



DALE & VALLEY HOMES

Single Equality Scheme

2009-10

Contents

Part 1

3

Introduction by the Chair of the Board & Chief Executive of Dale & Valley Homes

Section

1.	Dale & Valley Homes – about us	4
2.	Introduction to the Single Equality Scheme	6
3.	Dale & Valley Homes Single Equality Scheme in context	10
4.	Involvement and consultation in developing the Single Equality Scheme	13
5.	Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)	17
6.	Identifying and assessing Dale & Valley Homes' functions and policies for relevance to General Equality Duties	19
7.	Key functions of Dale & Valley Homes	20
8.	Equality in Procurement	24
9.	Equality in employment	25
10.	What have we achieved so far?	32
11.	Monitoring policies for adverse impact on equality	34
12.	Arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services	36

Annexes to Part 1

1.	Dale & Valley Homes organisation chart	37
2.	Dale & Valley Homes governance chart	39
3.	Single Equality Scheme – Consultation Groups	40
4.	List of General and Specific Duties	41
5.	EIA Flowchart	42
6.	List of prioritised functions and policies for EIA	43

Part 2 – Single Equality Scheme Action Plans

45

Section

1.	Common Action Plan	46
2.	Disability Equality Action Plan	51
3.	Gender and Gender Identity Equality Action Plan	53
4.	Race Equality Action Plan	54
5.	Sexual Orientation Equality Action Plan	56
6.	Religion or belief Equality Action Plan	57
7.	Age Equality Action Plan	58

Introduction by the Chair of the Board & Chief Executive of Dale & Valley Homes

We are pleased to introduce our first Single Equality Scheme for 2009-10. This Scheme builds on our Corporate Equality Scheme 2008 and the Race; Gender and Disability Equality Schemes that were developed by Durham County Council in 2007 to meet public sector statutory duties.

Social housing within Wear Valley has an impact on all communities across the District and we have a central role in this as the main social housing provider. We believe that in order to become a truly excellent organisation, we must ensure that all parts of the community are satisfied with our services and that we provide greater access and better quality irrespective of race, disability, gender, gender identity, sexuality, age and religion or belief. This is why we have taken the decision to produce a Single Equality Scheme. We intend to move beyond simply meeting our statutory requirements.

We hope that this Single Equality Scheme shows just how far Dale & Valley Homes is progressing. We are committed to involving our customers and partners in helping us develop good processes and procedures so we can carry out our work more efficiently and fairly. We are not complacent and we recognise that there are stronger connections to be made and much to achieve. We want to focus on better outcomes for our customers in relation to our role as housing providers and also to employees making sure that they reflect the community and work in a supportive and progressive work environment.

We are indebted to a number of customers, staff and partners who have been instrumental in the production of this Scheme: not only the members of the Corporate Equality Group and Disability Working Group, who are listed in Annex 3, but all those who took the time to comment on our draft Scheme. Many people gave their time freely and willingly and we acknowledge and thank them for their contribution. It has been invaluable in ensuring that the Single Equality Scheme better reflects the priorities and concerns of diverse communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Chaffer'.

Peter Chaffer,
Chief Executive



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Button'.

Norman Button,
Chair of Dale & Valley Homes Board

Part 1

Section 1 – Dale & Valley Homes – about us

D&VH is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) set up in 2006 by Wear Valley District Council to manage, repair and improve Council owned homes. Since Local Government re-organisation in County Durham in April 2009, we now manage homes for the unitary authority Durham County Council.

Our housing stock, as of July 2009 was 4,277 properties across the areas of Crook, Bishop Auckland and Weardale. Our responsibilities include letting homes; repairing homes; delivering the Decent Homes Programme; rent collection; recovering arrears; debt counseling; promoting customer involvement; enforcing tenancy conditions; managing lettings, voids and under occupation; estate management, caretaking and housing related support services under the Supporting People programme.

In 2007 we were inspected by the Audit Commission which found us to be providing a good (2 star) service to our customers. Our success at the inspection released an additional £27m for us to invest in improving our customers' homes and it is our aim to provide a decent home for all our customers by 2012. We stand out as a service provider because we have placed our customers at the centre of everything we do. We understand the needs and expectations of our customers and partners and we have made their priorities the main focus throughout our Single Equality Scheme.

Dale & Valley Homes – The people we serve

The customers we serve have varied backgrounds and life experiences, aspirations and needs. We understand and acknowledge this. We know that some people are at particular or increased risk of exclusion and/or discrimination. These groups include (but are not limited to):

- Older people
- Disabled people
- Carers/Dependants
- Black and minority ethnic communities
- Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Women
- Young people
- Young adults leaving care
- Single parents
- Teenage parents
- People on low income
- Religious or faith groups
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual communities (LGB) communities
- Transgender communities
- Prisoners and ex-offenders
- Asylum seekers or refugee communities

Dale & Valley Homes Vision

Our **vision** and purpose is to:

“Provide homes and neighbourhoods that our customers want to live in and are proud to live in”

The **values** that underpin this vision all centre on our customers:

- We will be honest fair and open in all we do.
- We will listen to our customers and treat them as individuals.
- We will maximise the benefits to customers of all available resources,
- We will achieve excellence and continue to improve.
- We will work with all partners to improve the lives of our customers.

Our four **strategic objectives** are:

- Delivering Excellent Services
- Delivering Decent Homes
- Running our Business Well
- Contributing to the wider Community

Working together with our partners

By working in partnership with other forums, agencies and organisations we will make equality & diversity central to everything we do. It also helps us to contribute towards the achievement of the wider vision for communities of County Durham. Our main partner is Durham County Council, with whom we work closely at both a strategic and an operational level. We are represented on the Board’s of all three Area Action Partnerships. On a more operational level we work together on a number of issues including the Home Improvement Agency, Grounds Maintenance and the management of Anti Social Behaviour. Our formal relationships with Durham County Council are defined in the Management Agreement and Service Level Agreements.

Our other partners include Wear Valley Customer Panel; Local Multi Agency Partnerships; South Durham Management Support Group; Wear Valley Safety Partnership; Go Warm and Eaga partnerships; Citizens Advice Bureau and our construction partners Gentoo and Dunelm.

We have excellent partnerships with other organisations to provide a comprehensive package of support to our customers. These include the County Durham Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Accommodation & Support Needs Assessment Sub Group. We are members of the North East Equalities Network and Durham Equalities and Diversity Partnership. Our work on tackling homophobia has also extended our partnership working with the Crown Prosecution Service Race and Harassment County Forum. We have increased our involvement with Gay Advice Durham and Darlington; and we are recognised Stonewall Diversity Champions.

Section 2 – Introduction to the Single Equality Scheme

This is the first Single Equality Scheme to be produced by Dale & Valley Homes (D&VH). It builds on the success of our earlier Corporate Equality Scheme. The Single Equality Scheme complements our Equality & Diversity Strategy to promote equality with our customers and employees for the period 2009-10. During this period we will be constantly collecting views and opinions and at the end of 2010 we will then produce an updated scheme covering a 3 year period.

As the largest social housing provider in Wear Valley, our customers' experience is central to everything we do. We must act fairly at all times and in the interests of all our customers and the wider community. It is important for us to be trusted and to make fair decisions in all our areas of responsibility.

For D&VH, equality and diversity is more than just meeting our statutory requirements. It is fundamental in developing and delivering greater satisfaction with our services and increasing quality of life to our customers.

D&VH is also an employer as well as a service provider. As such we take our responsibilities extremely seriously making sure that our work force is reflective of the community and can work in an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying

D&VH also exerts influence with partners too, whether they are other public or voluntary bodies, or the private sector contractors that deliver work on our behalf. We make sure that our partners are aware of our commitment to equalities and understand that they too must also make such commitments if they wish to work with us.

This Single Equality Scheme has been prepared under the requirements of a number of statutory duties to promote equality. They are summarised below but a full list can be seen Part 1, Annex 4. The duties we work to consist of two types; *general duties* - the fundamental cornerstones of equality legislation and *specific duties* - these duties provide the mechanism by which we can test whether or not we are meeting the fundamental cornerstones of equality law. The purpose of the duties is to help public bodies like D&VH address institutional and systemic inequalities that some groups face.

The duties are as follows:

- Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 public bodies are required to produce a Race Equality Scheme and to review it every three years. As an ALMO, we adopted the Council's Scheme in 2006. D&VHs Race Equality Scheme will be incorporated into this Single Equality Scheme.
- Under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 public bodies are required to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. As above, we adopted the Council's Scheme in 2006 and our own scheme will be incorporated into this Single Equality Scheme.

- Under the Equality Act 2006 the public bodies are required to produce a Gender Equality Scheme. As above, we adopted the Council's Scheme in 2006 and our own scheme will be incorporated in this Single Equality Scheme.

Our decision to produce a Single Equality Scheme

Recent changes in the 'unitary authority structure' within Durham have meant that we are now in a position to produce our own Single Equalities Scheme. This means we can capitalise our unique insight and experience with customers and partners

How we will ensure that we fully comply with the Disability Equality Duty

Whilst we recognise the benefits of producing a Single Equality Scheme D&VHs is mindful of the need to ensure that the specific requirements of each duty are addressed in an explicit and discernible way. We have done this in respect of the Disability Equality Duty by:

- including a distinct section on gathering and analysing the evidence of disability equality and inequality in housing and employment practice in Part 1, section 5
- Addressing identified gaps in disability equality by producing a separate Disability Equality Action Plan which identifies how and when these gaps are to be closed;
- Formally involving disabled people in the development of the Single Equality Scheme by establishing a distinct Disability Working Group which has been responsible for establishing the priorities and actions in the Disability Equality Action Plan; and
- Developing our approach to equality impact assessments which considers the impact on disability, gender and race equality separately.

How we will ensure that we fully comply with the Race Equality Duty

Compliance with the Race Equality duty is measured through the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE's) Statutory Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing and D&VH template for assessing Race Equality Schemes. This code of practice originates from The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 that came into force on 2 April 2002. The new Act amends the Race Relations Act 1976 and strengthens its application to public authorities in several important ways. It gives the Equality and Human Rights Commission powers of enforcement and authority to issue statutory codes of practice, providing practical guidance to public authorities on how to fulfil their general and specific duties to promote race equality.

This means we have a duty to "mainstream" the elimination of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations, by making these an integral part of the way we work. The aims of the Code are to:

- set standards for achieving racial equality;
- provide practical guidance and best practice; and
- identify legislative requirements for service users and providers.

An individual or an organisation, including the Equality and Human Rights Commission, can apply to the High Courts for a judicial review of a public authority's alleged failure to

comply with its general duty. The Commission has powers of enforcement to take legal action against a public authority for not fulfilling its specific and positive race equality duties.

The legal requirements of the code are divided into nine themes which are governance, new & improved housing; lettings; housing advice & homelessness; neighbourhood regeneration & integration; tenancy & housing management; racial harassment & anti-social behaviour; contractors & procurement; involvement of residents & tenants. In January 2009 a gap analysis was completed on our performance in relationship to these themes and approved by the Board. This gap analysis was also approved by Equality & Diversity Development Services in April 2009 and they concluded that Dale & Valley Homes practice is in line with the 'CRE Code of Practice in Housing' and we are meeting the criteria.

