



Queens
Cross
Housing
Association

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2018-2021



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Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Strategy
2018-2021

FOREWORD

I'm delighted to present the Association's second Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for 2018-2021 and want to thank everyone who has contributed to it.

The strategy represents a major step forward for the organisation. Whilst much has been achieved and delivered, we recognise the need for our strategic approach to be more cohesive across the organisation and broader in its reach.

The good news is that the Association is in a strong position to convert what we've learned since 2013 into even more meaningful results for tenants, communities, and employees.

The strategy is a clear statement of our commitment to making equality, diversity and inclusion mainstream activities in our organisation. We'll open our doors to more people, use knowledge and information to deliver targeted programmes of work and create more opportunities for involvement for people from diverse backgrounds.

My own goal is to encourage more people to join a community group, volunteer or become a Board member. Eleven years ago I joined an Association area committee and was a Board member three months later. And now I have the privilege of being Board Chair, working with a fantastic group of people who work very hard to make Queens Cross the best it can be.

Being part of the community helped me through a very tough time in my life. And I'm delighted that this new strategy's reach and purpose includes those who are experiencing ill health and the consequences of living on a very low income. Poverty is a real issue for many people in this area.

As a key partner in North West Glasgow we provide housing and bring people and communities together. This strategy will ensure we do this on an equal basis for everyone.

Marilyn Clewes
Board Chair

Executive Summary

This Equality and Diversity Strategy sets out the Association's aim to break down barriers to communication and participation, eliminate discrimination and give equal opportunity and access for all groups, communities and individuals to employment and services.

We have set ourselves some significant goals, to encourage more participation and partnership by working with a broad range of tenants, staff and customers. Especially those that we haven't yet reached.

We'll be guided in this by what customers, staff and tenants are telling us and by the information we gather through surveys, focus groups and what individuals tell us. We are already out in communities meeting tenants, listening and responding to their service needs. Some of that work will be to find different ways and times of getting together using the type of communication that suits those taking part.

A big part of our focus will be to equip staff, volunteers, scrutiny and community groups with the knowledge and understanding of the diversity in Queens Cross communities. We want those who work with and for us to feel confident in dealing with people from all backgrounds and experiences.

To help us keep in track, we'll review some of the systems and processes we use to monitor how well we're doing. Our Equality Impact Assessment process will be updated to make it easier to review policies from an equalities perspective. We'll set out recruitment plans for paid and volunteer posts and keep tenant and staff equalities information up to date as far as possible.

As a registered social housing landlord there are duties and regulations that we must meet. The aim of this strategy is to demonstrate that we, as an organisation, want to do more than we might be expected to do. And that everyone who lives or works in Queens Cross has the same right to take part and to be treated with respect.



WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

Excellent housing in vibrant communities

Our Values

Respect

We see the positive in everyone, especially our tenants. We treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, race, gender or background. We ask for opinions even if we know we might not like what we hear. And we address people's concerns in any way we realistically can.

Integrity

What we say in public is the same as what we say behind the scenes. If we say we'll do something, we mean it. Our tenants can count on us to solve their problems and make sound decisions.

Aspiration

We want the best for all our current and future tenants. We're not afraid to strive for things that won't be easy – or try things that haven't been done before. We seek out opportunities and welcome change. If it doesn't turn out as planned, we learn and improve and then we try again.

Our Strategic Aims

What we want to do:

- Build more desirable homes in popular neighbourhoods.
- Deliver more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives.
- Invest in our people to grow and develop their skills.
- Find more ways to ensure value for money.
- Continue to challenge poverty.
- Put even more focus on community health and wellbeing.
- Be ready for opportunities.



What we do

Since 1976 Queens Cross Housing Association (QCHA) has been at the heart of the community here in North West Glasgow.

We remain a grassroots organisation run by local and community representatives and service providers. Since we started, we've grown from managing just a few properties to looking after more than 4,300 homes.

We're a community based social landlord and, as well as providing low cost housing, we run services where individuals, friends and families can socialise, develop skills, get support and advice, have fun and get to know their neighbours.

