



Gender Equality Scheme

2008 - 2011

Introduction

It is with great pleasure that I present to you our Gender Equality Scheme, the first for Trident. It demonstrates our commitment to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between genders.

The Scheme details the steps we intend to take to achieve this.

Although there is a regulatory requirement to produce this scheme, we have been addressing equality issues through our Strategy for a number of years; gender being one of our six identified strands of diversity.

We have already made considerable progress in providing gender equality in all areas of

our business, and the priorities and actions outlined in our scheme will provide an added impetus to this work.

The scheme forms part of our long-term strategy to embed equality into our work, and we will continue to strive to create a culture that respects and welcomes diversity, providing an environment in which our staff can develop to their full potential, and a service to our customers which meets their individual needs.

Tridents Board and management are committed to overseeing the implementation of the Gender Equality Scheme, ensuring that equality and diversity remains at the heart of who we are and what we do.

Contents

1.The Legal Context

- 1.1 Why do we need a Gender Equality Scheme?
- 1.2 Sex Discrimination Legislation
- 1.3 Types of Discrimination
- 1.4 The Equality Act 2006

2. Aims of the Gender Duty

- 2.1 General Duty
- 2.2 Specific Duty

3. Key areas for Trident

- 3.1 Recruitment
- 3.2 Training & Development
- 3.3 Pay & Benefits
- 3.4 Staff and Customer profiling

4. Where are we now?

- 4.1 What do we currently do?
- 4.2 Employee Profile
- 4.3 GES Survey results

5. Data

- 5.1 Involving residents
- 5.2 Equality Impact Assessments
- 5.3 Gathering information
- 5.4 Performance Indicators
- 5.5 Using the information

6. What we aim to achieve

- 6.1 Monitoring & review
- 6.2 Action plans

Gender Equality Scheme 2009

1.1 Why do we need a Gender Equalities Scheme?

Trident Housing is committed to providing equal treatment of individuals, ensuring equality of opportunity in access to housing, services, and employment.

The scheme sets out how we will meet both our general and specific duties to promote gender equality

We are committed to continuously improving our equality performance so that our policies, services, and employment practices meet the different needs of men, women, and transgender people by:

- Embracing principles and practices that promote equality;.
- Meeting the diverse needs of the communities where we work
- Eliminate sex discrimination across all areas of the Group's functions.
- Promote positive attitudes towards all genders

The gender equality duty 2006 placed a new statutory obligation on all public authorities. This means that they must have due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women, when carrying out all of their functions.

As a public authority, the Housing Corporation has complied with the duty and published a Gender Equality Scheme (GES). It expects housing associations and relevant partner organisations, to adhere to these principles of gender equality by publishing their own Gender Equality Scheme

1.2 Sex Discrimination Legislation

The **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** (SDA) applies to both men and women and makes sex discrimination unlawful in:

- Employment and vocational training;
- Education;
- The provision and sale of goods, facilities and services and premises.

In employment and vocational training, it is also unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of being married or a civil partner or on grounds of gender reassignment.

From December 2007, it became unlawful to discriminate on grounds of gender reassignment in the provision and sale of goods, facilities and services.

The Equal Pay Act 1970 makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate between men and women in terms of their pay and conditions where they are doing the same or similar work, work rated as equivalent or work of equal value.

1.3 Types of Discrimination

There are three types of discrimination for which protection is provided by the Sexual Discrimination Act:

Direct Sex Discrimination occurs where a person of one sex is treated less favourably on grounds of sex than a person of the opposite sex would have been treated in the same circumstances. Direct discrimination includes sexual harassment. Sexual Harassment is

defined as unwanted conduct on the grounds of a person's sex or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature where that conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. If an employer treats a member of staff less favourably because they have rejected, or submitted to, either form of harassment described above, this also counts as sexual harassment.

Indirect Sex Discrimination occurs when a requirement or condition is applied which, on the face of it, appears to apply equally to men and women, but which in practice can be met by far fewer people of one gender than the other and this condition or requirement cannot be justified.

Victimisation occurs when individuals are discriminated against because they have exercised their rights under the Act.

