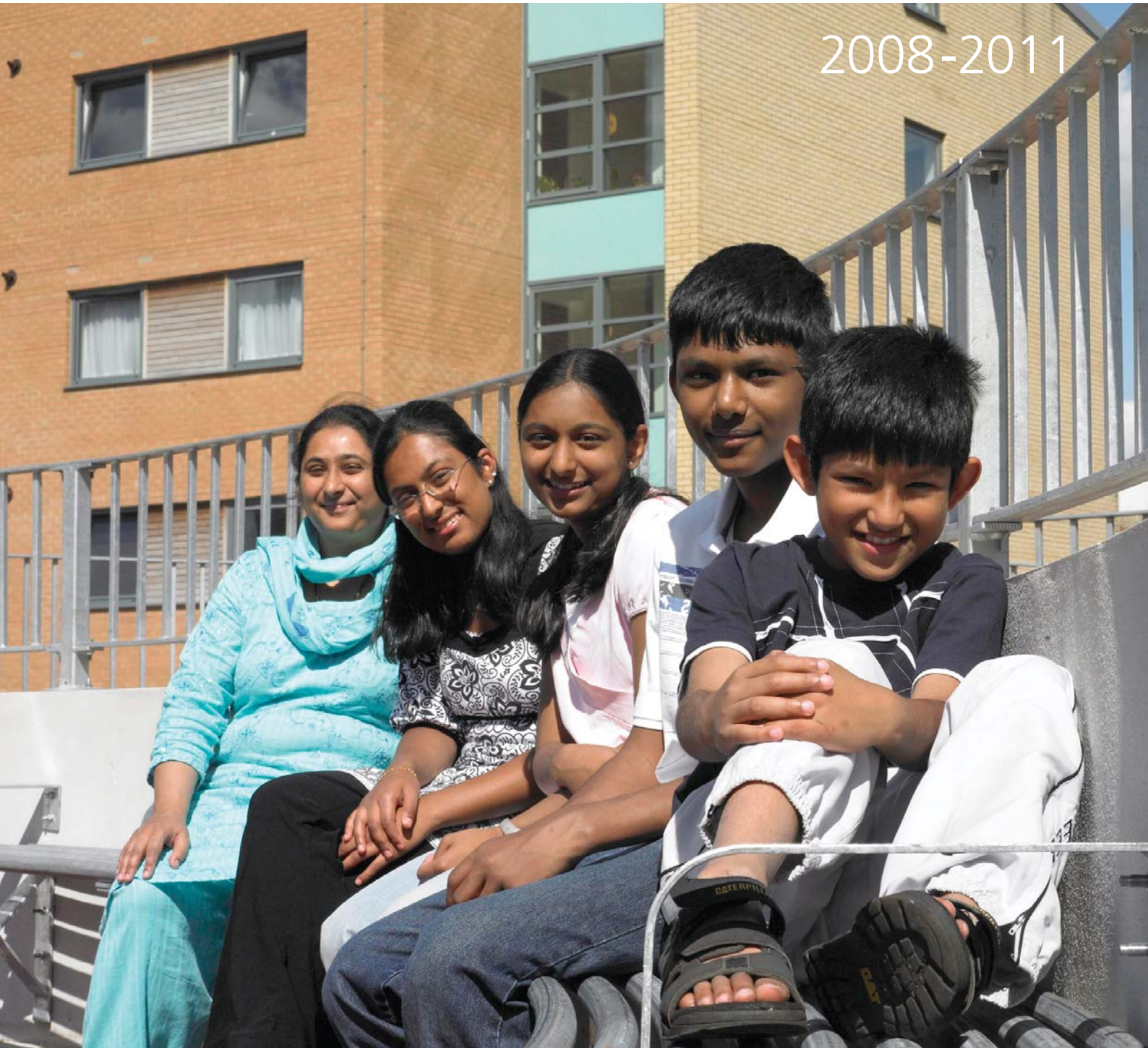


Gender Equality Action Plan

2008-2011





Southern Housing Group delivers services to around **25,000 households** across London and the South-East of England, working across **80 local authority areas**. We directly employ over **900 people** and have business relationships with over **1000 organisations**.

The nature of our business and areas of service delivery mean that our customer base, and our partner organisations, are significantly diverse and affected by geography, and tenure.

Our Group-wide Equality and Diversity strategy was agreed in 2006 and we are committed to eliminating discrimination and valuing diversity in the communities wherever we work and within our own workforce. We aim to ensure that residents and other customers receive effective, responsive and culturally sensitive services which recognise particular issues of discrimination and harassment. We recognise our legal responsibilities as well as the demands arising from our commitment to support sustainable communities and promote community cohesion. We are proud of our commitment to delivering high quality and ensuring fairness and equality.

