

## **Progress on Single Equality Scheme Action Plan**

2009 saw the development and launch of the new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the WDH Single Equality Scheme, covering the six strands of disability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

A new Diversity and Inclusion Framework was also launched, consisting of a Diversity and Inclusion Operational Group tasked with taking forward actions from the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan, and a Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Group made up of senior managers and LMC Diversity Champions. The role of the Group is to challenge progress on diversity and inclusion for both tenants and employees.

During 2009, over 1200 employees completed the Respect for people diversity training. The training has also been extended to LMC members, a number of whom have already completed the on-line training package.

To communicate our progress on diversity and inclusion, the 2009 Diversity and Inclusion Performance Report was published in August and a new diversity and inclusion intranet site was developed for use by employees.

A programme of “Naked Lunches” have taken place quarterly for employees with the objective of “uncovering” the truth and dispelling myths about hard to reach groups. So far, topics that have been covered include, mental health, asylum seekers and refugees and poverty and place. In order to share best practice, other housing associations have also been invited to attend along with WDH’s Active Learners.

2009 also saw the relaunch of the Disability At Work Group. The Group has so far been instrumental in developing a Disability At Work intranet site, promoting reasonable adjustments in the workplace and increasing the number of employees who self-declare as disabled from 24 to 35 in the last six months. The Group have also had input into the Single Equality Scheme and suggested actions that are included on the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan.

January 2010 was the launch month of WDH’s pilot work placement programme with Back in Touch in Wakefield. Back in Touch is part of the charity Mental Health Matters and works with people from the Wakefield District with mental health issues to identify work placements and employment and training opportunities and to increase self-confidence and self-esteem. The pilot has seen three Back in Touch clients working at WDH every Wednesday afternoon for 12 weeks. WDH has provided each person on placement a fully trained workplace mentor and feedback on the scheme has been extremely positive so far.



During 2010, our focus will be on strengthening our approach to equality impact assessments by forming an Equality Impact Assessment Panel to ensure consistency in the completion of the assessments. Refresher training will also be given to all managers and to the Diversity and Inclusion Operational Monitoring Group members in this area.

Currently, we are looking at ways of completing our customer profiling information so that WDH can provide reports to our LMC members to help them to make important decisions on service delivery. A new data set is also in development to enable managers to see if we are meeting the needs of all of our customers by disability, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

This year we will also be working towards the achievement of the Investors in Diversity level Two Standard. To do this we will be consulting with tenants and employees on what they feel is important and setting up an action plan to ensure that all the actions are captured and that WDH responds to all of the points raised.