1.4 The Equality Act 2006

The Equality Act 2006 amends the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and places a statutory duty on public authorities, to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination.

2 The Gender Duty

This duty is made up of two elements: The general duty, and the specific duty:

2.1 General Duty

To meet the 'general duty', while carrying out all of their functions organisations must have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment that is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and discrimination that is unlawful under the Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA)
- To promote equality of opportunities between women and men.
This requires agencies to take action on the most important gender equality issues within their functions. The promotion of equal opportunities between women and men requires the recognition that the two genders are not starting from an equal footing and identical treatment will not always be appropriate. Under the duty authorities also have an obligation to eliminate discrimination and harassment towards current and potential transsexual staff. This duty was extended to trans-sexual service users from December 2007.

2.2 Specific Duty

Trident Housing Group is also required to meet the 'specific' duties and will therefore:

- Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives. In formulating its overall objectives, consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Gather and use information on how our policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- Consult stakeholders (i.e. employees, service users and others,) taking account of relevant information and reviewing the scheme at least every three years.

3. Key areas for Trident

This section looks at key areas of achievement for Trident, it looks at positive practices that Trident already have in place to meet the different needs of men, women, and transgender people with regard to

Recruitment

Training & Development

Pay and benefits

Staff & Customer profiling

3.1 Recruitment

Trident is committed to having a diverse workforce that encourages all staff to maximize their potential and value their work colleagues.

When recruiting staff at all levels, managers receive anonymised applications which do not identify the gender, ethnicity, age or personal details of the applicants thus allowing the short-listing process to be based objectively on skills and knowledge.

The gender make-up of the workforce at different levels of the organisation is monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to the Board through our Key Performance Indicators. We will keep building on this with continued monitoring of ethnicity, disability, gender and age. Also by encouraging the career development of all staff, both part time and full time, through training needs analysis and thorough training plans.

We are also committed to further developing our existing system of policies that will appeal specifically to current and prospective men and women employees.

3.2 Training & Development

Trident will promote equality training for all staff, in order to foster a work environment free from the limitations of traditional views of gender roles, and to support the appreciation and understanding of diversity

In order to promote equality of opportunity, we will consider other initiatives such as single gender training or coaching in management in order to take positive action to address any existing or disclosed inequalities.

We will also work to improve gender sensitive management skills across the company, including an understanding of the value of work/life balance, and basic management tools e.g. appraisal, PDR's (Personal Development Reviews) staff development etc.

3.3 Pay & Benefits

We are committed to identifying any equal pay gaps and eliminating those gaps which cannot satisfactorily be explained on grounds other than gender.

All vacancies are advertised internally, with the relevant details of pay and role profile and are made available to all employees

Through the internal staff newsletter – Your Voice, Your Choice- Trident raises general awareness of all issues including Gender Equality.

3.4 Staff and Customer Profiling

Staff Profiles

As part of their company induction all staff are required to attend mandatory courses

The courses consist of Company Induction, Data Protection and Equality & Diversity.

Attendance on these courses is documented and included in the staff profiles. In addition staff will be asked to provide Trident with information regarding their Race, Gender, Sexuality, Religious beliefs etc. Participants are free to decline giving any personal details that they would prefer to remain private

Details gathered will assist us in maintaining an up to date data base highlighting the needs and requirements of our diverse workforce.

Information is also gathered regarding “additional skills” this would include things such as second languages spoken (including sign) and experiences or strengths that may be an asset to the company.

Customer Profiles

Information gathered from customer surveys and application forms enable the Group to create customer profiles which we will use to review the needs of the communities we house, as well as maintain a comprehensive customer data base.

The data gathered assists us in building new links with communities and allows us to become more focused on our residents. It will also enable our frontline staff to play a more positive role in working with residents, and assist in removing any barriers that may prevent us from fully engaging with all sections of the community.

This in turn will enable us to determine the effectiveness of our policies and procedures, as well as any differences in the way each gender uses services.

4. Where are we now?

As part of our drive to achieve service excellence, we have developed a number of action plans from a self-assessment of the Audit Commission’s Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs).