Our aim is for Queens Cross to be a welcoming and vibrant community and we encourage all sorts of city, national and local partners to work with us, recognising our strengths and investing in the future for everyone who live and work in our communities.



Purpose of the Strategy

This Equality and Diversity Strategy 2018-2021 outlines our commitment to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and harassment and to foster good relationships as an organisation and service provider.

This strategy tells the story of what we've achieved, where we still need to develop and what we'll be focussing on for the next three years.

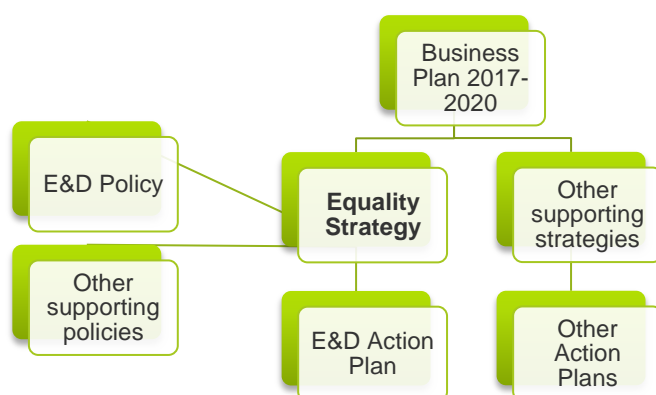
The strategy is linked to the Association's *Business Plan 2017-2020* which commits to providing services that address wider wellbeing needs beyond the home and to providing an equal and diverse workplace. It commits, for example, to improving access to our services through making the most of new technology and responding to individual customers' communication needs.

Over the course of the next three years, our customers should feel that they are experiencing a more personal and individual service from us. Our staff, tenants and volunteers should feel comfortable in sharing their equalities information and that they have the right training, skills and tools to provide services that meet their own and their customers' needs. Our systems and processes will become more people centred and provide us with the service design information we need to improve and develop our customer service.

This strategy complements existing Association policies, strategies and processes. Over the course of its three years, it will inform thinking and activity in relation to all our services, departments and communication (Fig.1). It will also inform our approaches to our contractors, suppliers and partners and how each employee approaches their role.

Through the success of its approach and actions, it will also strongly inform the development of the next business plan for 2020-2023.

Fig.1



How the strategy was developed

It is important that this strategy supports the Association's own goals but, in writing it, we've also learned from and been influenced by experts and organisations who specialise in supporting and representing different communities, individuals and groups.

We consulted with a broad range of people including tenants, Association employees and organisations with an interest and expertise in equality and fairness issues. We're extremely grateful for the time given to us. The advice and guidance received has been important to us in developing the strategy's aims and objectives. It has improved our knowledge and given us confidence in moving our actions forward.

To research and write this strategy we:

- Met with a wider range of organisations including Council for Ethnic Minority Voluntary Organisations, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector, the Poverty Alliance, Stonewall Scotland and the West of Scotland Regional Equality Council.
- Held feedback sessions with the Association's resident and community groups, the Residents Task Force and four Community Involvement Groups.
- Invited feedback from our customers.
- Consulted with Association employees through the Equality and Diversity Working Group and the trade union Unite.

Definitions

These are the definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion that we bear in mind when thinking about how we approach a task or issue.

Equality is based on the principle of creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. It is also about recognising that inequalities exist, and making sure that everyone is treated fairly.

Diversity is defined as 'difference'. Taking a representative sample of one hundred adults from the population it is likely we will find a wide range of individuals with different and diverse

characteristics. Diversity is also a principle of recognising and valuing the differences we have as individuals, as teams and as communities.

Inclusion is a feeling as well as an ethos or a value. As a feeling, we experience inclusion as a sense of belonging, feeling respected and valued for who we are. As an ethos or a value, it is about consciously considering the diversity of people, including their needs, and making everyone feel welcome and valued.