How we will ensure that we fully comply with the Gender Equality Duty

We will do this in respect of the Gender Equality Duty by ensuring we address the specific requirements announced in October 2006.

There are also developing legal obligations in respect of what are called the 'new' equality strands for religion or belief, sexuality and gender identity and age. Whilst there are no current statutory equality duties in respect of these three strands, when the Single Equality Bill is enacted in autumn 2009 there is a strong chance there will be. Therefore, D&VH has decided that our first Single Equality Scheme should address the three statutory strands of race, disability and gender and the three newer strands of religion or belief, sexuality and gender identity and age. However, we have not followed exactly the same approach with the newer strands as we have in respect of race, disability and gender as some of the specific duties may not be relevant or applicable in the same way.

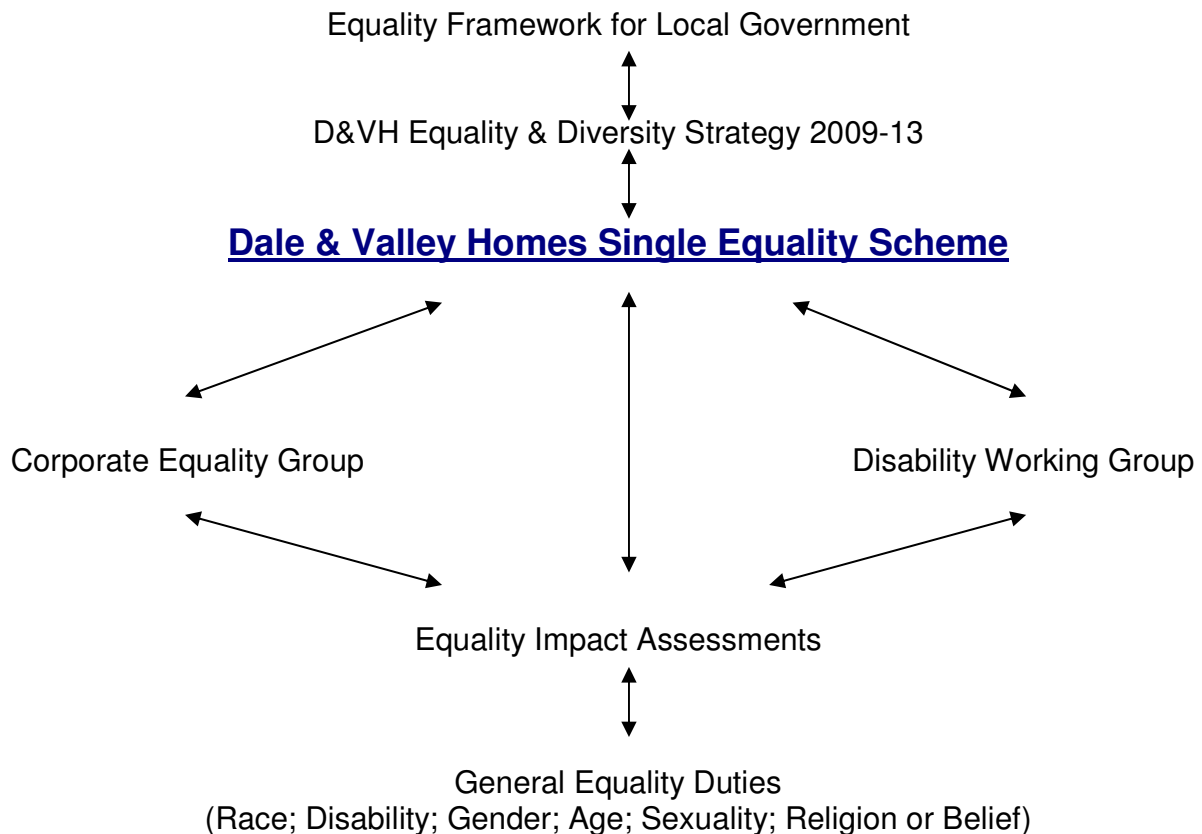
In taking equality issues forward in this way we recognise that there are a number of challenges which need to be recognised and addressed in producing the Single Equality Scheme. These include:

- the timescales and life span of our first Single Equality Scheme; and
- tracking progress and demonstrating success on strands where monitoring and targets may neither be in existence or underdeveloped nor appropriate as exist for other strands

In addition, through our Equality Impact Assessment process we will also consider age, sexuality, religion and/or belief too. Our monitoring processes and action plans will clearly help to identify discrimination in these areas and enable us to put solutions in place to help those that suffer from such treatment.

Where does the Single Equality Scheme fit into our Equality & Diversity outcomes?

The diagram below details where the scheme fits into our equality and diversity outcomes:



Timescales for the Single Equality Scheme

As this is our first Single Equality Scheme it will run from 2009-10 as many of the actions feeding into it are short-term at the moment. In 2010 we will review the scheme and develop our second scheme to run from 2010-13 in line with legal requirements.

Tracking progress and demonstrating success

With regard to the issue of tracking progress and demonstrating success on strands where monitoring and targets may be non-existent and inappropriate, this is an issue that will have to be addressed in the life cycle of the Scheme.

Section 3 – Dale & Valley Homes Single Equality Scheme in context

The development of a Single Equality Scheme provides a framework to integrate planning for equality and diversity so that it becomes an integral part of how D&VH undertakes its day to day work.

Our vision for equality and diversity

Our vision is to make a significant change in our performance on equality and diversity outcomes by 2010. We aim to listen to our customers and treat them as individuals valued by all and will do this in by delivering equality and diversity outcomes which show real success.

Our goals and measures of success – across all customers, stakeholders and groups are based on the objectives from our Equality & Diversity Strategy 09-13 which are as follows:

- **Knowing our community and equality mapping**
- **Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**
- **Community engagement and satisfaction**
- **Responsive services and customer care**
- **A modern and diverse workforce**

Success on equality and diversity can seem difficult to measure. Here we picture our organisation in 2010 – an organisation recognised as increasingly successful in this area. We have based our success around the objectives of our Equality & Diversity Strategy 09-13:

- **Knowing our community and equality mapping**
 - Our customer profile is 100% complete across all strands
 - Satisfaction across all diverse groupings continues to rise
 - Services are tailored to individual needs
- **Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**
 - Partnership working has expanded our understanding of the needs and aspirations of the LGB community
 - Partnership working has expanded our understanding of the needs and aspirations of the BME community
- **Community engagement and satisfaction**
 - Young people are involved in shaping our services
 - We have engaged with our BME customers
 - Continuing to have a service that involves customers and staff and uses this involvement to improve our services
- **Responsive services and customer care**
 - Equality Impact Assessments are completed across all our policies and functions and actions implemented

- All our policies, procedures and practices free from any discrimination
 - Satisfaction across all diverse groupings continues to rise
 - Services are tailored to individual needs
 - increased success in working in partnership to prevent hate crimes including violence against women.
- **A modern, diverse and reflective workforce**
 - A number of staff who started in administrative posts have become Senior Managers
 - A work force profile that reflects the community
 - Gender parity across senior grades
 - An environment where one is accepted for who they are and be able to be open and honest about personal identity issues
 - Our younger workers being prepared and mentored for succession
 - Training be accessed by all staff at all levels
 - Dale an Valley Homes being an employer of choice for talented job seekers
 - Staff through internally sponsored/supported schemes developing professional qualifications
 - A physical workspace that supports and can facilitate disabled workers
 - Increased employee satisfaction

Specific areas of measurement – our equalities indicators

We have embedded the measurement of equalities outcomes within our Performance Management Framework. Our equalities indicators are:

- HM11 What level of the equalities framework has been reached
- HM1 Percentage of customers (all) satisfied with our services
- LPI 95 Percentage of BME customers satisfied with our services
- Percentage of VMS individual questions and responses monitored by diversity
- HM12 Percentage of customers on whom the landlord has diversity information (age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and religion or belief)
- HM59 Number of working days lost to sickness absence
- HM 58 Percentage of employees satisfied with their employee
- LPI 80 Percentage of disabled staff
- LPI81 Percentage of senior staff who are women
- LPI 82 Percentage of BME staff
- LPI 59 Percentage of local labour employed by Decent Homes Contractor
- LPI 60 Percentage of local labour employed by Repairs and Maintenance Contractor
- LPI 61 Percentage of BME employed by the Decent Homes Contractor
- LPI 62 Percentage of BME employed by the Repairs & Maintenance Contractor
- Equality Framework for Local Government
- Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry 31

We are aware, the demographics of Dale & Valley Homes staff, Board, customers, contractors is predominately White British, therefore, we are not solely looking at percentages or target-setting. We are more concerned with satisfaction with services.

Leadership and responsibility for delivering equality and diversity

The Chair of the Board, Diversity Board Champion and Chief Executive directly champion the equality and diversity agenda. Their specific responsibilities are:

- Providing leadership on the agenda, acting as overall champions to ensure the Single Equality Scheme is developed and put into practice.
- Making sure we develop our vision and plans which reflect our Single Equality Scheme and Equality & Diversity Strategy.
- Communicating our plans to others both within and outside the organisation.
- Answering to our customers and stakeholders for what we do and what we achieve in terms of equality and diversity.
- Holding Directorates to account by reviewing performance and tackling poor performance.

Section 4 - Involvement and consultation in developing the Single Equalities Scheme

Mechanisms for gathering evidence

Service provision

For diversity data on our customers' needs and aspirations we gather information through our Customer Profile. D&VH Customer Profile is 77% complete and provides us with data around ethnicity; disability; gender; age and religion or faith. We also utilise data from VMS satisfaction surveys; any recent consultation on functions listed below; Status Survey 2008; Local Performance Indicators and Service Standards data.

Our customer involvement events (listed below) have helped identify key areas of concern. In addition, our regular customer surveys reveal priorities in specific areas and by specific groups/individuals.

- Wear Valley Customer Panel
- Resident Groups
- D&VH Board
- Dunelm
- Gentoo
- Officers and Councillors of Wear Valley District Council; post April 2009 Durham County Council
- Age Concern
- PCT
- SureStart,
- Police, Community Network
- Social Services.
- Blind life in Durham
- Adult services
- Gypsy Traveller Liaison
- DISC
- Age Concern
- Creative Support
- LINKs
- Well Being steering group
- Focus groups with current housing applicants held in four geographic locations in the D&VH area.
- Tenants Conferences (2008 and 2009)
- Wolsingham Agricultural show
- Registered Social Landlords
- Customer Involvement Review Team
- Access & Customer Care Working Group
- Wear Valley Citizens Advice Bureau
- Staff survey on disability
- With customers on Watergate Estate in connection with the Neighbourhood Agreement
- Editorial Panel

- Young Persons Housing Initiative Working Group
- Decent Homes Forward Planning Group
- Repairs & Maintenance Delivery Group
- Home Improvement Agency

Employees

The primary source of staff feeding in to the Single Equality Scheme is via the Equalities Impact Assessment process. Staff teams have worked through equality issues coming out of policies and functions and have identified actions. These actions have formed the core of the Single Equality Scheme and will be fed into Directorate plans. All staff have completed questionnaires on their views in relation to Equality and Diversity these too have been fed back in to the action plans from 2008 onwards.

