**Broadacres Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (EDI) 2024-2026**

**Background**

Hand in hand with our vision to be the best rural housing association in the country comes a responsibility to show leadership in our work. This includes our ambitions towards diversity and inclusion. We have some firm foundations, and this strategy seeks to build from these to create the best possible environment and culture where customers and colleagues can flourish by virtue of being themselves.

Our EDI strategy has three strategic themes. We think that together these will enable and embed an organisational culture that supports equitable outcomes for our customers and colleagues, ensures that opportunities are accessible to all and our services are inclusive by design. The EDI strategy will work in conjunction with both the customer and people strategies. It is supported by specific customer and people policies and an EDI action plan to progress our work.

**Setting the Scene**

Recent tragedies in social housing have brought into sharp focus inequalities in the treatment of different groups of customers; and movements such as BLM and societal inequalities highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic have drawn attention to the need to think more about diversity and embed inclusivity in our society and culture.

Considerable work has been taking place in the social housing sector to support and navigate the implications for our work of these broader societal changes. This includes guidance and direction from the Housing Ombudsman through for example, the Spotlight report on Attitudes, Respect and Rights (January 2024); the focus of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard to ensure that tenants be treated with fairness and respect and that registered providers take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants; and the proposed competence and conduct standard which has offered that significant culture change is needed to improve the professional behaviours of staff, tackle stigma and ensure that residents receive a respectful and professional service at all times. These are underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 in which the Public Sector Equality Duty requires Housing Associations to think about how we can improve society and promote equality in every aspect of our day to day work.

For Broadacres, whilst these are critical factors that provide impetus to our work, the moral and organisational arguments for ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion run through all aspects of our activities is equally as compelling. This strategy provides the direction to ensure that all our customers and colleagues have the opportunity to thrive through their connection with Broadacres Housing Association.

**Core purpose of the strategy**

Our 2024-2026 EDI strategy will build on the progress that has already been made through an array of activities that have supported our work to build understanding and knowledge for colleagues and services for our customers that are accessible and inclusive.

Equality, diversity and inclusion often go hand in hand, but are different from one another.

**Equality** is ensuring that individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and not discriminated against or treated differently because of their characteristics.\* This includes identifying and putting in place adjustments to achieve equality, rather than treating everyone the same.

**Diversity** is about recognising and embracing difference, based not just on protected characteristics. So it could include things like neuro diversity and personality traits. Placing positive value on the benefits of the different perspectives and experiences everyone brings enriches communities and the workplace.

**Inclusion** is including people in a way that is fair for all, values everyone’s differences, and empowers and enables each person to be themselves and achieve their full potential and thrive at work and in their homes and communities.

\*Protected characteristics include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation.

Three strategic themes provide the focus for our new EDI strategy.

**Theme 1: Great Governance and Leadership**:

The Broadacres Board will continue to provide visible leadership and commitment to this agenda so that equality, diversity and inclusion is an integral part of our organisational culture. We will do this by monitoring and promoting the diversity of our Board and Committees and demonstrating our commitment through explicit support of EDI activities in the social housing sector. The Board will ensure that progress against equality, diversity and inclusion plans are monitored and that our progress is published externally as well as shared with colleagues. They will challenge and support senior leaders to embed EDI in all aspects of our work.

**Our ambition: If we achieve this, Broadacres will have representative and diverse governance arrangements including the Board and committees which lead Broadacres HA. Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations will be embedded into all strategic decisions through being integrated into the governance framework and through Equality Impact Assessments. Broadacres will be proud of its diversity, equality and inclusion work and will be able to point to multiple examples of how it is embedded in its culture and practice.**

**Theme 2: Great Customer Experience**

To be able to personalise our services and support to meet our customers’ individual requirements, we need to have a better understanding of customers’ needs including any vulnerabilities they may have and any adjustments they may need as a result. We recognise that we need to do more to capture this information from our customers and publicise to customers what we mean by accessible services and what they may request. We also want to ensure that all our customers can easily find and understand the information they need about Broadacres through our communications, including our website.