Legal duties

Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland

The Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland was created by the Equality Act 2010. The Duty covers the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to eliminating discrimination also covers marriage, civil partnerships and social economic disadvantage.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/commission-scotland/public-sector-equality-duty-scotland>

Equality Act 2010

The Equality and Human Rights Commission publish statutory codes of guidance⁴ on the implementation of the Equality Act 2010.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice

Guidance on the application of the Equality Act 2010 has also been produced by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CiH)⁵.

www.cih.org/resources

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 introduced the Scottish Social Housing Charter². One of the sixteen outcomes which Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) must meet is the equality outcome. It says that RSLs are to ensure:

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.



<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter-april-2017/>

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998³ says an individual has the right to own and enjoy the ownership of property, respect for their private life, respect for their family life and respect for their home. The Human Rights Act legislates for the right not to be discriminated against.

<https://beta.gov.scot/policies/human-rights/>



Where we are now

From 2013-2018 we worked on delivering the commitments of our first equality and diversity strategy, aiming to make a difference to our service delivery, strategic planning and governance, procurement, staff, employment and performance monitoring.

We're proud of what's been achieved and the work of the Equality & Diversity Working Group who have guided us through the strategy action plan. Through the work that we've completed, we know that we've improved our understanding of and engagement with individuals and community groups through a wide range of initiatives. Here are the projects and actions that have shaped our services and delivered for tenants and employees.

Getting to know our tenants

In 2016/17 we carried out a second tenant household profile survey. *Getting to Know You 2*, completed in April 2017, provides the Association with valuable equalities, socio-economic and health and wellbeing data. It helped form the aims and objectives of our business plan 2017-2020 including new initiatives on addressing child poverty which we measured for the first time.

It also updated our information on a whole range of diversity issues such as language, health and internet access. For example, we now know:

- There are 46 languages spoken locally
- 13% of tenants have a first language other than English
- 58% of tenants live alone
- 26% are not working due to a health condition
- 64% of tenants now have internet access
- 36% have an income of less than £200 per week.

Work continues on how the Association stores and uses the Getting to Know You data. A priority is keeping information we hold about tenants secure and up to date.

Addressing Hate Crime

As a third party reporting centre for Hate Crime, staff at the Association are here to support and help not just tenants but any resident who has experience of it because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability.



In line with reporting across Glasgow, and Scotland in general, reporting of Hate Crime to us is low. To address this, we've continued to publicise our involvement in third party reporting. Neighbourhood Managers attend the citywide Third Party Reporting Network and Hate Crime Action Group meetings on a rotational basis.

The Association also marks National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October, joining campaigns to raise the profile of what a hate crime is and our role in supporting those who experience it. The Association was represented at the launch of National Hate Crime Awareness week in 2016.



Hate Crime starts with individual prejudice, as a third party reporting centre we want to send the message that we are a safe place for people who are experiencing hate and that we will not be a bystander to hate or harassment in our communities – Tracy Hamill, Neighbourhood Housing Manager

Equality and diversity for staff

We've invested a huge amount of time in our equality and diversity training for all employees.

An e-module was rolled out to all staff in early 2017. It covers all of the protected characteristics, including race and religion, and now forms part of induction training for new employees. Board members were provided with several equality and diversity training sessions which included guidance on their legal and regulatory responsibilities. LGBTI+ awareness training was delivered to all staff by LGBT Youth Scotland from October 2016 to February 2017.

Housing and technical services staff attended Autism Awareness Training sessions delivered by Glasgow City Council Social Work Services in February and March 2017.

We want everyone who is or wants to work for us to be confident that they can expect us to be a fair and equal employer. We carried out a Gender Pay Gap Analysis in 2018 which showed our pay gap is 4% in favour of women with women out earning men on all of the recognised comparators. We're an accredited Living Wage employer and are recognised as a Disability Confident employer.

Scottish Housing Regulator, Equalities Thematic Inquiry

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) asked the Association to take part in a Thematic Inquiry into Equalities in Social Housing.