Gaps in the evidence

Service provision

The major gaps in our evidence are around sexual orientation; gender identity and the minority group of Gypsy; Roma or Traveller customers. Further gaps have occurred due to variances in how equalities monitoring data has been set out or analysed across the company. This will be addressed throughout the organisation through staff training and inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity questions within surveys and the inclusion of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller within our ethnic monitoring.

Employees

Whilst we currently collate data in relation to employee diversity, it is often fragmented at Directorate level. Plans are in place to concentrate the information and to format it in more accessible ways. In addition, better information needs to be gathered on sexuality, religion and/or belief, to ensure that all our staff are in an environment free from harassment and bullying

Corporate Equality Group

The Corporate Equality Group has been responsible for the overall project guidance, steer and assistance to ensure the Single Equalities Scheme achieves the expected benefits within the agreed costs, quality and timescale.

Disability Working Group

A high proportion of our customers are disabled. Customer Profile data shows us that 35.4% of our customers suffer from a mobility problem, 13.9% suffer from sight problems and 13.2% suffer from hearing problems. Focusing on our local situation and in order to address the specific requirement to involve disabled people in the development of the Disability Equality Scheme, we established the Disability Working Group at the outset of the project. This group has consisted of customers and staff who have declared themselves as having a disability.

The Group has:

- identified issues from disabled people’s perspectives;
- identified barriers to making progress;
- proposed actions to promote disability equality in employment, prosecution policy and practice; and
- overseen the drafting of the Disability Equality Action Plan.

Potential barriers raised by Disability Working Group

Initial reactions of the Disability Working Group to D&VH Single Equality Scheme: were positive. Members were encouraged by the fact that D&VH is investing staff resources and showing a corporate commitment to the delivery of the Single Equality Scheme.

The group discussed what potential general barriers to for disabled customers that there could be. The majority of these issues where picked up within the Equality Impact Assessments of functions as detailed in Part 1, Section 6.

Function	Potential barriers for disabled customers
Decent Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to customers at start of scheme could be viewed as too generic. • Not publicising that contractors will move furniture
Repairs & Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers with sight or hearing disabilities will not find appointment reporting by text useful • All staff and contractors do not factor into the appointment how long it may take a disabled person to answer the door to them • Clarity around whether or not aids and adaptations are re-conditioned)
Housing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to factor into a tenancy enforcement issues whether or not either party has a disability • Disabled customers may find it difficult to access Durham Key Options due to the logistics of traveling to go on websites (e.g. in libraries) • Disabled customers may require more extensive follow up or support on income management issues • Disabled customers may require more extensive follow up or support after tenancy take up • A lot of estate management problems can cause really issues for wheelchair users or customers with mobility issues

Function	Potential barriers for disabled customers
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility of Dale & Valley House and Telly talk reception for customers and staff who are wheelchair users• Staff training may be required around disability:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ awareness of customers at first point of contact,○ specific worries for customer, and○ needs of customers across the different forms of disability.

The group also discussed how D&VH could promote disability equality. Their suggestions are listed below:

- Articles on support for people with disabilities in Dale Mail
- A D&VH disability leaflet in reception – focusing on support provided across all of our services
- Articles on support for people with disabilities in Customer Link (Customer Panel newsletter)
- Ensure leaflets are taken to all community events attended by D&VH

Targeted consultation

A draft version of the Single Equality Scheme was sent out for consultation to all our partner agencies throughout August 2009 to provide an opportunity for interested individuals or organisations to respond. These responses have been integrated into the final document.

Section 5 - Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

What are they?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a way of systematically and thoroughly assessing the effects that a function or policy (actual or proposed) is likely to have on a groups of individuals in respect to specific equality categories, that is, race, disability, gender, religion or belief, sexuality and gender identity and age.

Why do them?

For D&VH the main purpose of conducting an EIA is to pre-empt the possibility that any of our functions or policies could affect some groups unfavourably. It allows us to consider alternative ways of achieving the same ends with no or less adverse impacts.

It is also a key mechanism by which we can ensure that we meet our priority objective of moving from agenda setting for equality and diversity to focussing on results and outcomes. Also, an EIA seeks to identify impacts in terms of promoting good community relations, for example, impacts that affect relations between groups and those that may affect relations between D&VH and different community groups.

Public bodies have a legal requirement to meet their duties under equalities legislation. In order to test whether these duties are being met, it is also a legal requirement to 'assess' efforts so far. This assessment is a RISK assessment. A failure to meet general duties, not only will have unwanted consequences for service users and staff, but also can have far reaching legal ramifications for our organisation.

The onus to identify and remedy risk rests with each Directorate. The EIA is the first mechanism that highlights potential and actual discrimination. A properly conducted EIA will allow each Directorate to identify within its work areas, the need to change its process and procedures to avoid unlawful discrimination. Conversely it may also demonstrate, based on evidence, that the Directorate is fully complying with the equality legislation and its work needs celebrating.

Knowledge Check list

The EIA is a 'process' for identifying risk therefore it is vital before beginning EIA's that staff understand what is being 'tested for' and 'tested against'. There are foundational principles at play which govern the EIA process. All staff with responsibility for producing EIA's were trained on the process and principles. To this extent they can identify:

- the 'general duties';
- the nature of indirect/institutional discrimination and can test for this;
- the role and type of 'evidence' in the EIA process;
- the ramifications of non-compliance to equalities legislation and non compliance of an EIA;
- are able to promote change if the EIA identifies this need; and
- are able to conduct EIA's as part of a team or can draw on strong support from others as part of the process.

How we do EIA's

A flowchart of how we do EIA's is at Part 1, Annex 5. A template was developed to help those involved in the EIA process. The template was based on the following steps:

Policy/Function

- Summarise the policy under assessment in 2–3 paragraphs
- Does the policy/function have an effect on people and is this effect relevant to Anti-discriminatory legislation? (If yes, EIA it)
- Describe the barriers/discrimination for target groups generally

Evidence of discrimination?

- Obvious –e.g. cases/complaints against your organisation
- Non-Obvious (potentially evidence of indirect/institutional discrimination) : statistical profiles/ User information/ commissioned research

Based on evidence:

- Do we need to set up monitoring?
- Is the bias lawful (i.e. is it a national programme) targeting a particular group that suffers a particular problem e.g. housing for young /elderly.
- Recognise there is Bias – is this purposeful? Can another way of achieving the same aim be done without the bias? If not-
- Involve and engage with service users in consultation and redesign
- Alter function to incorporate underrepresented groups
- Develop Positive Action to help under represented groups overcome barriers. (This can range from PR & Marketing to specific targeted program of activities)

Monitoring:

- How will you monitor the situation?
- What will you do with the data?

Actions

- What actions will you now take to set everything up?
- Who will be responsible?
- What time scales are you working to?
- Is there a resource implication – how will this be met?
- Who will over see this process and when will it be reviewed?

PR.

- How will service users/general public know about this assessment?
- Will it be attached to your 'equality' scheme?
- Are you going to celebrate success?

Section 6 - Identifying and assessing Dale & Valley Homes' functions & policies for relevance to general equality duties

A prioritised list of functions and policies and proposed policies that are relevant to the equality duties listed in Part 1, Annex 6. Feedback received through engagement and consultation has been a key criterion in the prioritisation process resulting in a customer informed view of our priorities. These consultation groups are listed within Part 1, Section 4 and Annex 3.

In addition to this we have had internal workshops where staff have identified areas of concern. These activities lead to a prioritised list of functions. These functions then went through the Equality Impact Assessment process.

Our overriding principle when deciding priority is asking of each function or policy:

- a** whether there is already evidence that the function or policy is affecting some groups differently;
- b.** whether there is any public concern that the function or policy in question is causing discrimination; and
- c.** whether there is any public concern that the function or policy is damaging opportunity and good relations in the community.

Also to make sure the policy meets the general duties we ask:

- a.** whether, and how, each of the duties applies;
- b.** which groups are affected; and
- c** whether there is any reason to believe that people are, or could be, differently affected because of belonging to a particular group.

Equality Impact Assessment Timetable

Action	Date
EMT list all functions to be EIA's	March 2009
Report on EFLG to EMT	7 April 2009
20 Business Critical Functions determined by EMT	27 April 2009
1 st EIA Workshop	30 April 2009
2 nd EIA Workshop	6 May 2009
3 rd EIA Workshop	14 May 2009
4 th EIA Workshop	28 May 2009
5 th EIA Workshop and next set of EIA's agreed	9 June 2009
6 th EIA Workshop	11 June 2009
7 th EIA Workshop	18 June 2009
20 Business Critical Functions EIA's completed	13 July 2009
1 st Draft of Single Equality Scheme commenced	13 July 2009
List of next set of EIA's sent to EIA workshop Managers	15 July 2009
8 th & 9 th EIA Workshops scheduled in	6 & 20 August 2009

Section 7 – Key functions of Dale & Valley Homes

Our key business functions include the following areas:

Property Directorate, which covers:

- Delivering Decent Homes
- Repairs and Maintenance Service

Housing Operations Directorate, which covers:

- Choice Based Lettings
- Income Management
- Vulnerable People & Safeguarding Adults
- Tenancy Enforcement
- Tenancy & Estate management
- Customer Involvement
- Domestic Violence
- Access & Customer Care

Through our EIA's we have challenged our policies, practices and functions in respect of ensuring desirable equality outcomes for staff and customers. The first area we focused on was potential barriers across our business functions. Following on from this we gathered evidence to determine if these issues could be occurring.

This process has shown us that none of our policies, practices or functions are discriminatory and our EIA action plans focus on positive action.

The table below details potential barriers across service areas. These were then tested throughout the evidence gathering stage and any gaps were included within the action plans for the individual EIA's.

