



# Equality and diversity

## CIH charter for housing



# Equality & diversity: CIH charter for housing

The CIH equality and diversity charter is a flexible framework that helps you identify what outcomes a fair and accessible housing service can deliver. Housing plays a fundamental role in everyone's life. Homes, and the communities in which they are located, directly influence access to key social and economic opportunities and affect wellbeing. Equality means that the housing sector is striving for a better balance in opportunities, resources, and decision-making processes for staff, customers and communities. Being more aware of and proactive about the diversity of customers will ensure housing organisations provide the right services and meet the right needs and aspirations.

The charter includes a set of commitments which are underpinned by a range of outcomes - together, the commitments and outcomes provide a framework against which organisations can assess where they are now and where they aspire to be. The charter consists of two core elements:

- **Who we are:** inclusive leadership and organisational culture
- **Who we serve:** involved and empowered customers in the communities where we work

By signing up to this charter, you are making a public commitment to deliver a fair and accessible housing service which is clearly focused on outcomes for staff, tenants and communities.

There are six core principles underpinning the equality and diversity charter for housing:

1. Sign up is voluntary and based on self assessment
2. It has been developed using sector expertise
3. It is flexible and can be tailored to suit the outcomes that matter to you and your tenants
4. It is focused on outcomes, not processes
5. It drives sector-led improvement
6. It complements existing frameworks or initiatives

# Signing up to the charter

We recognise that the housing sector is diverse and that capacity, resources and priorities will vary from organisation to organisation. It is also really important that organisations have the space to innovate and be creative in their approach. As such, we recommend that you use the equality and diversity charter as a framework which can be built on and adapted to respond to individual and local circumstances. It is up to you and your tenants how you use the equality and diversity charter - to drive continued excellence or to act as a springboard for change - the key thing is that you deliver the right outcomes.

Once you have signed up to the charter you can:

- **Share practice and learn from others:** CIH will support a free, open-access website and participating organisations will be invited to upload short practice examples that align to the charter principles, which they will share with the wider sector. This reflects the principles of transparency and sector-wide shared-learning that underpins the charter
- **Join our equality and diversity network:** organisations that sign up to the charter will join our free equality and diversity network where they can share ideas, expertise and knowledge with other charter signatories to drive improvements in equality and diversity across the housing sector

Sign up at [www.cih.org/equalityanddiversitycharter](http://www.cih.org/equalityanddiversitycharter)

## Support and assistance

- While this charter can be used as a self-assessment framework, CIH has a team of experts who can provide external assistance and critical challenge.

### Contact us:

e: [policyandpractice@cih.org](mailto:policyandpractice@cih.org)

t: 024 7685 1777

# What are we signing up to?

## Who we are: inclusive leadership and organisational culture

	Core commitment	We can demonstrate that
1	<b>Equality and diversity is driven from the top</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is strong leadership from our governing body, chief executive and management team endorsing a strategic commitment to equality and diversity across all nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation; and to supporting an understanding of the role of human rights in housing</li> </ul>
2	<b>Equality and diversity informs our business planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and diversity lies at the heart of our business planning process and informs our investment decisions, how we design and deliver value for money services, how we procure services; and how relationships with partners, suppliers, contractors, customers and communities are sustained</li> <li>• We undertake equality analyses which show how equality and diversity informs our business objectives and equality analyses are transparent, monitored, reported and acted upon</li> <li>• We are committed to ongoing improvement in providing fair and accessible services to our existing customers and to future customers</li> </ul>
3	<b>Equality and diversity shapes our organisational culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and diversity informs recruitment and staff development - the staff we employ represent the communities we serve. Diversity is represented at all levels of the organisation and our staff in their diversity are satisfied with us</li> <li>• Our commitment to equality and diversity is public, clear and transparent - all language, imagery, policies, procedures and publicity are inclusive and representative of our diverse communities. Information is provided in alternative or accessible formats where this is required</li> <li>• Our organisation communicates a zero tolerance approach to discriminatory attitudes or practice from staff, partners, contractors, suppliers, customers and from individuals in the communities in which we work</li> </ul>

# What are we signing up to?

	Core commitment	We can demonstrate that
4	<b>Equality and diversity is supported through staff training, development and engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff at all levels are supported to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver equal services to our staff and our customers in their diversity</li> <li>• Staff in their diversity have an opportunity to shape and influence the delivery of fair and accessible services</li> </ul>

## Who we serve: involved and empowered customers in the communities in which we work

	Core commitment	We can demonstrate that
5	<b>We know who our customers are</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We proactively use customer profiling to gather customer insight information to help us develop fair and accessible services</li> <li>• Staff and customers clearly understand how customer profiling can improve our organisation and where service improvements have been made we will share our successes</li> <li>• We will develop our capacity to understand and respond to the housing needs and aspirations of migrants and new arrivals in the communities which we serve</li> <li>• We will develop our capacity to understand and respond to the housing needs and aspirations of future customers in their diversity</li> <li>• Customer insight information is regularly reviewed, monitored and refreshed and measured against our strategic plan and business objectives for equality and diversity</li> <li>• Customer profiling is informed by best practice, is undertaken confidentially and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998</li> </ul>

# What are we signing up to?

	Core commitment	We can demonstrate that
6	<b>We involve our customers in shaping and scrutinising services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We actively encourage and proactively seek the involvement of customers in their diversity across all nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in the shaping and delivery of fair and accessible services</li> <li>• We provide structures, resources, training and capacity building opportunities for customers to enable them to contribute to delivery of fair and accessible services</li> <li>• We effectively empower our tenants to scrutinise, monitor and review our services for equality and diversity - we provide our customers with regular, robust and appropriate information in accessible formats which have been agreed with them and customers are encouraged to challenge our performance in relation to equality and diversity. We will report to our customers on our progress</li> </ul>
7	<b>We represent the communities which we serve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We build visible links with local, diverse and representative community groups and community advocates to strengthen our relationships with the communities which we serve and to build trust</li> <li>• We work openly with partners and other service providers in the community to ensure that our services are representative and diverse and to ensure that the diverse customers which we serve are safe and secure in their homes and communities</li> </ul>
8	<b>We support the communities which we serve</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with the communities which we serve and with community partners to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups within the communities which we serve</li> <li>• We will work with the communities which we serve and with community partners to eliminate discrimination, tackle harassment, hate incidents and hate crime and domestic violence</li> </ul>