The Regulator approached QCHA as “Queens Cross has a really good reputation for how it communicates and involves tenants”. The Thematic Inquiry asked about the barriers social landlords face in collecting good equalities data, the steps we take to overcome these barriers, and whether landlords make use of data other to inform our approach to attracting people onto the governing body. The Association featured in the Thematic Inquiry report published in June 2016 as an example of Positive Practice by undertaking the *Getting to Know You* tenant survey (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2



Positive practice

[Queen's Cross Housing Association](#) improved its equalities data through the *Getting to Know You* tenant survey which asked a range of questions relating to all nine protected characteristics by using a highly skilled professional market research company to carry out its survey. Queen's Cross also addressed common customer apprehensions around providing equalities data by providing a clear explanation in advance which outlined why they were asking the questions in the survey and how they would then use the data that tenants provided. Queen's Cross found that when they told tenants that the information would be used to inform how it could improve its services, better target those services for the greatest community benefit and to ensure it acted fairly as a landlord, tenants became much more willing to provide their personal information.

Sharing Lives, Sharing Spaces

Sharing Lives, Sharing Spaces is a project whose key objective is to engage with residents of the Chinese community living in Woodside. Through the project, we've been able to recruit a full-time officer. The programme of activities includes access to free English classes, money and welfare rights services, children's clubs and cultural events such as an annual Chinese New Year Ceilidh.

Winner of a UK Housing Award for Outstanding Approach to Equalities and Diversity in 2018, the project is supported by £60,500 funding from the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund which increases support for community-led regeneration throughout Scotland.

The project delivers ESOL language classes for Chinese residents and other activities geared towards social inclusion. We organised and hosted a Burns Night celebration for the second year running in February 2017. We held a St. Andrew's Day cultural celebration in November 2016.

Dealing with digital and social inclusion

Our social regeneration team have a rolling programme of activities and clubs aimed at improving social and digital inclusion and promoting community cohesion across the generations and for people on low incomes. Just some of the activities they've run are:



- A digital inclusion project for all ages funded by £17,835 from Digital Xtra.
- Youth Clubs in Westercommon and Queens Cross run in partnership with Young Possil Futures. Funding of £25,000 has been awarded by Glasgow City Council Integrated Grant Fund for our youth work projects.
- Eat Better, Feel Better – promoting healthy eating among parents and young children who are on a tight budget. This project receives funding from NHSScotland’s childhood obesity scheme.
- Growing Spaces – running weekly group gardening sessions for adults in Dundasvale, Woodside and Westercommon
- The Stag Group – an award winning project for men aged over 60 who were a socially isolated.
- Holiday programmes – a huge range of sport, culture and fun for very young children to teenagers.
- Christmas events – we’ve recently introduced pantomimes to our calendar of festive events. These have been a big hit, especially with families who couldn’t otherwise afford to go to the theatre.
- Community Chest – a new small grants scheme for people aged up to 25 years. £150 is available to pay for activities, equipment, training, clothing and clubs.

Refugees & Asylum Seekers Welcome Cup

Held in partnership with Maryhill Integration Network in May 2016, the Welcome Cup was a football tournament aimed at helping closer integration of the city’s asylum seekers and refugees with local communities. Football equipment and kit was collected and donated to those taking part and the event was a huge success.

Flourish Café in Westercommon

A unique new community café opened its doors in November 2016. Offering fresh food and employment opportunities, the Courtyard Café, Westercommon, is a partnership between the Association and mental health recovery charity Flourish House.

As well as affordable meals, cakes and coffees five days a week, the café provides training, employment and volunteering opportunities to people in the community who have experienced mental ill health. The partnership seeks to address issues of social isolation and food poverty which often accompany economic disadvantage.



Both Queens Cross and Flourish House have made a really big difference to my life. When I was in hospital a few years ago the support I got from both organisations was fantastic –
Tommy Hedivan, QCHA tenant and Courtyard Café volunteer

Seeking Customer Feedback

Our Customer Feedback Framework helps us measure customer satisfaction with the services that mean the most to them such as repairs and supported housing. Put in place in 2013, the Framework helps us meet our regulatory obligations such as the Annual Return on the Charter and performance reporting and means we can assess how well customers feel our services are doing.