Functions	Potential barriers across all diverse groups:
Generic	<p><u>Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-engagement in services due to a person's mental or physical disability <p><u>Communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English not being a customers first language • non-engagement in services due to learning difficulties or below average literacy levels

Functions	Potential barriers across all diverse groups:
Delivering Decent Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobility issues for customers during refurbishment. • harassment directed towards disabled people • non-positive attitudes directed towards disabled people • decanting customers into non-suitable properties during refurbishment • elderly/infirmary customers not wanting the ‘upheaval’ concerned with the refurbishment • elderly customers having no where to re-locate during the refurbishment • sole tenants (female) experiencing discrimination and safety issues • disengagement by male customers • poor links with the local community, in terms of promoting the service. • working predominantly to the Christian Calendar, • no information being gathered concerning sexual orientation • decanting customers to a different area where they could face discrimination due to their sexual orientation
Repairs & Maintenance Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • call centre staff lack of awareness and understanding of individual customer care needs • repairs appointment system is restrictive for customers with children • repairs appointment system is restrictive for customers in full time employment. • female customers feeling vulnerable as contractors do not employ male operatives • call centre staff lack of awareness and understanding of individual customer needs with different religious beliefs • consideration that any diverse group could perceive discrimination due to the length of time taken to complete a repair

Functions	Potential barriers across all diverse groups:
<p>Choice Based Lettings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applicants on current housing register with a medical priority may be assessed differently under the new policy • lack of engagement from elderly customers due to system being web-based • women are often the head of one parent families – so will form the majority of applicants • customers may be subject to harassment due to their sexual orientation • applicants may express a desire to be close to a particular place of worship • customers with lower incomes may not have easy access to the Internet • high levels of unemployment could lead to low levels of access to the internet and therefore the scheme.
<p>Income Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elderly customers may be less likely to ask for assistance if they have arrears • elderly customers not being aware of welfare benefits available to them • majority of sole tenants are female
<p>Vulnerable People & Safeguarding Adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not identifying vulnerable groups to determine help required • females are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse • older people are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse • people are more likely to be financially or physically abused by their children • staff dealing inconsistently with someone who is potentially being abused due to lack of understanding, knowledge; clear procedures, skills, or stereotyping through age
<p>Tenancy Enforcement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • customers may be harassed due to a mental or physical disability • ability of older people to be happy in their home and community is reduced by incidents or behaviour that may not impact on younger customers • majority of sole tenants are female • majority of sole female tenants are elderly • requests for assistance often come from one parent households where the lone parent is female • domestic abuse can affect either sex, however the vast number of reported DV cases involve women as the victim • some female tenants may be at risk of harassment and exploitation and may find it difficult to prevent unwanted visitors to their homes • young male tenants are at greater risk of being both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and harassment.

<u>Functions</u>	<u>Potential barriers across all diverse groups</u>
Tenancy & Estate management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incidents of harassment are often thought to be racially motivated • nuisance or harassment on the grounds of faith, particularly in combination with issues of race, can mean that anti-social behaviour disproportionately affects people from these groups • customers may be subject to harassment due to their sexual orientation • it is well established that incidents of DV are under-reported • older and or disabled customers are likely to require assistance to cut back shrubs and keep their gardens tidy • elderly customers place great importance on the appearance of their homes, gardens and streets in their community • elderly customers ability to feel safe in their neighbourhood relies heavily on a clean environment which includes the lack of graffiti, used syringes, overgrown shrubs and trees etc • elderly customers can struggle to be active in keeping their own home / garden in a tidy condition is often reduced as they get older • elderly customers do take part in estate inspections but do not attend their resident group meetings for feedback on the outcomes • ensuring that we review the way we record and remove of graffiti especially if it is racist or sexually explicit
Customer Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • barriers around age is stereotyping age groups • not tailoring services to customers needs in relation to their age group • barriers could be sexism, or roles specific for a certain gender • lack of understanding of a customers' religion or belief
Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • women are more likely to experience domestic violence, and are repeat victimisation • male victims will be reluctant to report incidents because of the stereotypical view of men in the north-east region • no breakdown of cases by age group • domestic violence does occur in same sex relationships, and sometimes where the aggressor is the female.
Access & Customer Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff discrimination against disabled people due to lack of awareness of the nature and implications of a person's disability. • stereotyping individuals or groups of people due to their age

<u>Functions</u>	<u>Potential barriers across all diverse groups</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lack of knowledge people's age groups resulting in not• tailoring services to meet individual need• barriers around gender in relation to sexism and the interpretation that work/life roles are specific to individual due to their gender• barriers in relation to differing religions' or beliefs'• barriers to accessing our services around sexual orientation centred-around homophobia and intolerance

Section 8 – Equality in Procurement

D&VH spends over £14m a year on externally purchased goods and services. Most contracts are for services. The procurement function has been assessed as relevant to the public duties to promote equality. The aim is to ensure that from the initial planning stage issues relating to how the goods, works or services to be procured should be related to the general duties and anti –discriminatory legislation.

A five-point summary of the main steps D&VH takes is:

1. Promotion of consistency in the approach to equality at each stage of the procurement process, including contract monitoring
2. Considering all potential equality elements of a contract
3. Consulting users on their requirements for particular services
4. Ensuring that there is a level playing field for all potential contractors regardless of size, ethnicity, disability or gender of ownership
5. Factoring equality into all service reviews and option analysis

D&VH is committed to working with its contractors and partners to ensure that services are delivered in a professional, courteous manner and that customer needs are understood and acknowledged.

D&VH is committed to ensuring that contractors understand the EIA process, that they are aware of monitoring needs that statutory legislation places on D&VH and can actively play a part in both of these functions.

In addition to this D&VH will only award contracts to companies that can demonstrate good employment practice including steps to break down the gender segregations of work roles.

Value for Money

Our approach to managing equality and diversity enables us to achieve value for money across our services because effective equality and diversity practices ensure that we do not undertake activities that are unnecessary or exclude customers from involvement in our services.

Section 9 - Equality in employment

Key areas as an employer

Dale and Valley Homes is also an employer to around 80 people. It is important to us that we treat our staff fairly, that we give them good terms and conditions of employment and provide an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

We ensure that as an employer we value each employees' individuality and efforts and in so doing ensure that they have access to training programmes that will bring out the best in them for the benefit of our customers and other colleagues.

We ensure that we monitor the processes around recruitment, promotion and training in order to analyse trends and provide genuine equality of opportunity. In addition to this we also monitor complaints against the staff if they occur, to ensure we are not creating barriers that favour one group over another.

As with our key functions, through our employment EIA's, we have challenged our policies, practices and functions in respect of ensuring desirable equality outcomes for staff and customers. The first area we focused on was potential barriers across our business functions. Following on from this we gathered evidence to determine if these issues could be occurring.

This process has shown us that none of our employment policies, practices or functions are discriminatory and our EIA action plans focus on positive action.

The list below details potential barriers across our human resources function. These were then tested throughout the evidence gathering stage and any gaps were included within the action plans for the individual EIA's.

Human resource function potential barriers:

- barriers due to a person's disability can be present both at application stage and interview
- barriers can be physical but also expecting a certain 'schooling/career' pattern in the application form process
- disabled employees can often be the victim of abuse and isolation
- if physical environment need adaptation for disabled employees, lack of incentive from the employer can be a barrier
- employers see disabled employees as 'fire proof' so refuse to employ in case their performance is not up to the required standard
- employers and workforce unable to understand 'mental health' needs, resulting in bullying and ostracism
- employers/companies not projecting positive and capable images of physically and mentally disabled people

- workers who become disabled fearful of revealing this in case they are treated unfavourably and/or lose their employment
- disabled people in the workforce may be fearful of speaking up against poor treatment in case they lose employment
- many employers and workforce unaware of how to work alongside and integrate disabled employees in a successful way
- younger people in workforce not being valued and properly developed to their full potential
- older people being denied training and career development opportunities
- stereotypes and jokes about older people being readily accepted as harmless banter in the workforce.
- age not being valued as a bringer of wisdom
- age barriers can be presented at application and interview level
- minority workers can suffer prejudice based on stereotypes resulting in offensive and harassing behaviour towards them.
- majority staff can apply different and unfair standards on minority workers resulting in failure to promote, recognise good work, over use of disciplinary or negative marking in personal performance meetings
- minority workers can face over expectation to conform and can feel isolated in a low BME populated workforce.
- barriers that present themselves around sexual orientation include fear of harassment/bullying, exclusion from promotion and ostracism.
- employees faith or religion can be a barrier due to workforce ignorance that could result in exclusion, bullying, harassment.

D&VH Local Labour Market Assessment and workforce profile

D&VH takes its employer's responsibility very seriously and is committed to providing a working environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. We want to develop and maintain:

- a workforce which represents communities at all levels;
- increased employee satisfaction;
- a workforce where there are no differences in employees experiences which are not justified; and
- a service which engages with and involves staff and communities and uses this to improve how we work to deliver our business objectives

In addition, we are striving towards a worker profile that reflects the customers we serve. We have carried out a Local Labour Market Assessment which details the employment profile of the former Wear Valley District and compared that with the profile of our employees across the diverse groupings. These findings are detailed below:

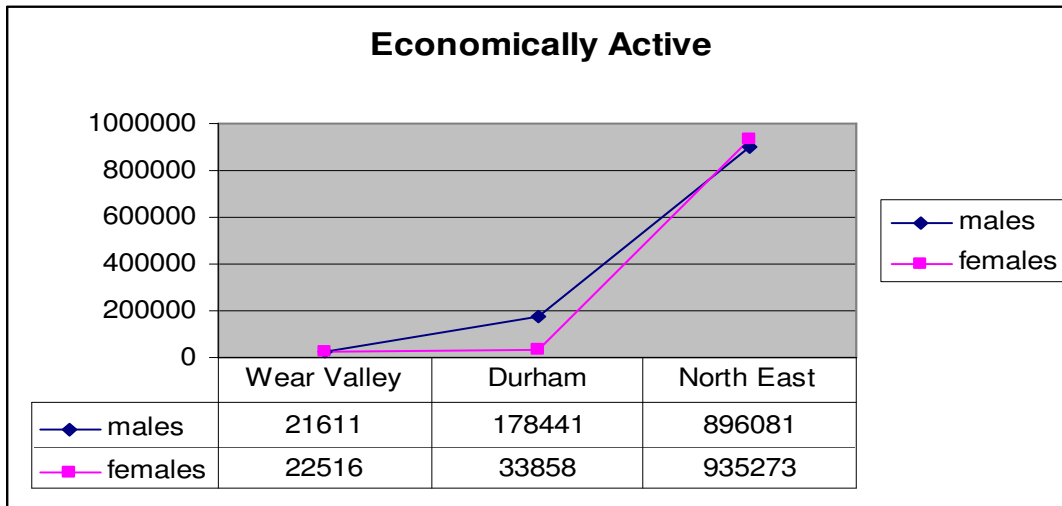
Gender

The table¹ and graph below represents the profile of economically active people within the surrounding area. On the whole there is parity between male and female economically active people. As such our profile should show parity between the genders throughout the grading structure and departments.

