



Equality Scheme & Action Plan 2022

Canopy Housing adhere to the following service standards:

- Our frontline services will be culturally sensitive, open and accessible to all.
- Our Board and committees will be representative of the communities with whom we work.
- All job applicants, employees and volunteers will be treated fairly and equally.
- We aim to provide housing and volunteering opportunities for those who are disadvantaged and have limited access to housing; newly developed housing will aim to meet the needs of the entire community.
- We will promote the full and active involvement and participation of all groups in the communities with whom we work.
- We will assess the equality impact of new policies and procedures.
- Our contractors, consultants and partners are expected to comply with our equality and diversity policy too.

We aim to achieve these standards through five strategic approaches:

- Understanding our customers
- Taking positive action
- Count me in – Giving people a voice
- Fair access
- Clued-up delivery

This booklet explains how we performed during 2020-21 and sets out our plans to improve in 2022.

Understanding our customers

We aim to understand the people, communities, partners and contractors with whom we work. We will do this through profiling and equality mapping at a national and local level.

What we do

- We hold information on the race, gender and disabilities of our tenants, volunteers and job applicants.
- We carry out exit interviews with volunteers and record the information in a spreadsheet.
- We learn about good practice on equality issues through local and regional networks (Locality, Voluntary Action Leeds, Chartered Institute of Housing, Chartered Institute of Personnel Development), legal seminars and the trade press.

Achieved in 2020/21

- ✓ 2 new Board members have been appointed, to help ensure the Board is representative of the communities we serve. We also currently have a long-term volunteer as observer on the Board

Further action required

Actions for 2022

- Examine the data we hold on tenants & volunteers and check whether we can drill down to protected characteristics
- Conduct regular data protection and confidentiality checks to ensure the information we hold on staff, tenants and volunteers is accurate and up-to-date

Aim for 2022 (would be 'nice to do')

- Analyse data from volunteer exit interviews [Challenge is getting the interviews, as often when volunteers leave, they simply stop turning up]

Taking positive action

We will show an organisational commitment to tackling inequity, promoting and publicising the action we take. We will support other agencies who champion the disadvantaged. We will not tolerate harassment and victimisation.

What we do

- We host regular events including community meals with amateur cooks from different cultures (pre-Covid)
- We promote a culture of crossing divides, mixing different cultures, ages, genders, etc in our volunteering teams and at our events.
- Half of our properties' workers are women.
- We provide translators at our events to allow the local community to engage with us properly.
- We hold employment support sessions at a range of venues including local mosques.
- We have clear procedures for accident/incident reporting and safeguarding.
- Equality & Diversity Policy last reviewed February 2020.
- Recruitment and Selection Policy last reviewed January 2020.
- We are a Mindful Employer
- Equality & Diversity Review Group meet at least quarterly to review action plan.
- Gender and Disability Action Plans (ROSH requirement) are incorporated in this plan.

Achieved in 2020/21

- ✓ Have at least one Mental Health First Aider at Canopy – Marie (staff) & Anna (Board member) trained
- ✓ Prepared a Gender Pay Gap report
- ✓ Produced an anti-harassment policy (draft written)
- ✓ Develop a Dignity at Work Policy
- ✓ Train staff to advise on dealing with hate crimes (original action was to register Canopy's offices as Hate Crime Reporting Centres, but procedure for reporting these crime has now changed)

Further action required

Action for 2022

- Develop procedures for dealing with domestic violence, to accompany the current draft policy

Count me in

We are committed to giving a voice to people who are vulnerable or at greater risk of disadvantage and inequity, identifying their potential and supporting them to achieve levels of choice, autonomy and improved outcomes that other citizens enjoy.

What we do

- We host regular events including community meals with amateur cooks from different cultures (pre-Covid).
- Our volunteers are drawn from a variety of disadvantaged backgrounds.

Targets/monitoring

- Several of our staff have learnt basic British Sign Language.
- 40% of our properties' volunteers are women.
- Aim for 50% of new trainees to be women, 50% to be minority ethnic, 8% to have a disability (see below).

Achieved in 2020/21

- ✓ Several of our staff have learnt British Sign Language.
- ✓ 40% of our properties' volunteers are women.
- ✓ Continued to provide appropriate translation services at events

Further action required

Actions for 2022

- Offer 36 six-week traineeships over 18 months, recruiting people from disadvantaged groups. This training is currently ongoing and is a mixture of classroom-based and on-site practical work
- Explore roles for under-25 apprentices at Canopy

Aim for 2022 (would be 'nice to do')

- Explore ways to lend notebooks/tablets/PCs to tenants, volunteers & trainees

Fair access

We aim to personalise and adapt our frontline services to ensure fair access and meet the needs of people with different backgrounds.

What we do

- Tenants and volunteers can contact us by phone, e-mail, social media or in person.
- We offer 24-hour emergency repairs through a third party.
- Contactless rent payments were introduced in 2019
- Critical information for tenants and volunteers is written in plain English.
- As a small organisation, staff can take the time to read out, explain or translate information for people who have difficulty reading English.
- Job applicants can download the application form and complete it online or offline.
- All adverts, policies and other key communications let people know that information is available in different formats.

Achieved in 2020/21

- ✓ Made offices more accessible by moving public-facing areas downstairs
- ✓ Reviewed contact list for job adverts to ensure people with protected characteristics are being reached
- ✓ Ensured written communications are accessible to all by using Easiread

Further action required

Actions for 2022

- Offer office opening times when people can visit us in the evening or early morning

Aims for 2022 (would be 'nice to do')

- ✓ Expand E&D working group to involve Board members, tenants & volunteers with protected characteristics
- ✓ Review Aids & Adaptations Policy
- ✓ Consider buying a house adapted for people with disabilities – or adapt the ground floor of the old Getaway Girls offices

Clued-up delivery

We aim to have a workforce that can understand and tackle inequity through its composition, skills, understanding and commitment. Our workforce is deemed to include our Board, employees, contractors and other partners who deliver services on our behalf.

What we do

- Equality and Diversity Policy was renewed in 2020.

Achieved in 2020/21

- ✓ Carried out skills audit with individual Board members, including whether or not they have had E&D training
- ✓ Recruited a minority ethnic Board member

Further action required

Actions for 2022

- E&D training for all staff & Board, preferably face-to-face
- Identify E&D Champions amongst staff