Translation & Interpretation

We've developed our translation and interpretation service over the last four years. We continue to use Happy to Translate service so that we can communicate well with tenants who speak little or no English face to face and over the telephone. We introduced signage in seven languages at our three neighbourhood housing offices so that tenants know they are welcome and can access our services no matter their first language.

Service Scrutiny Steps Up

We've achieved a Tenants Information Service silver accreditation in 2018. This means that we are involving residents in the development of our services – inclusion and involvement is vital if we're to continually improve services and we want to ensure that membership reflects the diversity of our neighbourhoods.

We have a dedicated group of volunteer residents who receive training and support from us but who are now well and truly established as expert customers. They've helped us review the handyperson and estate caretaking services and are now working with us on updating our anti-social behaviour procedures.



Without CHYP and the Firestation Project I don't think my life would have turned out as well, and I know that is true for many service users. -
Claude Mutuyimana, tenant and filmmaker

Aids and Adaptations

Many tenants are referred to us through occupational health for an aid or adaptation in the home to help them with a condition, illness or disability such as a mobility issue. At 112.52 days to complete an adaption in the home, we felt that we could do better. We put a focussed programme in place and are pleased to say that we've reduced this service time to 72.6 days. Working closely with our Glasgow City Council colleagues has paid off.

At the forefront of LGBTI+

Over the past four years we've developed a reputation as one of the leading housing associations working to support LGBTI+ staff and communities. Here's a list of some of our achievements:

Stonewall: We're signed up as a **Stonewall Diversity Champion** and were ranked 310 in Stonewall's **WorkplaceEquality Index** in 2017 - an improvement of 82 places on our 2016 ranking. Although further work is to be done, the result represents one of the strongest improvements in ranking of any organisation taking part.

We also signed up to Stonewall Scotland's **#NoBystanders** pledge in August 2016. This is a campaign which asks people to stand up to hate and abuse whenever and wherever they encounter it.

The Association sponsored **Glasgow Frontrunners**, Scotland's largest LGBT running group. Their aim is to highlight and promote LGBT participation in sport. The event is part of Pride Glasgow and we were proud to support such an important event.

Association staff marked **Purple Friday** in February 2017, a day dedicated to showing support for LGBTI+ people and for taking a stand against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Staff wore purple to work in solidarity with those experiencing prejudice or abuse.



We want people to actively choose to live and work in Queens Cross, and to recognise Queens Cross as an open and welcoming place to live and work. - Lynne MacDonald, Human Resources Manager



The Association's Youth Homelessness Service undertook the **LGBT Youth Scotland charter accreditation**. We met challenging award criteria including a review of Association policies, an Equality Impact Assessment on the service and service user surveys and interviews. We're waiting to hear from LGBT Youth Scotland who'll tell us whether we've got the accreditation or not.



Where we want to be

In this section, we outline in detail the five objectives we'll deliver over 2018-2021.

Objective 1

Know our customers, understand their needs and develop and adapt our services.

Over the next three years we aim to:

Increase and improve how we use QL, our **customer relationship management system**. Our aim is to have up to date equality profile information about our customers on which to base future programmes of work, large and small. We need to have effective systems in place to access and use information to inform how we plan for and develop the services we deliver.

We'll hold our **third Getting to Know You tenant household survey** to ensure the demographic information we hold is up to date and so that we can track and take further action on the big issues impacting tenants' lives such as poverty, ill health, aging and social and employment exclusion. With that in mind, we'll further develop our digital inclusion, social inclusion, employability and community development projects and measure the impact they make as well as the diversity profile of participants to ensure we are responding to the needs of all of our tenants.

Arrange workshops with different staff groups to examine the **service user journey** from the experience of specific tenant groups or service users. Workshops will focus on addressing where there may be instances of unintentional discrimination - for example barriers to communication and engagement. This will be incorporated in to Equality Impact Assessment review and training.

We'll engage **groups of tenants and service users** from diverse backgrounds to examine and discuss specific services alongside staff members, to help identify unmet needs and unintended barriers to accessing support.

The **financial advice team** will review the services it provides in relation to people with specific needs such as refugees and asylum seekers who may not have any experience of paying fuel bills, or dealing with bureaucracy of benefits and banking for example.