Numbers across local areas

	Wear Valley	Durham	North East	England
all people	44127	362555	1831354	35532091
males	21611	178441	896081	17489977
females	22516	33858	935273	18042114

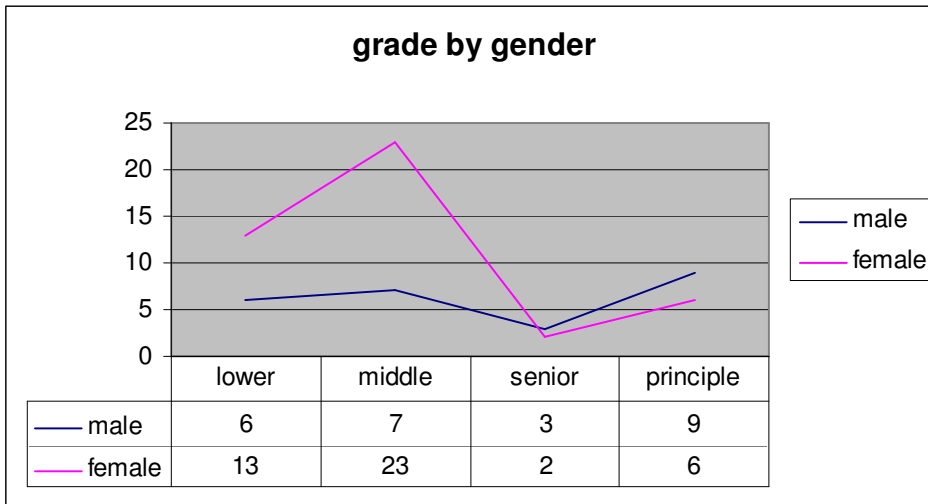
Graph showing convergence across the genders



¹ All tables and graphs use data supplied by office of national statistics

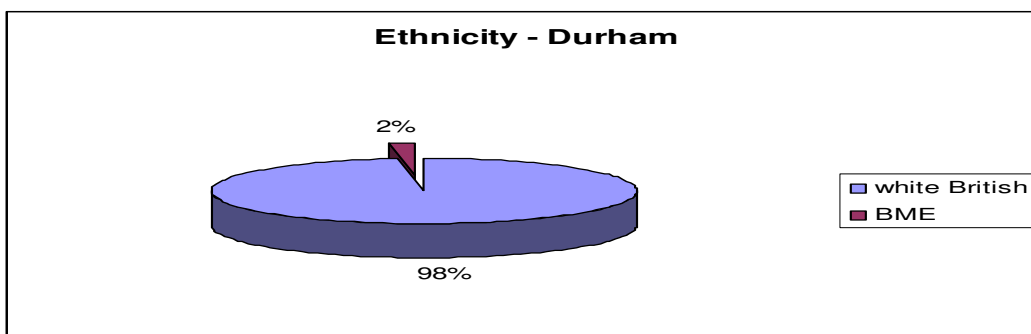
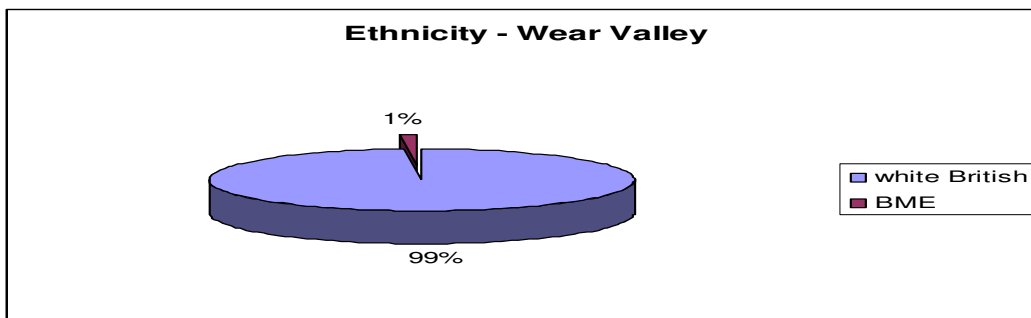
D&VH staff profile by Gender

The graph below, whilst spikes in favour of females in middle ranks, it does demonstrate that there is parity across the genders throughout the organisation. Data from the Local Labour Market Assessment, employment statistics throughout County Durham and North East shows that gender for administrative posts are predominately female.



Ethnicity

The graphs below demonstrate that around 2% of the local population belong to a BME group



D&VH has 1 BME member of staff from a staff group of 80 which represent 1+% of the staff group. In order to attain 2.5% the BME staff group would need to increase to 2 staff.

D&VH is not setting a target of just 2, and is always looking for talented staff when recruiting, BME or other wise. However the data does mean that we will increase our activity when advertising to ensure BME community are made aware of opportunities with us.

Disability

National and regional data reveal that the number of people with long term limiting illness in the workplace is growing, the grid below reveals numbers of 17-19% of economically active people would categorise themselves as having ‘long term limiting illness’ – which is analogous to the DDA definition of disability

People of working age with limiting long term illness				
	Wear Valley	Durham	North East	England
Number	7132	60133	275183	4014005
%	19.41%	19.76%	17.94	13.29%

DVH staff profile reveals that 6 members of staff have described themselves in line with the above definition. If 19% of economically active people have a disability, this would translate to 15 staff within D&VH. Our current number of 6 shows that we are not matching the Local Labour Market. As such we need to examine our recruitment process to ensure equality of opportunity is given.

Age

National and regional age data shows us that the predominant age group is 30-50 year olds. The 18-29 age range in is in the minority. As a consequence employers may have to plan for succession, i.e. ensuring that as staff leave/retire, their skills and abilities are retained by the organisation through appropriate training, equipping the younger generation and ensuring their retention.

D&VH profile shows no huge disparity across the age range of staff. Our lowest staff range is 56-65 age group and 18-29 are not in the minority.

Age Range	16 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 to 65
No	16	15	13	15	10
Percentages	23%	22%	19%	22%	14%

Sexuality, Religion and/or Belief

D&VH currently has little data on its staff regards 'sexuality', age and religion/belief.

However, Stonewall makes the assumption (which is supported by the Government) that between 5 – 7% of workers could be gay, lesbian or bi-sexual. As such as employers we have to make sure that staff who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual feel comfortable in the work place and are not subjected to harassment either directly or indirectly.

D&VH will be developing training and awareness raising programmes to in relation to staff perceptions of homophobia and developing good practice to produce a more inclusive work force

In terms of religion the following table shows how the surrounding population has described itself:

As a % of population people stating religion as:

	Wear Valley	Durham	North East	England
Christian	84.67	83.52	80.09	71.74
Buddhist	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.28
Hindu	0.08	0.08	0.17	1.11
Jewish	0.02	0.03	0.13	0.52
Muslim	0.11	0.22	1.07	3.1
Sikh	0.07	0.09	0.19	0.67
Other religions	0.17	0.17	0.15	0.29
No religion	7.93	9.32	10.98	14.59
Religion not stated ²	6.83	6.44	7.09	7.69

The biggest group with 80+% are Christian, the next largest group are those that have purposely declared 'no religion', the next largest faith is Muslim with just over 1% in the North East.

D&VH has not collected data from staff on religious faith and/or belief.

Transgender

DVH as an employer supports staff and customers who are transgender and strives to ensure the environment is supportive and conducive to their identity needs.

Dale & Valley Homes Board Profile

Our Board are committed to all aspects of equality and diversity. We carried out a profile of our Board in 2007 that resulted in positive action to promote Board membership to women as an underrepresented group. This has achieved some success with the number of women on our Board increasing from three to five. Plans

² Religion not state is not to be included as a group as it denotes people who decline to fill in any part of the census survey – as such they can not be counted as ascribing to any particular belief.

are in place to carry out follow-up profiling of our Board to take into account changing members over the past two years.

Section 10 – What have we achieved so far?

D&VH has carried out a great deal of work in relation to equality and diversity. We have achieved a multitude of equality outcomes for customers, staff and board members. These achievements are listed below.

Achievements

- We established the Corporate Equality Group
- We introduced mandatory Equality and Diversity training for all employees
- We have started Job Evaluation and Equal Pay reviews
- We work with 'hard to reach' groups such as Black and Minority Ethnic, young people, disabled and lesbian and gay communities
- We have adopted design features, such as kitchens for visually impaired people and visual and audible smoke alarms for people with hearing impairments
- We have increased access to services by improving British Sign Language and Minicom services and introducing Customer Care kits and portable hearing loops
- All of our customer access points are now accessible to disabled people.
- We set up a database of vulnerable customers, including disabilities, Impairments and other specific needs
- We provide training courses for young people – Life skills and Healthy Eating
- The Tenancy Agreement is being reviewed to make it clear that homophobic harassment will not be tolerated and can lead to eviction
- We set up an estate caretaking service to help vulnerable people manage in their home and garden.
- We meet with tenants when undertaking improvements to their homes to ensure they have access to timely information and can make choices where possible.
- We set up a Community Fund to help support community groups and improve community facilities.
- Worked with energy organisations i.e. Go Warm and Eaga to tackle fuel poverty in the Wear Valley area and accessed an additional £35,249 of benefits to help with affordable warmth

To improve access to services for our customers we have:

- Language Line (telephone interpreting)
- Other language translating services
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters
- Made available on request audio and large print versions of leaflets, documents and our customer newsletter Dale Mail.
- Hearing Induction Loop Systems available at our office, meeting venues and for home visits
- Tellytalk system is available for those customers who prefer face to face contact
- Introduced free-phone for customers using a land line and reduced cost calls for customers using a mobile telephone
- Preferred sex interviews on request

- All officers have Customer Care Kits, which are also available at our customer access points
- Tenant and Leaseholder 'A-Z' Handbook of Services, available in large print, and community languages on request
- All customer access points are Disability Discrimination Act compliant.
- A range of contact methods are available including letter, fax, e-mail, telephone, Minicom and SMS text
- Assistance is available to complete forms.
- Increased the number of home visits we carry out to take services to our customers
- Information is provided on our website about how to access information in different formats.
- Accessible information, childcare, carer service, transport and reimbursement of travelling costs is arranged for people attending involvement sessions and meetings when prior requests are received.
- Continued to proactively target communication and information in different formats, through community organisations, the newspaper and website to increase awareness.
- An editorial panel monitors content, navigation and style with planned input from customers.
- Developed a diversity handbook for employees to provide information on the needs of different communities. Advice on how to access information in a range of formats is included.
- Produced an in-depth fact sheet on Buddhism for employees as this is our second largest religion. We are currently developing an annual calendar of events for employees to ensure they better plan service delivery for customers who tell us they are Buddhist.
- We are improving our web site and are working with Access Ability Net to make sure it is fully accessible.
- At present we use font size 14 for all publications. We are currently working towards all correspondence being in this font size.
- We are currently working towards being in a position where customers will automatically receive information in their preferred communication format. This will be achieved by collecting information on people's communication needs at sign-up and from other opportunities.
- Employees will be provided with guidelines on sending out letters, information and automatic communications, to ensure people receive information in their chosen format.

Section 11 - Monitoring policies for adverse impact on equality

A key tool in spotting potential or actual indirect discrimination is being able to monitor how and to whom the service is being received.

To this end D&VH has several monitoring process in play:

- Vision Management Satisfaction surveys detailing satisfaction across all diversity groups (for each function listed in Part 1, Section 4) carried out bi-monthly; quarterly and six-monthly
- BME Allocations & Lettings monitoring
- Service Standards monitoring results monthly, quarterly and six-monthly
- Local Performance Indicators monitored monthly, quarterly and six-monthly specific to diversity as listed in Part 1, Section 2.
- 2 yearly Status Survey satisfaction by diversity
- 6-monthly Complaints monitoring by diversity
- Customer Profile monitoring
- EIA bi-monthly monitoring by Corporate Equality Group

Consultation projects

Our customer involvement events listed Part 1, Annex 3, have helped identify key areas of concern. In addition our regular customer surveys reveal priorities of concern in specific areas and by specific groups/individuals.

Staff Consultation

In addition, D&VH regularly questionnaires staff to find information that will help us be better employers and to ensure that we are providing a working environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Section 12 – Arrangements for ensuring public access to information and services

We are committed to publishing the results of assessments, consultations and monitoring as this will increase our openness, allow us to demonstrate our commitment and enable stakeholders to assess our performance.