This **Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan** will be a key part of achieving our aims. We have developed it after considering the evidence we have about what matters to residents, and our staff and at the detail of our performance.

We know that there are areas where we can continue to make improvements and we've put these into our 3 year action plan, which has been approved by the Group's Diversity Action Group and management team.

We shall be continuing to work with our customers and partner organisations to make sure that we share information and ideas about how we can make the progress we want. We have developed indicators which we'll use to help us determine whether we are making a difference.

We shall be reporting on that progress to residents in our regular newsletter and on an annual basis to the Boards and customer services committee.

Gender Equality Action Plan 2008-2011

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

- An action plan
- A statement of how staff and residents have been involved in developing the scheme
- Information about performance of the Group on gender equality
- An assessment of the impact of the Group on gender 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 Gender Equality Action Plan. It will enable us to meet the following core objectives:

- 1 To promote equality of opportunity between men and women and those who are transgender
- 2 To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender or transgender

Stage 1

DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN

Reviewing existing plans and gap analysis (February 2008)

In-house consultation to complete action plan (February/March 2008)

Consultation with residents on priorities for improvement (April 2008)

Approval by Group Strategy Team (May 2008)

Stage 2

LAUNCHING THE ACTION PLAN

In-house launch and briefings to staff (from May 2008)

External launch with partners and residents (from July 2008)

Communicating to Customer Services Committee, JBHA, SWHA and Group Board (from June 2008)

Stage 3

REVIEW OF THE ACTION PLAN

Annual staff consultation on service delivery and employment approach (from March 2009)

Annual resident consultation on plan and progress (from March 2009)

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Head of Human Resources						
Governance	Membership	<p>Identify any barriers to men, women and those who are transgender to becoming Board or Committee members</p> <p>Positively encourage the recruitment of men, women and those who are transgender when and if appropriate</p> <p>Monitor and report on Board and Committee membership</p>	Increased accessibility to Board and Committee positions	Company Secretary	April 2008	1 & 2
	Understanding role and responsibilities	<p>Ensure Board and Committee members know the legal and regulatory changes with regard to gender equality</p> <p>Build the gender equality duty into strategic planning</p>	<p>Ensure the duty is implemented and acted upon</p> <p>Deliver consistent message that gender equality is integral to the Group</p>	Company Secretary	March 2008	2
	Awareness	Launch gender equality training for all Board and Committee members	Attendance at training sessions	Company Secretary	March 2008	1 & 2
	Group-wide reporting requirements	<p>Produce reports against gender equality action plan to Board and Committee members on progress</p> <p>Report on-going Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Board and Committees</p>	Enable Board and Committees to monitor performance and progress against Group's action plan	Company Secretary	April 2008	1
Employment	Recruitment	Identify and remove any barriers to the recruitment of men, women and those who are transgender when and if appropriate	<p>Equality of opportunity</p> <p>More applications from under-represented groups</p>	Head of Human Resources and Recruitment Business Partner	April 2008 and on-going	1 & 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Head of Human Resources						
Employment	Recruitment (cont.)	<p>Train all staff involved in the recruitment process in gender equality.</p> <p>Use recruitment process to challenge gender stereotypes in job roles</p>	Eliminating gender stereotypes			
	Retention	<p>Review part-time and job share practices to identify and address any discrimination on the basis of gender or transgender using an equalities survey</p> <p>Promote part-time / flexible working to all staff on an annual basis, regardless of gender</p> <p>Conduct an equal pay audit (every 3 years) in relation to gender and eliminate any discrepancies found</p> <p>Promote access to management as and when appropriate</p>	<p>Eliminate any gender pay gap</p> <p>Continual assessment of representation within management roles</p>	Head of Human Resources	<p>June 2009</p> <p>April 2008</p> <p>September 2009</p>	1 & 2
	Training	<p>Integrate gender equality training into all training strategies</p> <p>Provide all staff with gender equality training</p> <p>Train managers to be able to effectively respond to victims of harassment, including employees who are victims of domestic violence</p>	<p>Increased awareness of gender equality</p> <p>Promoting a positive attitude towards gender equality</p>	Head of Human Resources and Learning & Development Business Partner	June 2008	1 & 2
	Staff support	Ensure that Worklife Plus is available & appropriate for all staff	All staff are aware of their benefits under the law and under Worklife Plus	Head of Human Resources		1 & 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Head of Human Resources						
Employment	Staff support (cont.)	Understand what staff with caring responsibilities need through an equalities survey	All staff are aware of their benefits under the law and under Worklife Plus	Head of Human Resources	June 2009	1 & 2
		Understand what staff who are transgender require through an equalities survey	No discrimination against: - pregnant women/those returning from maternity leave; - men taking up/returning from paternity leave; or - carers			
		Support for women & men returning from paternity/maternity leave and those returning from carers' leave	All staff feel supported and valued			
	Transgender	Set up systems which can record gender identity of staff and applicants	Ability to identify transgender staff and applicants	Head of Human Resources and Recruitment Business Partner	April 2008	1 & 2
	Monitoring	Monitor job role by gender profile Take account of transgender in monitoring approach Monitor staff awareness of gender equality through an equalities survey Monitor experience of transgender staff through an equalities survey Monitor the number of harassment and sexual harassment complaints and tribunals	Fairer representation at all levels Findings of equalities survey are included in gender equality action plan and acted upon	Head of Human Resources	June 2009	1