Objective 2

Our Board, Community Involvement Groups, employees and volunteers actively contribute to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

Over the next three years we aim to:

Place **equality and diversity in our mainstream day to day activity**. We will, for example, put objectives for every staff member in place through regular PDC discussions with their manager. Employees will, for example, be asked to identify and address their own patterns of indirect discrimination in relation to the internal working of the organisation and in service delivery.

We'll consider **analysing the organisation's pay gap** in relation to characteristics apart from gender such as ethnicity and disability. We'll become members of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI), an employer-led network that assists with a range of equalities issues including recruitment, retention and organisational reputation.

We aim to **improve diversity at Board level** and our recruitment, retention and succession planning will include a planned channel of access to board membership from other forms of engagement with the organisation including volunteering, community involvement groups and tenants. Secondments and mentoring from experienced board members will also be considered as they can be effective for supporting under-represented groups into board positions. The timing of board meetings will be reviewed to avoid unintentionally discriminating against people with childcare and other accessibility issues.

We'll put **training in place for employees** around:

- **Unconscious bias:** this training would describe the range of biases that everyone possesses; the ways in which they can affect our work in negative ways, particularly in relation to recruitment; and what practical and personal steps we can take to mitigate against the effect of unconscious bias.
- **Human trafficking:** particularly the range of possible indicators of trafficking; various forms of exploitation; and what action to take if you suspect someone is a survivor of trafficking.
- **Communicating through interpreters:** to cover the reasons why it is not appropriate to use a friend or family member to interpret; how to ensure the interpreter is communicating



everything that both parties say; booking interpreters; and how to manage the ethical issues involved.

- **Religious and cultural diversity:** training to include the impact of religion and belief on the needs of tenants and service users; the perception of choice in relation to beliefs; the impact of culture on communication, and on perceptions of rudeness and politeness.
- **Violence against women including FGM and domestic abuse:** to cover the many forms that violence against women takes; the societal and cultural elements that underpin it; myth-busting; how to support and advise someone who may be experiencing violence; and a focus on the particular patterns and dynamics around domestic violence.

We'll train our staff in **responding to offensive and stress related behaviour**: It would cover the difference between intention and impact in communication; discuss the more common examples of words that have shifted in their interpretation; and use scenarios to help employees discuss how they might respond supportively if a colleague or customer said something that may be seen as offensive or prejudicial.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) help us review our strategies, projects, policies and procedures from an equalities perspective. But it should not feel a cumbersome process. We'll review the current EIA system and teach employees how to conduct them in a way that is effective, revealing but not overly-arduous.

Employee social events will be assessed for their inclusiveness. Sporting activities and those involving alcohol will often unintentionally exclude some people and may put them off applying for work with us. Our intention is to come up with a variety of events and activities that staff can choose from. This matches our aim to have most of our tenant events alcohol free.

Mental health and wellbeing of employees has been and will continue to be an ongoing concern. Psychosocial difficulties are a growing cause of staff absence across Scotland and we want to make sure that our staff are aware of all the different schemes we have in place to support them if and when they need it.



Objective 3

Deliver excellent services that are accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities.

Over the next three years we aim to:

Review the methods used to contact tenants and service users from the perspective of a range of different identities. Telephone contact will work for some, but not all. Similarly, visiting tenants' homes may be the best form of communication for some people but intimidating for others. Additionally, some may prefer to have control over the gender of the staff who visit their home.

Language interpreters are often most effective when they are in the same room as the people they are interpreting for, but some in some circumstances a telephone interpreter will be preferable. We'll improve our knowledge and use of tenants' **preferred communication methods**. For example, our employees could use three-way telephone calls where the staff member, customer and an interpreter communicate through one telephone call.

Cultural norms can be different depending on your experience and background. Tenants from many cultural groups strongly prefer staff to remove their shoes when they visit their home. For many this has the level of importance of a religious belief. Staff should have access to this information. Staff health and safety should be considered but need not be a barrier.