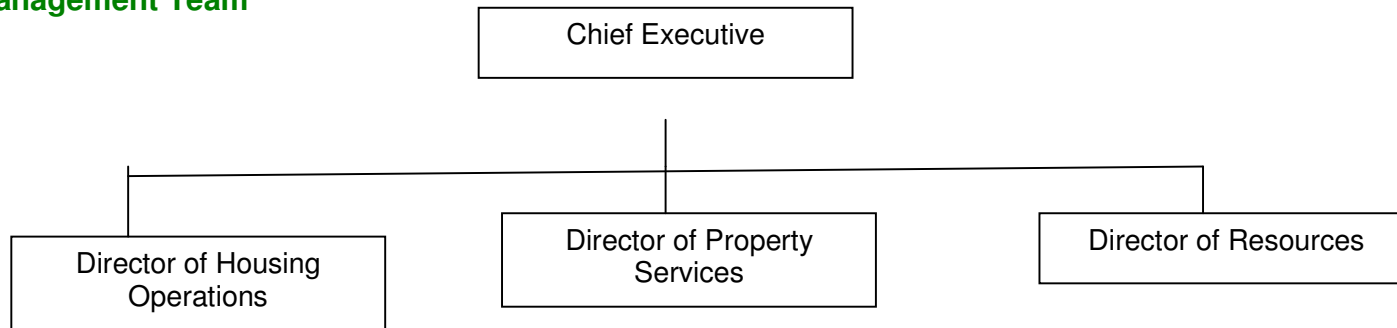
We have various means of making such information available including:

- We will on a six monthly basis place summaries of EIA actions and summaries produced in the previous six months on our website. We will also make hard copies available upon request. These summaries will be on the website for six months and will then be updated with the most recent reviews.
- D&VH will incorporate actions arising from the Single Equality Scheme into Directorate Plans for 2010/11 and will report on progress against the equality strands as relevant to the local context and priorities.
- We will investigate distribution of the Single Equality Scheme at national and local conferences
- We will investigate distribution of the Single Equality Scheme at local community outlets

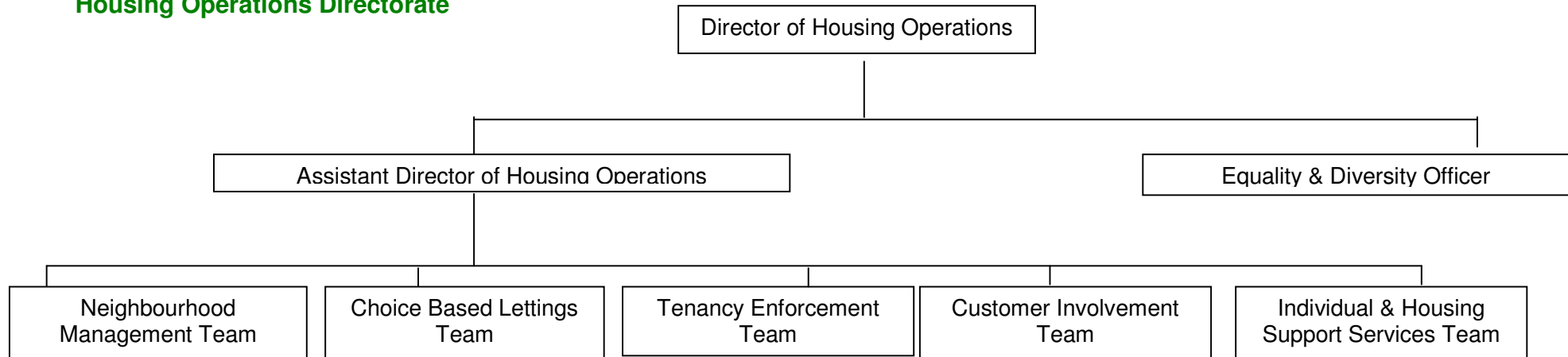
Annexes to Part 1

Annex 1 - Dale & Valley Homes' organisation chart

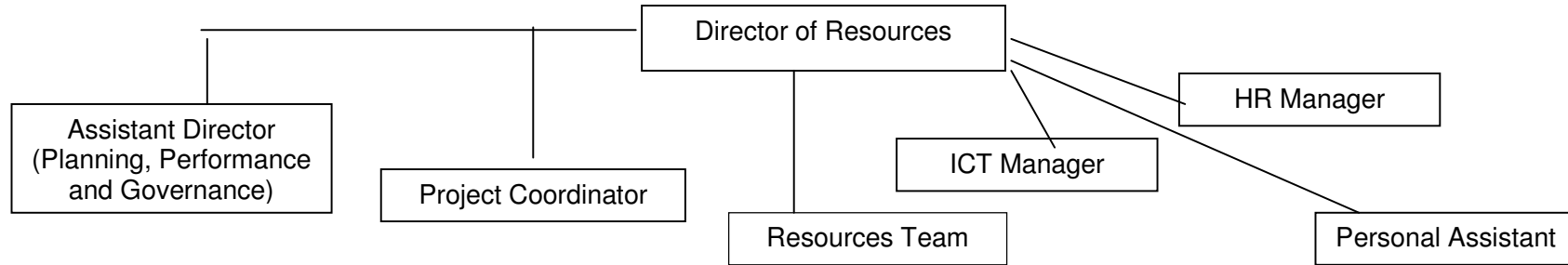
Executive Management Team



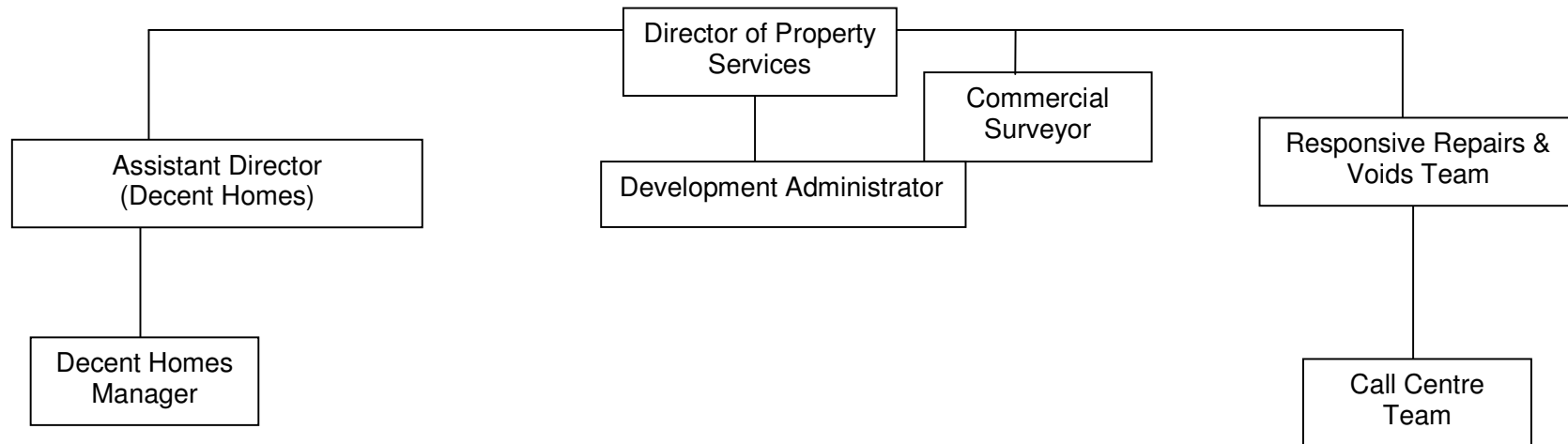
Housing Operations Directorate



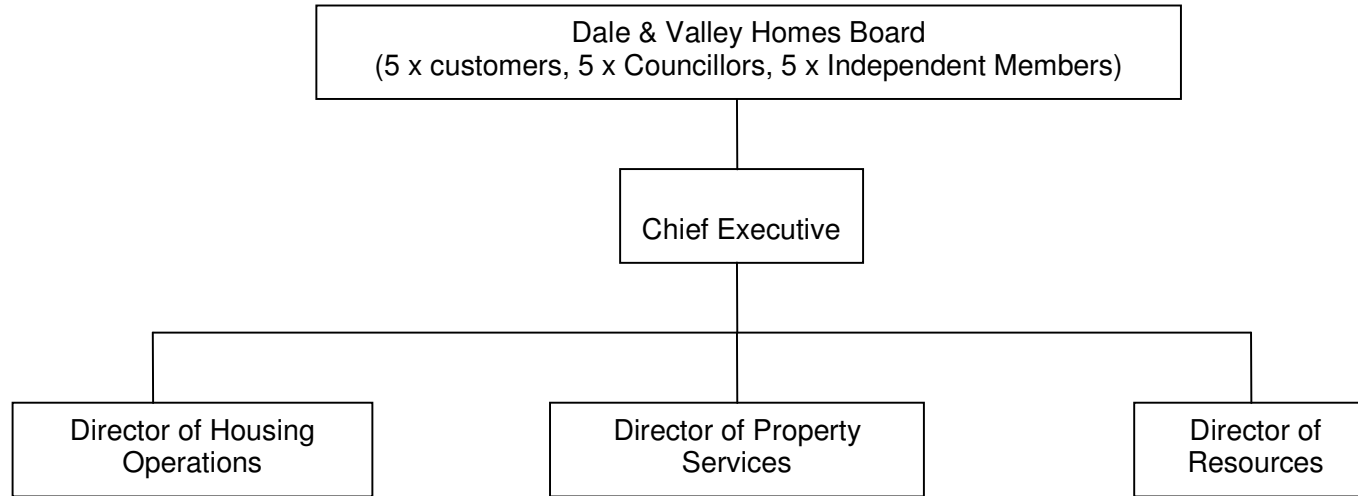
Resources Directorate



Property Services Directorate



Annex 2 – Dale & Valley Homes Governance Chart



Annex 3 – Single Equality Scheme Consultation Groups

Corporate Equality Group

Colin Stockwell, Vice-Chair and Diversity Champion of Board
Geoff Paul, Board Member
Reg Lovett, Customer Panel Representative
Peter Chaffer, Chief Executive
Pat Wanless, Director of Housing Operations
Jack Hurst, Director of Property Services
Marie Roe, Assistant Director of Governance, Planning & Performance
Joanne Dunn, Assistant Director of Housing Operations
Deryk Nolan, Repairs & Voids Manager
Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer
Jackie Hall, Support Services Manager
Chris Walton, Tenancy Enforcement Manager
Kath Wright, Neighbourhood Manager
Ian Hornsby, Choice Based Lettings Manager
Clair Ord, Customer Involvement Manager
Angela Foster, Human Resources Manager
Terry Cranston, Decent Homes Manager

