



Agenda Item No

**DALE & VALLEY HOMES POLICY & SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

11 AUGUST 2009

Report of the Equality & Diversity Officer

CODE OF PRACTICE ON RACIAL EQUALITY IN HOUSING

purpose

To provide information to Policy & Service Development Committee on BME allocations and lettings and Vision Management System (VMS) satisfaction surveys by diversity.

background

1. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 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 broadens the definition of “public authority” to include any organisation which provides a service that is “of a public nature”
 - It extends the scope of the 1976 Act to cover areas that were previously excluded (e.g. Environmental Health, Licensing, investigation of benefit fraud etc) and makes it unlawful for public authorities to discriminate on racial grounds when carrying out any of their functions. It places a general statutory duty on a wide range of public authorities to promote racial equality and prevent racial discrimination
 - It provides for the Home Secretary to impose specific enforceable duties for public authorities to promote race equality
 - 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.

2. The Act places a mandatory requirement on public authorities, including housing authorities, to introduce policies and procedures that:
 - eliminates unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promotes equality of opportunity; and
 - promotes good relations between people of different racial groups.

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The legal requirements of the code are divided into nine themes. 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 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. This is the second report produced to detail the following elements of CRE Code:
 - BME customer satisfaction with services by diversity
 - Housing applicants and lettings by ethnic origin

bme customer satisfaction by diversity

6. Customer satisfaction by diversity was reported to the Board in January 2009 with approval for it to be reported 6 monthly thereafter. Through our VMS satisfaction survey, the following service areas have been reviewed by diversity:
 - Complaints
 - Decent Homes
 - Doors & Windows programme
 - Repairs & Maintenance
 - Moving home
 - Managing your home
 - Tenancy enforcement
 - Customer involvement
 - Estate management
7. In relation to BME disparities the parameters have been set at minus 2 of the highest figure across White British, BME European and BME non-European. Within the figures for Oct 08 – Mar 09, across 44 VMS satisfaction surveys, the following slight disparities are showing:
 - lower score from BME non-European (Complaints procedure survey)
 - lower score for BME non-European (Gentoo Housing Repairs)
 - higher score for BME non-European (Decent Homes)
 - higher score for BME non-European (Door & Windows)

8. As this is the first time we have used the categories defined above for ethnic monitoring, the recommendation at the moment would be that the individual surveys are looked at by the respective managers in relation to both higher and lower scoring to determine if particular areas are an issue. The numbers at the current time are all concerning individual customers due to the small numbers of BME customers we have (22 BME customers at 0.43% of our customer base).
9. However, if trends of lower satisfaction did occur regularly across our VMS surveys, we would then need to investigate further in relation to our race equality policies, procedures and practices.

customer satisfaction by other diversity groupings

10. Although Dale & Valley Homes have a public duty under the CRE Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing to investigate BME customer satisfaction, we investigate satisfaction with services across all diversity groups through our VMS surveys. As with BME monitoring, the parameters have been set at minus 2 of the highest satisfaction figure across each grouping. The following data is across 6 months of surveys (44 VMS surveys in total) across all service areas:

Diverse Grouping	Lower levels of satisfaction across diverse groupings	Service Area(s)
Age	16-25 year olds	Decent Homes Repairs & Maintenance
	26-45 year olds	Decent Homes
	46-60 year olds	Decent Homes
	61-75 year olds	Complaints procedure
Disability	Mobility	All service areas
	Learning Disabilities	Housing Operations
	Hearing	All service areas Complaints
	Mental Health	All service areas
	Sight	Decent Homes Housing Operations
	Speech	Complaints Decent Homes Housing Operations
Gender	Male	Housing Operations
	Female	Decent Homes
Religion or Belief	No faith	Housing Operations

Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	Decent Homes
	Gay Man	Housing Operations

11. These disparities have been investigated through Equality Impact Assessments carried out Mar-July 2009 to determine positive action initiatives and further work e.g. around our customers with disabilities, younger people scoring lower around Decent Homes & Repairs & Maintenance . In cases of one individual customer scoring lower, this is picked up at the working groups around VMS surveys.
12. We will investigate quarterly as to whether or not the satisfaction levels rise across the areas detailed above, when the next set of results from VMS surveys are reported.

dale & valley homes applicants by ethnic group

July 08 – Dec 08

Ethnicity	Number of Dale & Valley Homes' applicants	Percentage of Dale & Valley Homes' applicants
Black Minority Ethnic (BME)	7	1.15%
White British	521	85.55%
Refused / Missing	81	13.30%
TOTAL	609	100%

Jan 09- June 09

Ethnicity	Number of Dale & Valley Homes' applicants	Percentage of Dale & Valley Homes' applicants
Black Minority Ethnic (BME)	4	0.91%
White British	440	99.09%
TOTAL	444	100%

13. The percentages of BME Dale & Valley Homes Applicants between Jul – Dec 08 and Jan-Jun 09 were both higher than the total BME population in Wear Valley which is at 0.8% (Census 2001).
14. This data shows us that our practices for publicising and marketing our housing application processes are not discriminating against our BME population in Wear Valley.

dale & valley homes applicants re-housed by ethnic group

July 08 – Dec 08

Ethnicity	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants Re-housed	Percentage of Applicants Re-housed
Black Minority Ethnic	7	1	14.29%
White British	521	70	13.44%
TOTAL	528	71	13.45%

Jan 09 – Jun 09

Ethnicity	Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants Re-housed	Percentage of Applicants Re-housed
Black Minority Ethnic	4	0	0%
White British	440	70	15.91%
TOTAL	444	70	15.76%

15. From the total number of applicants between July – Dec 2008 who stated their ethnicity on the application form (528), 13.45% were re-housed. The breakdown between White British and BME applicants shows that in percentage terms the greater percentage of re-housing for this period has been in relation to BME applicants.
16. For the period Jan –Jun 09, we did not re-house any BME applicants. To be in line with percentage figures, 1 BME applicant would need to be re-housed, which would give us a percentage of 25%. Due to the small number of BME applicants overall, the recommendation at this stage of monitoring is to investigate further if no BME applicants are re-housed in the next 6 months.

monitoring and review

17. Reviewing the code of practice on racial equality in housing will carry on six monthly as agreed by Board.

business plan

18. This report is linked directly to the Business Delivery Plan 08-13 in relation to the strategic objective of running the business well.

value for money/financial implications

19. Ensuring we are compliant with the Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing adds value to the services we deliver to both existing and potential customers. There are no additional financial implications to the Company in relation to the delivery of this report.

equality and diversity implications

20. The equality and diversity implications of this report are implicit.

consultation

21. Consultation will be carried out with the Customer Insight Working Group and Access & Customer Care Working Group.

RECOMMENDED

1. Dale & Valley Homes Board notes the data on BME allocations & lettings and VMS satisfaction surveys by diversity.

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