We'll engage with **local organisations** to support wider community cohesion and integration efforts. A mapping exercise will be undertaken to identify current and potential partners and initiate the relationship with them. Examples include: Maryhill Integration Network; Glasgow Mela; Concrete Gardens; Lambhill Stables; and Scottish Refugee Council.

Reassessing the use of **translated signs and information** is a priority. We'll consider what key written material we've still to translate, such as standardised letters and tenancy agreements into the top 5-8 local languages and make sure they are checked by a native speaker before being sent out. We'll look at improving our communication in other small but significant ways such as using multi-lingual appointment cards.



We want to make better use of social media, publications and notice boards to display information about **specific social issues** such as: domestic violence; hate crime; child abuse; female genital cutting; and human trafficking. Communicating this way tells customers something about our organisation's values and providing practical information on where and how to access support. We'll also make more use of the Association's social media to raise tenants' awareness of campaigns, events and religious and cultural festivals.

For the new development of 600 homes in Hamiltonhill, our existing community engagement strategy will include **Equality Impact Assessments** for a number of elements of this major project: procurement; housing accessibility and design; community cohesion, safety, facilities and amenities. There will be a need to engage with many stakeholders over this significant development.

We'll work to more clearly promote **anti Hate Crime initiatives**, and of the 3rd Party reporting. We'll articulate what's considered a hate crime, the benefits of reporting it, and how it can be reported and seek to tackle the pattern of normalisation among those often targeted. Hate crime initiatives in the future will be developed with awareness of the Lord Bracadale review into hate crime legislation. The Scottish Government has accepted the recommendation to consolidate all Scottish hate crime legislation into one new statute, a new hate crime bill.

We'll encourage **greater community cohesion** and understanding between different groups through anti-discrimination workshops and training for our Community Involvement Group members, Residents Task Force, volunteers and other groups of tenants who work alongside us.

Objective 4

Have meaningful and effective ways for our tenants and other customers to engage with us, and that their views are central to the way we provide our services.

Over the next three years we aim to:

Consider and **address the many possible barriers to involvement** that may exist for tenants and residents so that we gain more meaningful input. For example, we know that around 10% of our tenants are living with a health issue or condition.

Issues getting in the way of getting involved may include: chronic illnesses; mobility issues; addictions; mental health issues; shame at reduced ability to care for oneself or home; language and cultural barriers. **People who have these experiences often have the most useful insight** on unintentional barriers in service design and delivery, but are the most likely to be unable to participate in standard methods of engagement.

People may not participate in our community clubs and activities for all sorts of reasons and we want to understand why. They may not be aware of what we do or how to find out when classes are on. The times or days when activities are held might not suit them. We know also that lack of confidence in making that first step to join a new club can be daunting or that living on a very low income makes it difficult to join a club. We want to **extend our reach to people and communities who don't take part right now** by doing more work on who's attending and who doesn't attend and then adapt our programmes to increase participation.

The better we reach people in Queens Cross, the more opportunities we'll have to involve them in working with us as close partners. We're going to take **a more active approach** to recruiting a more diverse range of volunteers, especially those in our service and community development groups. We'll actively promote membership, for example, to our Board, Community Involvement Groups and Residents Task Force especially among people who are currently under-represented.

Our *Sharing Lives Sharing Spaces* project has been maintained successfully over the past three years with tenants who speak Mandarin and Cantonese as their first language. We want to use this experience to broaden the programme and develop and promote **English classes** more widely in the community and to other services who know people living in our area who could benefit. Organisations that could help us communicate more effectively include British Red Cross, Maryhill Integration Network, Scottish Refugee Council and the Colleges.



Objective 5

Our workforce, Board and tenant groups reflect our communities and share our aspiration of equality, fairness and inclusion and to being a progressive organisation.

Over the next three years we aim to:

Focus on recruiting a more **diverse workforce**. For example we will develop the modern apprenticeship programme already in place to offer career opportunities for young people and more actively promote increased employment opportunities for black and minority ethnic people through our partnership with PATH Scotland.

We'll continue work on creating employment **opportunities for people with a disability** through our successful partnership with the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.