Equality Impact Assessment Workshops

Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer
Barrie Stanhope, Managing Director, Equality & Diversity Development Services
Pat Wanless, Director of Housing Operations
Dave Sanders, Director of Resources
Deryk Nolan, Repairs & Voids Manager
Jackie Hall, Support Services Manager
Chris Walton, Tenancy Enforcement Manager
Kath Wright, Neighbourhood Manager
Ian Hornsby, Choice Based Lettings Manager
Clair Ord, Customer Involvement Manager
Angela Foster, Human Resources Manager
Terry Cranston, Decent Homes Manager

Disability Working Group

Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer
Edith Stobbs, Chair of Customer Panel
Ken Goddard, Secretary of Watergate Estate Action Group and Customer Panel Representative
Jean Cowing, Customer Panel Representative

Annex 4 – List of General and Specific Duties

The fundamentals of this Single Equality Scheme are the general public duties under Race; Disability; Gender; Age; Sexual Orientation and Religion and/or Belief. These duties relate to D&VH policies, procedures and practices towards both customers and employees. The general public duties are listed below in more detail:

Race:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

Disability:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

Gender:

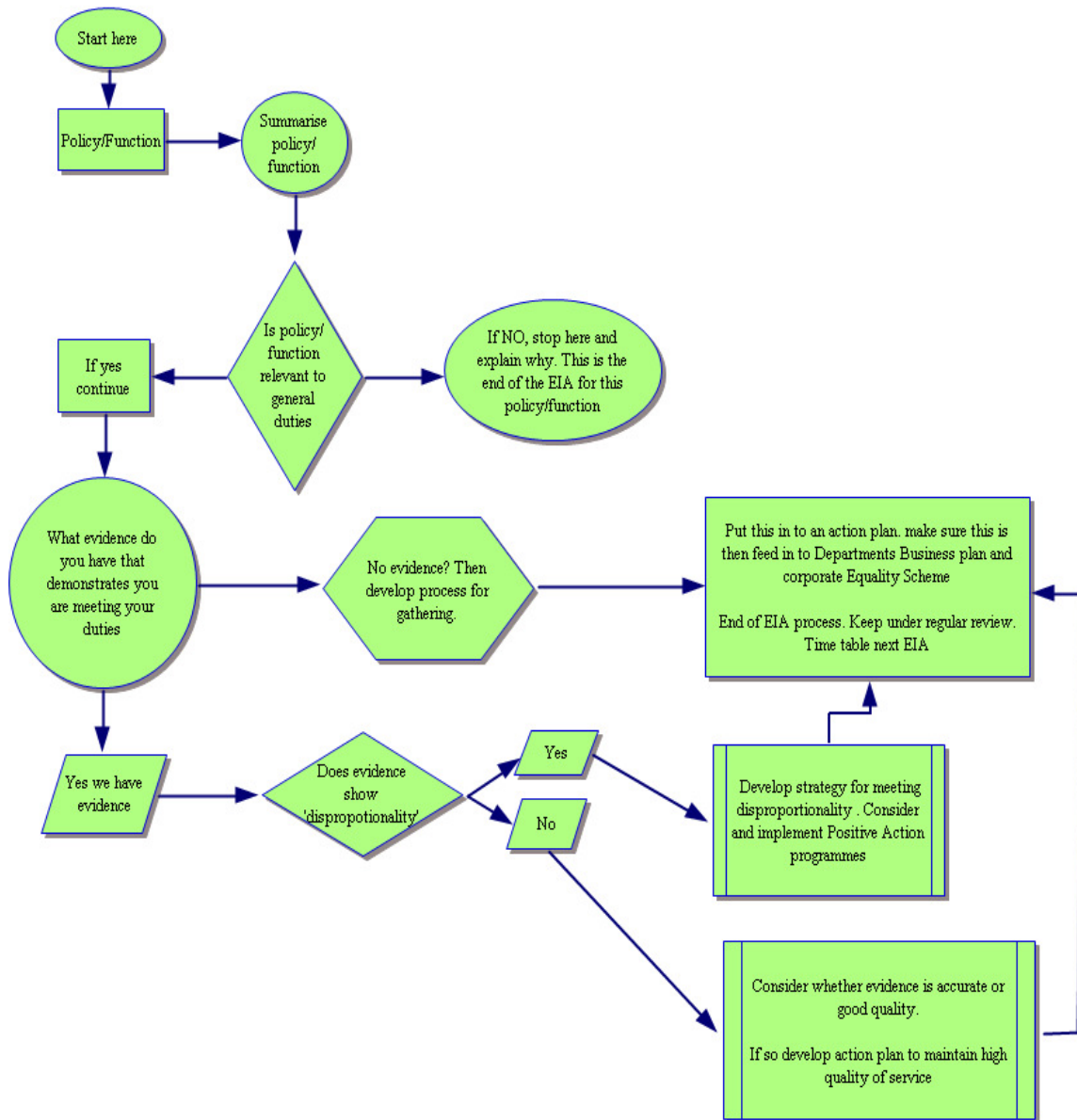
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of sex AND transgender;
- promote equality of opportunity between women and men; and
- not to discriminate on the grounds of marital status.

Age, Sexuality, Religion and/or Belief:

- Eliminate direct discrimination;
- eliminate indirect discrimination;
- eliminate harassment; and
- eliminate victimisation.

Annex 5 – EIA Flowchart

EIA flow chart 'over view'



Annex 6 – List of prioritised function and policies for Equality Impact Assessment

Completed

- Income Management Strategy
- Durham Key Options Choice Based Lettings Function
- Hate Crime Policy
- Racial Harassment Policy
- Harassment & Nuisance Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Domestic Violence Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Strategy
- Safeguarding Adults Function
- Home Contents Insurance Policy
- Customer Involvement Strategy
- Customer Compact
- Tenant Board Member Protocol
- Decent Homes Function
- Access & Customer Care Strategy
- Tender specification for Minor Contracts
- Repairs & Maintenance function
- Human Resources Function
- Memorandum & Articles of Association
- Tenancy Management function
- Estate Management function
- Voids Policy

July 2009 – October 2009

- Disciplinary Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Grievance Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Medium Term Finance Strategy – Reserves
- Medium Term Finance Strategy - Efficiencies
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Equality & Diversity Strategy
- Complaints Function (inc. Compensation & Informal Comments Policy)
- Affordable Warmth Policy
- Health & Safety Policy (inc Lone Working Policy)
- Financial Inclusion Strategy

November 2009-January 2010

- Board Members Code of Conduct
- IT Strategy
- Model Constitution for Residents Associations
- Model Constitution for Customer Panel
- Major Repairs & Improvement Policy (and associated Decent Homes Standard & Decoration Allowance)
- Gas Servicing Function
- Access & Refusals Policy
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Environmental Improvements Policy
- Decoration Allowance Policy
- Tender specification for Major Contracts
- Confidential Reporting Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- HR Strategy
- Right to Flexible Working
- Performance Management Framework
- Value for Money Strategy
- Procurement Strategy

January 2010 – March 2010

- Capability Procedures
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave
- Adoption Leave
- Hospitality Policy

Part 2 – Single Equality Scheme Action Plans

In Part 2 of the Single Equality Scheme we have set out our Common Action Plan and individual Equality Action Plans across the six equality strands. However, this is a 'live' Scheme and each of the individual Equality Action Plans will be kept under active review and will be cross checked against our list of policies and functions in Part 1, Annex 6.

Section 1 details the strategic actions to ensure the Single Equality Scheme is compliant with the General Equality Duties. It sets out how the Scheme has been developed and how it will be formally reported on. It details the responsibilities and timescales for assessing our functions and policies through the EIA process and how we are going to publish the results of EIA's. Finally it details both completed and ongoing EIA's up to March 2010.

Sections 2-7 detail the individual Equality Action Plans covering Disability, Gender & Gender Identity; Race; Sexual Orientation; Religion or Belief and Age. They firstly give an overview of gaps identified and relevance to outcome areas. Then the next table detail sets out actions to address the gaps, responsibility and timescales. The Disability Equality Action Plan also has a general section encompassing the actions developed by the Disability Working Group.

These actions have been developed through the EIA's listed at Part 1, Annex 6. They detail the gaps identified from Part 1, Section 7 under potential barriers identified. These actions will strengthen our approach to equality and diversity across our business functions. D&VH Directorates will integrate equality and diversity actions arising from the Scheme into their Directorate planning process. Initial actions arising from this Scheme will be incorporated into Directorate Plans for 2010-11.

We will report annually on our progress against the Common Action Plan and the six individual Equality Action Plans to both the Corporate Equality Group (which will have oversight of the implementation of the Scheme) and to Policy & Services Development Committee.

Section 1– Common Action Plan

Actions for compliance with general equality duties	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>SES & Annual Reports</p> <p>Produce Equality Scheme for 2009-10</p> <p>Produce Equality Scheme Annual Progress Reports</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Jul 09</p> <p>Apr 09 and annually</p>
<p>Reporting</p> <p>Report to Policy & Service Development Committee</p> <p>Report to Customer Panel</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p>	<p>Aug 09</p>
<p>Assess functions and policies for relevance to equality</p> <p>Identify functions & policies</p> <p>Review and update list of functions & policies annually as part of the annual Progress Report on the Equality Scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively review list of prioritises functions and policies adding new and removing old functions and policies • Review current priorities in terms of higher, medium and lower, amend as appropriate • Update list of priorities (Annex 4) and amend as appropriate 	<p>All Directors</p>	<p>April 09 & 6 monthly</p>
<p>Assessing and consulting on likely impact of policies / functions on the promotion of equality</p> <p>Disseminate D&VH EIA toolkit</p> <p>Assess policies identified for action in 2009/10 and take action</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>All Managers</p>	<p>Apr-Jul 09</p> <p>Apr 09 ongoing</p>

Actions for compliance with general equality duties	Responsibility	Timescale
<p>Arrangement for publishing results of Equality Impact Assessments</p> <p>Publish results of EIA's on a 6 monthly basis, on website and hard copy</p> <p>Publish Single Equality Scheme annual report</p> <p>Publish employment monitoring data through the Annual Equalities in Employment Report</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09 & 6 monthly</p> <p>Apr 10 & annually</p>
<p>Arrangements for Training staff in relation to equality duties</p> <p>Training for all staff on equality duties focusing on our key functions</p> <p>Specific training for Managers on EIA's through workshops</p> <p>Integration of duties in relation to equalities and Single Equality Scheme in core training programmes such as induction</p> <p>As part of Equal Pay Review and PDR process, on an annual basis identify and evaluate the training needs of staff as they relate to the duty to promote equality</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer & Corporate Equality Group through to team meeting</p> <p>Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>Performance & Training Manager, Equality & Diversity Officer</p> <p>All Managers Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Jul 09 onwards</p> <p>Apr 09 onwards</p> <p>Sept 09-Mar 10</p> <p>Sept 09-Mar 10</p>