With particular reference to **KLOE 31-Diversity**, we are already improving our approach to ensure our organisation offers a service that is equal and diverse to all.

We have developed an **Equalities Impact Assessment** process which allows gender issues to be considered alongside all other equality issues. Using a toolkit, assessments are being carried out on new policies and services as they are developed.

We have a policy on the **Prevention of Harassment at Work**. The policy makes explicit reference to sexual harassment, complaints on the basis of which are monitored.

We have a **Public Interest Disclosure or “whistle blowing” policy**, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

We have a **Recruitment and Selection** process to ensure candidates and potential candidates are treated fairly and consistently throughout the process.

We have a **Maternity, Maternity Support, Paternity and Adoption Pay and Leave Policy** which exceeds statutory requirements and meets best practice.

We have a **Parental Leave Policy** which permits parents to take a period of time off to look after a child or make arrangements for the child’s welfare.

We operate a **Working from Home policy** which recognises that a more flexible working arrangement can improve work-life balance for staff and can increase productivity for the organisation.

Trident has a **Domestic Violence Policy** which states our commitment to offering assistance to any of our residents who are suffering from domestic violence, or threats of violence. We are committed to raising awareness of domestic violence and abuse as a serious crime.

4.1 Employee Profile

As at 28 February 2009 Trident employed **508** staff.

The gender breakdown is as follows:

Employees	Females	Males	Transgender	% Female	% Male	Total
All staff	374	134	0	74%	26%	508
Senior Managers	41	13	0	76%	24%	54
Group Executive (Director and Asst Director level)	3	7	0	30%	70%	10
Board Members	6	5	0	54.5%	45.5%	11

4.2 GES Survey Results

In March 2009 a survey was conducted with Trident staff to canvas their opinions with regard to Gender Equality within the organisation. The survey was sent out to a cross section of 70 randomly selected employees. Returned forms were anonymous to encourage honest responses

The results were as follows

Survey Question	Yes	No	Don't know	Target answer %
1. Do you feel that Trident has an inclusive culture for all genders?	53	0	0	100%
2. Have you ever felt that you have been treated less favourably by Trident because of your gender?	2	51	0	96%
3. Do you think that any Trident policies or practices inadvertently discriminate against you because of your gender?	0	52	1	98%
4. Have you ever felt that you have been harassed or bullied within the workplace because of your gender?	3	50	0	94%
5. Do you feel that Trident treats employees equally in <u>pay scales</u> with regard to their gender?	37	1	15*	69%
6. Do you feel that Trident treats employees equally in <u>flexible working</u> with regard to their gender?	46	4	3**	86%
7. Do you feel that Trident treats everyone equally in <u>recruitment and promotion opportunities</u> with regard to their gender?	52	1	0	98%
8. Do you feel that Trident treats everyone equally in <u>grievance and disciplinary issues</u> with regard to their gender?	47	0	6***	88%

9. Do you feel that Trident treat everyone equally in <u>family friendly policies / work life balance</u> with regard to their gender?	42	6	5****	79%
10. Do you feel that Trident is sensitive to the needs of men women and transgender people?	43	5	5****	85%

*Q5 . 15 of the responses indicated that they were unaware of other colleagues pay levels so felt that they were unable to answer this question

**Q6 3 of the responses felt that they had insufficient knowledge on this to answer the question

*** Q8 5 of the responses had never experienced grievance or disciplinary issues and felt they could not answer the question

**** Q9 2 of the responses felt that they had insufficient knowledge on this area to answer this question, 3 had no requirement for family friendly policies and felt they could not answer the question

*****Q10 5 of the responses felt that they had insufficient experience of Trident's sensitivity to the needs of men women and transgender people to answer this question

Survey Participation

Male = 18 Female = 31 Transgender = 0 Preferred not to say = 4

Total number of responses **53** out of **70** = Return rate of **75.7 %**

5. Data

This section looks at the data we have in place now, and will need in the future to ensure that our action plans and strategies are based on relevant, accurate information and opinions.