**Our ambition: If we achieve this, we will know our customers and their specific requirements for service adjustments so that customers receive appropriate and inclusive services. Customers will also know what is available for them and how they can request adjustments. We will focus on understanding the customer experience of different groups of customers (identified by protected characteristics) so that we can improve and demonstrate equitable outcomes for all customers with our services and complaint handling overall. Where possible, we’ll ask customers to contribute to the design of our housing and property services, and we’ll ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are in place to drive change.**

**Theme 3: Supporting Great Colleagues**

Colleagues are at the heart of Broadacres. To enable colleagues to thrive we need to improve our understanding of colleagues diverse needs. To extend our colleague diversity, we want to ensure that Broadacres is an organisation that is attractive to diverse candidates and we will tailor our support for candidates with diverse needs through the recruitment process. We will also consolidate and extend our learning and development, so that colleagues can deepen their knowledge and understanding about equality, diversity and inclusion and feel confident to apply their knowledge to support customers and colleagues so that we can demonstrate a positive culture of fairness and respect for all customers and colleagues. We will continue to build an inclusive culture through facilitating organisational conversations about EDI.

**Our ambition: If we achieve this, we will understand much more about the make up of our workforce so that we can build a workforce that is representative of the customers and communities we serve; at all levels from Board to our frontline colleagues. We will value and celebrate the diversity of our colleagues so that Broadacres is a great place to develop and flourish. We will support colleagues to learn and develop with a specific focus on supporting colleagues to identify and recognise differences with customers and colleagues and enabling them to feel confident to take action to support these differences. Our culture will be inclusive and engender colleagues with a sense of belonging that results in Broadacres achieving the best outcomes for all our customers.**

**EDI Strategy Priorities: 2024-26**

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|  | **Year One: 2024-25** | **Year Two: 2025-26** |
| Theme 1: Great Governance & Leadership | Review and extend the commitment to the HDN Board mentoring programme  Review and revise EDI targets for the organisation including GPG  Identify EDI L&D requirements for the Board  Record and report how Board has considered EDI as part of strategic decision making | Support an HDN trainee to successful completion of mentoring programme  Monitor and publish targets and progress  Implement an active EDI L&D programme for the Board  Lead the embedding of Equality Impact Assessments as a key tool to ensure decisions, or changes to practices and policies are fair and do not discriminate |
| Theme 2: Great Customer Experience | Working with Vulnerable Customers and Reasonable Adjustments policy and procedure in place and proactively publicised for customers  System Updates delivered so that customer vulnerabilities and any adjustments can be recorded appropriately (in accordance with GDPR) on Salesforce  Triennial customer data census to be completed  Diversity of customer engagement groups are  monitored and published and targets are agreed to ensure that they are representative of customer demographics. | Identify and implement innovative methods to engage with customers between 15-44 who have been identified as harder to reach groups to understand how fair outcomes are being achieved.  Measure customer satisfaction and complaints data against overall customer demographics. Set proportionate targets for particular groups.    Implement campaigns to widen diversity of involved customers. Monitor progress and impact of activities  Use customer data gathered from TSMs, R&R and UKCSI to inform agenda of Community Action Days and affirm whether there are gaps that require action. |
| Theme 3: Supporting Great Colleagues | Undertake a colleague EDI census to enable us to improve our knowledge of the diverse characteristics of our workforce.  Use insight from our colleague data to identify how our colleague demographics are the same and different to our customer demographics and to inform where we want to focus our recruitment activities.  Inclusive Culture: Introduce a colleague network to champion equality, diversity, and inclusion and proactively publicise EDI agenda through recognised events e.g. international day of persons with disabilities, time to talk day  Review and enhance our EDI L&D programme so that colleagues can deepen their knowledge and feel confident to talk about and take action to support customers and colleagues with diverse needs. | Gather insight from colleague data to inform and support colleague engagement  Implement recruitment and selection practices that support the wider diversity of candidates for roles.  Monitor EDI data for recruitment to identify any improvements to support how we recruit.  Ensure any EDI accreditation requirements (e.g.Disability Confident Employer) is widely understood by hiring managers.  Implement an EDI L&D programme for hiring managers  Develop diversity awareness through having organisation wide conversations (such as lunch and learn events) linked to national events e.g. International Day of Persons with disabilities,  Implement an innovative EDI programme that supports colleagues and measure outcomes |