Completed EIA's

Policy or Function	Directorate & Responsible Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Management Strategy • Domestic Violence Policy • Home Contents Insurance Policy • Tenancy Management function • Estate Management function • Durham Key Options CBL Function • Hate Crime Policy • Racial Harassment Policy • Harassment & Nuisance Policy • Anti-Social Behaviour Policy • Vulnerable Persons Strategy • Safeguarding Adults Function • Customer Involvement Strategy • Customer Compact • Tenant Board Member Protocol • Access & Customer Care Strategy 	<p><u>Housing Operations</u> Director of Housing Operations</p> <p>Choice Based Lettings Manager Tenancy Enforcement Manager</p> <p>Support Services Manager</p> <p>Customer Involvement Manager</p> <p>Access & Customer Care Manager</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent Homes Function • Repairs & Maintenance function • Voids Policy • Tender Specification for minor contracts 	<p><u>Property Services</u> Decent Homes Manager</p> <p>Responsive Repairs & Void Manager</p> <p>Interim Assistant Director Property Services</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Function • Memorandum & Articles of Association 	<p><u>Resources</u> Human Resources Manager</p> <p>Director of Resources</p>

EIA's to Complete

Policy or Function	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Function (inc. Compensation & Informal Comments Policy) • Empty Homes Strategy • Financial Inclusion Strategy • Model Constitution for Residents Associations • Model Constitution for Customer Panel 	<p><u>Housing Operations</u> Director of Housing Operations</p> <p>Choice Based Lettings & Neighbourhood Manager</p> <p>Support Services Manager</p> <p>Customer Involvement Manager</p>	<p>Jul –Oct 09</p> <p>Nov 09-Jan 10</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Warmth Policy • Health & Safety Policy (inc Lone-Worker Policy) • Major Repairs & Improvement Policy (and associated Decent Homes Standard & Decoration Allowance) • Environmental Improvements Policy • Procurement Function • Gas Servicing Function • Access & Refusals Policy • Decoration Allowance Policy • Tender specification for Major Contracts • Procurement Function • Asbestos Management Plan 	<p><u>Property Services</u> Responsive Repairs & Void Manager</p> <p>Decent Homes Manager</p> <p>Director of Property Services</p> <p>Responsive Repairs & Void Manager</p> <p>Assistant Director Property Services</p> <p>Decent Homes Manager</p>	<p>Jul 09-Oct 09</p> <p>Nov 09-Mar 10</p>

Policy or Function	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Finance Strategy – Reserves • Medium Term Finance Strategy - Efficiencies 	<p><u>Resources Directorate</u> Director of Resources</p>	Jul 09 – Oct 09
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality & Diversity Strategy 	Equality & Diversity Officer	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary Policy • Recruitment & Selection Policy • Dignity at Work Policy • Grievance Procedure • Equal Opportunities Policy 	Human Resources Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Members Code of Conduct 	Planning & Governance Officer	Nov 09- Jan 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Strategy • Value for Money Strategy • Procurement Strategy 	Director of Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential Reporting Policy • Employee Code of Conduct • Right to Flexible Working • HR Strategy 	Human Resources Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework 	Assistant Director of Planning, Performance & Governance	Jan –Mar 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability Procedures • Maternity Leave • Paternity Leave • Parental Leave • Adoption Leave 	Human Resources Manager	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality Policy 	Director of Resources	

Section 2 – Disability Equality Action Plan

Gaps identified	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training • Promotion of support for disabled customers • Access to CBL scheme • Consultation with disabled customers • In depth investigation of satisfaction scores by disability • Inclusion of mental health question in surveys • Workforce under-representation • No record of workforce experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services delivered to disabled customers take account of diverse needs ensuring higher customer satisfaction • Increase workforce representation • Determining if there are any disparities in workforce experiences

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for staff / contractors on specific issues and concerns of disabled customers 	<p><u>All Directorates</u> Performance & Training Manager, Human Resources Manager, Equality & Diversity Officer</p>	<p>Oct 09-Mar 10 Oct 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-wording of any generic letters around appointments or decent homes 	<p>Decent Homes Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular articles in Dale Mail & Customer Link on disability 	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer, Customer Involvement Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaflet in Reception on support provided for disabled customers 	<p>Customer Involvement Manager</p>	

Single Equality Scheme – Dale & Valley Homes

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer • Examine our recruitment process to ensure equality of opportunity is given to disabled applicants • Production of staff satisfaction survey including disability monitoring 	<p><u>Resources</u> Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager</p> <p>Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Dec 09</p> <p>Sept 09-Mar 10</p>

Section 3 – Gender & Gender Identity Equality Action Plan

Gaps Identified	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering of gender identity information from customers • Partnership working around Domestic Violence & Hate Crime • In depth monitoring of satisfaction across gender and gender identity groups • No staff satisfaction monitoring by gender • No data collection of staff by gender identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understanding of customers needs • Joined up approach to Domestic Violence & Hate Crime that is well publicised and promoted • Action taken if differences in staff satisfaction by gender • Workforce profile including gender identity

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Mystery Customers by gender identity • Change monitoring on Tenants Questionnaire to include gender identity • Consultation with customers around gender identity question on surveys • Work with voluntary and domestic violence groups to ensure that those affected by DV can access the CBL scheme. • Publicise the Domestic Violence scheme to customers • D&VH to become part of new county wide hate crime panel • Investigate high proportion of abandoned properties relating to female customers 	<p>Housing Operations Customer Involvement Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09-Apr 10 Jun 09-Apr 10</p>
	<p>Choice Based Lettings Manager</p>	<p>Mar – Aug 09 Sept 09 onwards</p>
	<p>Tenancy Enforcement Manager</p>	<p>Oct 09 complete</p>
	<p>Assistant Director Housing Operations</p>	<p>Oct 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer • Change monitoring on satisfaction surveys to include gender identity • Produce staff satisfaction survey including monitoring by gender • Gather staff diversity information around gender identity 	<p>Resources Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>
	<p>Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09-Mar 10</p>

Section 4 – Race Equality Action Plan

Gaps Identified	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working to engage and work with BME customers, agencies and forums • Marginal under-representation of BME staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BME customers views are taken into account when shaping service delivery around CBL and Racial Harassment policies and procedures • Positive action promoting vacancies within BME community

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Mystery Customers by ethnicity • Change ethnic monitoring on Tenants Questionnaire to include gypsy/traveller / roma • Establish links with partner agencies to involve customers who are BME and explore barriers to involvement • Contact BME customers to explore barriers to involvement 	<p>Housing Operations Customer Involvement Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09-Apr 10 Jun 09 – Apr 10 Mar – Aug 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure CBL application form & literature are available in all common language formats on request • Ensure translation services are reasonably available on demand for CBL • Ensure that the website has a translation facility for identified common languages for CBL • Work with agencies supporting identified BME groups including gypsy /traveller/roma liaison agencies for CBL 	<p>Choice Based Lettings Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09 onwards</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D&VH to become part of new county wide hate crime panel • Take positive action across whole area of racial harassment to raise awareness of our approach to racial harassment and how incidents can be reported 	<p>Tenancy Enforcement Manager</p>	<p>complete Sept 09</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Centre staff training on Language Line 	<p>Property Services Equality & Diversity Officer</p>	<p>Nov 09</p>

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer • Change ethnic monitoring question on satisfaction surveys to include gypsy / traveller / roma • Investigate promoting vacancies throughout Co. Durham agencies to engage BME applicants 	<p><u>Resources</u> Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager</p> <p>Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Dec 09</p> <p>Sept 09- Mar 10</p>

Section 5 – Sexual Orientation Equality Action Plan

Gaps Identified	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff awareness of sexual orientation issues • Monitoring to determine satisfaction levels • Collect data from staff in regards to sexual orientation • Staff training & awareness raising session around sexual orientation • Staff satisfaction by sexual orientation gathered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services delivered to customers take account of diverse needs ensuring higher customer satisfaction • No significant differences in staff satisfaction by sexual orientation

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Mystery Customers by sexual orientation • Change monitoring on Tenants Questionnaire to include sexual orientation • Consultation with customers around sexual orientation question on surveys • D&VH to become part of new county wide hate crime panel 	<p><u>Housing Operations</u> Customer Involvement Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09-Apr 10 Jun 09 – Apr 10 Mar – Aug 09</p>
	<p>Tenancy Enforcement Manager</p>	<p>complete</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer • Produce staff satisfaction survey including monitoring by sexual orientation • Gather staff diversity information around sexual orientation • Staff training and awareness around sexual orientation 	<p><u>Resources</u> Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager</p>	<p>Dec 09</p>
	<p>Human Resources manager</p>	<p>Sept 09 – Mar 10</p>
	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer, Corporate Equality Group feeding down to Team meetings</p>	<p>July 09 ongoing</p>

Section 6 – Religion or Belief Equality Action Plan

Gaps Identified	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction results not monitored effectively • Collect data from staff in regards to religion or belief • Staff satisfaction by religion or belief gathered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher levels of customer satisfaction across all religions and faiths • No significant differences in staff satisfaction by religion or belief

Actions to address gaps	Directorate & Responsible Officer	Timescales
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Mystery Customers by religion or faith 	Housing Operations Customer Involvement Manager	Sept 09 – Apr 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer • Produce staff satisfaction survey including monitoring by religion or belief • Gather staff diversity information around religion or belief 	Resources Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager Human Resources Manager	Dec 09 Sept 09 - Mar 10

Section 7 – Age Equality Action Plan

Gaps Addressed	Outcome Areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of engagement in Decent Homes Scheme by elderly customers • Lower satisfaction levels from younger customers around Repairs & Maintenance • Engagement for elderly customers in CBL • Investigation of abandoned properties by age • Staff satisfaction by age gathered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater satisfaction with services provided across age groups • Targeted work in relation to abandoned properties and CBL • No significant differences in staff satisfaction by age

Actions	Responsibility	Timescales
<u>Housing Operations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Mystery Customers by age • Ensure that other methods of advertising for CBL are as widely used. e.g. newsletters at outlets throughout the area as elderly customers may not be comfortable using the internet • Access to CBL staff is easy – emphasis on home visits to elderly applicants • Ensure processes in place to identify older applicants for CBL • Further investigation of abandoned properties as highest proportion of females are in 16-25 age group • Gather statistical evidence of older people living with spouse/carer or grown up children and levels of recorded abuse nationally and regionally to 	<p>Customer Involvement Manager Choice based Lettings Manager</p> <p>Assistant Director Housing Operations</p> <p>Support Services Manager</p>	<p>Sept 09-Apr 10 Sept 09 onwards</p> <p>Oct 09</p> <p>Oct 09</p>
<u>Property Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with elderly customers who have refused decent homes work • Consultation with younger customers on lower satisfaction scoring in relation to repairs and maintenance 	<p>Decent Homes Manager</p> <p>Repairs & Voids Manager</p>	<p>Oct 09</p> <p>Aug 09</p>
<u>Resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of satisfaction surveys results per strand and then, if disparity recorded, by individual customer <p>Monitoring of staff satisfaction by age</p>	<p>Equality & Diversity Officer, Performance & Training Manager</p> <p>Human Resources Manager</p>	<p>Dec 09</p> <p>Sept 09- Mar 10</p>

At Dale & Valley Homes, we are delighted to introduce our first Single Equality Scheme.

If you have any comments about the Single Equality Scheme, please contact Louise Butler, Equality & Diversity Officer, Dale & Valley Homes, by

e-mail at: l.butler@daleandvalleyhomes.co.uk

directline on 01388 770966

mobile on 07787 105922

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