5.1 Involving Residents

Trident is dedicated to ensuring that all resident associations, and community groups, with which it works, are as representative and inclusive as possible. We believe this is crucial if we are to guarantee that the development and welfare of the whole community is promoted. We will ensure that the facilities and services we provide are accessible to all, so that all sections of the community are positively encouraged to participate in the shaping the services and activities we provide. We will

- **Assess** the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- **Implement** the actions set out in its scheme within three years, unless it is unreasonable or impracticable to do so
- **Report** against the scheme every year, reviewing the scheme at least every three years.
- **Publish** results on a regular basis ensuring that all stakeholders are included in the communication

5.2 Equality Impact Assessments

Trident will use equality impact assessments as the main tool for assessing whether we are meeting our gender equality duties. The Group will use information gathered to evaluate how well we comply with legislation. This assessment will be carried out in a way that it prioritises key areas of work, and enables a manageable programme of development.

Prioritisation

Because it is not possible for us to impact assess every service, function, policy and Procedure, before our preferred deadline, we will undertake an exercise to determine our priorities for the next three years.

Where service areas have been identified as a high priority they will be subjected to a full impact assessment, as long as the resources needed, and the likelihood of finding relevant information, suggests that this is practical.

Priority levels will be given to these services to ensure impact assessments are carried out in a manageable way over a three year period.

5.3 Gathering Information

Through a range of methods Trident will gather information on the effect of our policies and practices, and the data collected will be a key part of this work.

This will include analysis of the effect on the recruitment, development and retention of employees of both sexes.

The information will be analysed and this will be used when reviewing effectiveness of the group's action plan. to support future Equality Impact Assessments.

The qualitative methods we will use to gather this information will include:

- Staff surveys
- Customer surveys
- Mystery shoppers
- Feedback from the Staff Consultative Committee
- Analysis of complaints
- Research

5.4 Performance Indicators

Systems that are already in place for gathering information in relation to race and disability will be adapted to collect information on recruitment, career development, retention, and reasons for leaving, as well as information on pay scales. This data will give us an objective picture of our workplace, indicating whether we are implementing policies and practices which may negatively impact on women employees in indirect ways.

We already have in place a suite of indicators that enable us to assess whether we are meeting our key equality & diversity priorities, our statutory duties, and regulatory Requirement's including gender equality.

5.5 Using the information

We aim to make gender equality central to the way we work and to eliminate inequality and discrimination. We will take a proactive approach to meeting the duty, demonstrating action and positive change.

In complying with the duty, we expect services to improve and to use the information to achieve the following:

- Better informed decision making
- More effective targeting of policy and resources
- Strategic use (to assist in the development of plans for service delivery and the identification of high level trends)
- Improved development of plans for service delivery
- A more effective use of skills in the workforce.

Also to:

- Support our impact assessment program
- Facilitate the development of information gathering, around gender and other equality strands
- Critically assess whether services have improved for service users
- Review the effectiveness of our action plan
- Consult with stakeholders
- Assess the impact on gender equality of our existing and new policies and procedures.

6. Monitoring & Review

The Gender Equality Scheme, Action Plan, and consultation exercises will be monitored, reviewed and reported at various levels:

Board & management level

The GES, Action Plan, and consultation exercises will be reported to the Board and Management Teams as part of the annual review of the Equality and Diversity Strategy

Staff

The GES, Action Plan, and consultation exercises will be available to staff via the normal briefing process

Customers

Information will also be published and made available to customers with a summary included in the resident's newsletter. Feedback will be given to service users via the newsletter and Residents' groups.

Aids and Adaptations

We will carry out impact assessments regarding of how aids and adaptations are provided. Ensuring there are no gender related issues affecting the application for, and processing of aids & adaptations requests.

Community Development

We will carry out impact assessments regarding resident involvement. Ensuring there are no gender related issues affecting formal or informal resident involvement.

Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the GES is vital in order to meet the requirements of the Gender Duty. In addition we need to ensure that the scheme is effectively implemented to achieve the targets set out in our action plan.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding this Gender Equality Scheme, please contact Trident's Organisational Development Department on 0121 633 4633 or visit the comments section of our website, www.trident-ha.org.uk