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Head of Human Resources						
Procurement	Setting standards and expectations for contractors and suppliers	<p>Procurement policy to be reviewed to include gender impact</p> <p>Where appropriate specify certain gender equality matters into contracts</p> <p>Apply performance condition that contractors must comply with anti-discrimination provisions of Sex Discrimination Act / Equal Pay Act</p> <p>Exclude tenders who have serious findings against them in employment tribunals unless effective steps have been taken to resolve the issue</p> <p>Compose an equalities commitment statement for all services and contracts the Group procures</p>	<p>Compliance with gender duty</p> <p>Emphasis of gender duty will be proportionate to particular procurement contract</p>	Group Procurement Executive and Head of Compliance	October 2008	1 & 2
	Training	<p>Training for all employees involved in the procurement process</p> <p>Aware that contractor staff have had appropriate sexual harassment training</p>	Awareness of implications of gender duty on procurement process	Group Procurement Executive and Head of Compliance	October 2008	1
	Monitoring	<p>Ensure contract reviews address any equality issues that may arise</p> <p>Set up mechanisms to monitor standards (e.g. inspections, periodic satisfaction surveys, etc)</p>	Ensure contractors are meeting requirements of gender duty	Group Procurement Executive and Head of Compliance	October 2008	1

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Asset Management – Director of Reinvestment						
Asset management	Design brief review	Ensure that the design brief takes account of the diverse needs of local communities	The design of new build and reinvestment schemes reflects cultural expectations and practices where possible and appropriate, including gender	Reinvestment Director Head of Development	December 2008	1
	Impact assessments	Carry out impact assessments on new build and reinvestment programmes	Positive outcomes following Housing Corporation 'Scheme Assessments' relating to gender issues Introduction of new 'Service Standard' for contractors and consultants working on occupied dwellings, incorporating gender-specific requirements	Head of Development Director of Reinvestment	March 2009	1 & 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Employment and Governance - Head of Human Resources						
Lettings	Analysing lettings profile according to gender	<p>Use the lettings profile to identify any unequal outcomes of our processes (including Choice Based Lettings, nominations, etc.)</p> <p>Address any discrimination identified in our internal processes</p> <p>Work with Local Authorities to address any external discrimination identified</p>	Our lettings processes do not discriminate on the grounds of gender or transgender	Head of Lettings	April 2009	1 & 2
	Promoting joint tenancies	Encouraging partners to sign up to joint tenancies	Greater security of tenure and rights for both partners	Head of Lettings	April 2009	2
	Reviewing appointment times	Ensure viewing, visit and appointment times take account of individual circumstances and do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender or transgender	Flexible appointment times which take account of individual needs where possible	Head of Lettings	April 2009	1
Sales	Analysing sales profile according to gender	<p>Use the satisfaction survey to identify any unequal outcomes of our processes</p> <p>Address any discrimination</p> <p>Work with Local Authorities and other partners to address any external discrimination</p>	Our sales process does not discriminate on the grounds of gender or transgender	Sales Managers	April 2008 and on-going	1 & 2
	Use of marketing material	Develop our marketing material so that it promotes positive images about all gender roles, which challenges stereotypes, and is not discriminatory	Our marketing approach is non-discriminatory and promotes positive images of all genders	Marketing Manager	April 2008 and on-going	1 & 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Services to residents	Repairs	<p>Analyse the take up and satisfaction of the repairs service according to gender</p> <p>Work with contractors on a Respect for Residents agenda which covers all strands of diversity, including gender and transgender</p>	<p>Better understanding of the experience of the repairs service according to gender</p> <p>Using data to identify and address any areas of discrimination</p>	Group Maintenance Manager	September 2009	1 & 2
	Domestic violence	<p>Complete review of current approach to domestic violence (DV)</p> <p>Update DV policy and procedure to take account of gender and transgender</p> <p>Explore Supporting People resources for people who experience DV</p> <p>Work with Local Authorities and other organisations to access support for our residents that experience DV</p> <p>Signpost advice and referral to support agencies</p> <p>Develop a clear approach to rehousing victims of DV</p> <p>Prioritise health and safety repairs for people who experience DV and ensure that the maintenance budget covers these repairs</p> <p>Work with Local Authorities and other partners to explore potential of sanctuary/safe room provision</p>	<p>Improved levels of recording and reporting DV</p> <p>An approach to DV that does not discriminate on the grounds of gender or transgender</p> <p>An approach to DV that better understands and meets the needs of those experiencing DV</p> <p>Effective working with Local Authorities and other partners to meet the needs of those experiencing DV</p> <p>Increased awareness among staff and residents on how we approach DV and what actions we take</p>	Anti-Social Behaviour Manager	<p>December 2008</p> <p>December 2008</p> <p>June 2009</p> <p>June 2009</p> <p>August 2008</p> <p>March 2009</p> <p>December 2008</p> <p>March 2009</p>	1