We'll review our recruitment and selection processes to **identify and address barriers into employment**. One action will be to implement recruitment strategies to counteract unconscious bias as it's been found that people tend to select those they perceive to be similar to themselves. This could include removing applicants' names, and indicators of their age, gender, religion from the information seen by those involved in recruitment or through recorded rather than face to face interviews.

We'll develop **additional partnerships** with organisations that support the employability of under-represented groups. These could include: Bridges Programmes; Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre; Inclusion Scotland; Scottish Refugee Council; Radiant and Brighter & Brighter; Rare Recruitment. **Job roles and person specifications** will be carefully assessed to ensure they do not unintentionally dissuade certain groups or individuals from applying.

We want to **increase the equalities data** we hold on our employees and will develop a method of clearly explaining why equalities data is taken from each job applicant and member of staff, and how it benefits the organisation. We'll focus on giving assurance that private data will only be accessible to a small number of staff and for recruitment and monitoring purposes.

We'll engage with **volunteering placement organisations** like Volunteer Scotland, to create a more effective, supported and diverse volunteer-base. Other organisations' experiences tell us that this often increases the diversity of the staff-base as ex-volunteers see opportunities to



become staff members. It also serves to support under-represented and marginalised groups into employment.

Tailored **training** for all of our employees that focus on specific equality and diversity themes will continue throughout the period of this strategy. We know that the training programmes are welcome and popular as they provide staff members with knowledge, understanding and insight that they can then use in their roles and to put forward ideas for improving service delivery.



How the strategy will be monitored and evaluated

Everyone at Queens Cross has a duty and a role to play delivering this strategy. We consider equality and diversity to be an integral part of everything we do.

Additionally:

- The Association's Equality and Diversity Working Group will monitor the progress of Equality and Diversity Strategy actions on a quarterly basis.
- We will develop the Working Group with greater representation and shared ownership of objectives and their implementation across the organisation.
- The Strategy's progress will be reported to the Executive Management Team and Board every year.

This Strategy will be subject to a full review every three years in consultation with staff, customers and partner organisations. The Association will make any necessary alterations to this Strategy in advance of a full review in the event of any significant legislative or statutory changes or practices.

Communication & Engagement

The Association's Equality & Diversity Working Group will guide and implement a communications plan for the work outlined in this strategy.

Our communications and human resources teams will be closely linked to it, making the Association's intranet, website, publications and social media channels carry news and updates on our equality and diversity work and partnerships. An example of this is the development of an Awareness Calendar to promote and celebrate cultural and religious dates and events on social media.

Glossary of Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 Introduced the term 'Protected Characteristics' to describe groups of people that are protected by the law. These are outlined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in *New Equality Act Guidance Protected Characteristic Definitions*⁶.

- Age – Refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18-30 year olds).
- Disability – a person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
- Gender Reassignment – The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
- Marriage and Civil Partnership – Marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple⁷. Same sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as civil partnerships. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act 2010).
- Pregnancy or Maternity – Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby, maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for twenty six weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
- Race – Refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
- Religion and Belief – Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including a lack of belief (e.g. atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.
- Sex – A man or a woman.
- Sexual Orientation – Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Footnotes and references

1. Equality Act 2010, HMSO.
2. Scottish Social Housing Charter 2012, HMSO.
3. Human Rights Act 1998, HMSO.
4. The Equality Act 2010 Statutory Codes of Practice, Equality and Human Rights Commission 2011.
5. Briefing Paper on the Equality Act, Chartered Institute of Housing 2010.
6. New Equality Act Guidance Protected Characteristic Definitions, Equality and Human Rights Commission.
7. Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014.

NEED ANOTHER VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT?

If you would like this information in another language, in large print, Braille, Easy Read, on tape or disk or in British Sign Language (BSL), please ask us. You can call us on 0808 143 2002 or email contactus@qcha.org.uk

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ةراشل ةغللب وأ ، صرق وأ طیرش ىلع
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2002 ىلع لاصتالا كنكم ی. اذه انم
دیربلا ربع انتلسارم وأ 143 0808
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