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Services to residents	Harassment	Review our approach to dealing with harassment to ensure that it tackles gender and transgender harassment	Transgender and gender harassment are tackled effectively by current processes	Anti-Social Behaviour Manager	December 2008	1
		Make adjustments to our approach where necessary			August 2008	
		Signpost advice and referral to support agencies	August 2008			
		Ensure that our tenancy agreement/ lease covers the harassment of people who are transgender	December 2008			
		Investigate use of an out-of-hours report line for gender and transgender harassment and DV (and other types of serious Anti-Social Behaviour complaints)	March 2009			
			Increased awareness among staff and residents on how we tackle gender and transgender harassment			

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Services to residents	Equality and diversity resident summary	Produce equality and diversity resident summary and include in lettings pack	Residents are confident of our commitment to equality and diversity, including gender and transgender	Head of Service Development	April 2009	2
	Communication and providing information	Review formal and informal communication to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of gender or transgender Use formal and informal communication to promote positive images about gender roles, which challenge stereotypes	Communication approach which is non-discriminatory and helps to promote gender equality	Head of Communications	June 2009 June 2009	2
	Transgender	Set up systems to record the gender identity of our residents Capture and record the experience of people who are transgender	Ability to record gender identity Ability to understand how people who are transgender experience our service	Head of Service Development	September 2008 June 2009	1 & 2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Services to residents	Service monitoring	Include gender and transgender as a standard measure for all service monitoring	Report on gender and transgender as part of service monitoring	Head of Service Development	June 2009	1
	Service offer	Review current service offer to ensure that it does not discriminate on the basis of gender and transgender	A service offer which is relevant to all residents	Research Manager	December 2008	1
	Women's Housing	Review the service provided to the properties known as Women's Housing Trust schemes in the light of the gender and transgender legislative requirements	Services which meet the needs of all residents of these properties	London Regional Director	October 2008	

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Sustaining tenancies	Signposting support advice	<p>Provide advice and referral to appropriate support agencies</p> <p>Ensure that support packages accessible to all</p>	Provide support and advice which is accessible by all	Anti-Social Behaviour Manager	August 2008	2
	Sustainable communities	<p>Identify specific barriers faced by any gender in terms of accessing employment training opportunities</p> <p>Ensure the Foundation training programme takes account of all aspects of diversity, including gender</p> <p>Set up a system to record transgender experience where relevant /appropriate</p> <p>Identify/track projects and the outcomes based on diversity criteria</p>	<p>Employment and training strategy and targeting of resources to overcome barriers</p> <p>Projects that reflect the needs of all genders</p>	<p>Community Regeneration Manager</p> <p>Community Regeneration Manager</p> <p>Foundation Director</p> <p>Grants Officer</p>	<p>December 2008</p> <p>September 2008</p>	2

Functions	Priorities	Action	Outcome	Responsible	Timescale	Objective
Customer Services - Head of Service Development						
Resident involvement & inclusion	Inclusion framework	Identify and address any barriers to resident involvement on the grounds of gender	Resident involvement reflects our resident profile	Resident Involvement Manager	December 2008	1 & 2
	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) framework	Create an Equality Impact Assessment Framework for staff to follow Introduce training for key members of staff on EIAs	Policies and procedures include equality impact assessments	Head of Service Development	July 2008 December 2008	1
Policy & practice	Inclusion in policy review process	Ensure that resident involvement in policy development reflects our resident profile	A review process that's open & accessible to residents & reflects our resident profile	Head of Service Development	September 2008	2

For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, please contact the Service Centre.

- Arabic** لمساعدتك في الترجمة يرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة على هاتف 0300 303 1771.
- Bengali** অনুবাদ সাহায্য পেতে হলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারে 0300 303 1682 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।
- French** Si vous souhaitez recevoir de l'aide avec vos traductions, appelez le 0300 303 1771.
- Somali** Wixii ah caawimo turjumaan ka soo wac Xarunta Adeegga telefoonka 0300 303 1771.
- Spanish** Si necesita que le ayudemos con alguna traducción, llámenos al 0300 303 1771.
- Turkish** Tercüme konusunda yardım için 0300 303 1683 'den Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.

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