

PUBLIC SECTOR

EQUALITY DUTY REPORT

January 2016





PRACTICING FAIRNESS
VALUING DIVERSITY
PROMOTING INCLUSION



Introduction

Welcome to Northampton Partnership Homes' (NPH) first annual report on what we have done and are continuing to do to advance our commitment to practice fairness, value diversity and promote inclusion.

The 'Equality Duty' requires public sector organisations to publish relevant and proportionate information demonstrating compliance with the law and give an overview of the position in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

We set out a summary of our approach to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals and groups from unlawful discrimination based on or relating to their 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The report focusses on key data and provides examples to demonstrate how we implement our commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity in the way we work.

If you want a copy of this report in large print, alternative format or have it explained in another language please let us know. We also welcome your views about this report. To do any of this please ring us on 0300 330 7003 or email us at comms@northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk. Alternatively, [click here](#) to get in touch with us via our website.



Mike Kay
Chief Executive
Northampton Partnership Homes



About Northampton Partnership Homes

NPH was set up on 5 January 2015 to manage and improve Council-owned homes on behalf of Northampton Borough Council (the Council). As an 'Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) NPH is a separate, not-for-profit company owned by the Council. People living in Council homes remain tenants and leaseholders of the Council. NPH provides the following services on behalf of the Council:

- Allocate and let empty homes
- Carry out day-to-day repairs and long term property maintenance
- Deal with tenancy and housing management matters
- Provide support to tenants to enable them live independently
- Engage with residents and listen to their views
- Manage the Ecton Lane Park Traveller site

NPH has its own Board of Directors that oversees housing services provided to Council tenants. The Board of 16 includes five Council nominees, five tenants and four independent members and two NPH employees.

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board, and is supported by 4 Executive Directors. We employ around 250 staff, including an in-house team that deliver the responsive repairs service.

If you would like to know more about Northampton Partnership Homes visit our website (<http://www.northamptonpartnershiphomes.org.uk/about-nph>) or [click here](#) to go straight to the website.

Our approach to Equality and Diversity

We respect everyone's right to be treated fairly, and do not tolerate unlawful discrimination. Respect for residents and colleagues means valuing people, acting with honesty, integrity and professionalism, being open, welcoming and communicating well, demonstrating leadership and taking personal responsibility.

Equality is about ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to access homes, services, jobs and contracts regardless of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, colour, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caste and other irrelevant factors such as appearance.



Practicing fairness and valuing diversity are fundamental to our vision of providing homes which **'enable people to live happy and healthy lives in enriched communities'** and the mission to **'provide services which endeavour to meet the needs and aspirations of all tenants and residents'**.

Having an inclusive approach is structural to our values of **'listening and responding'** and **'achieving more with others'**.

Northampton's community

Northampton is a market town spread over an area of over 80 square kilometres in the East Midlands. It is the largest district in the county of Northamptonshire. The 2011 Census data shows the following about the population of Northampton. Where available, latest trends are shown. Figures are rounded up and may not add up to 100%.

Protected characteristic		Census 2011	Estimate 2014 (where available)
Total population		212,069	219,500
Number of households		88,731	
Age		%	%
18-24		9.9	The proportion of people aged 65+ is 14.2%. Estimates show an additional 16k and 1.7k of people over 65 and 90+ respectively by 2025
25-64		54.1	
65-74		7.0	
75-84		4.4	
85 and over		2%	
Disability		%	%
Day to day activities not limited		84.2	
Day to day activities limited a lot		7.2	
Day to day activities limited a little		8.7	
Race / Ethnicity		%	%
White	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	76.6	76.6
	Irish	1.4	1.4
	Gypsy or Irish traveller	0.1	0.1
	Other White	6.5	6.5
Mixed	White and Black Caribbean	1.5	1.5
	White and Black African	0.5	0.5



	White and Asian	0.6	0.6
	Other Mixed	0.7	0.7
Asian	Indian	2.5	2.5
	Pakistani	0.7	0.7
	Bangladeshi	1.6	1.6
	Chinese	0.8	0.8
	Other Asian	0.9	0.9
	Black	African	3.1
Caribbean		1.4	1.4
Other Black		0.6	0.6
Other	Arab	0.3	
	Any other ethnic group	0.4	
Communicating in English			
Cannot speak English well or at all		5000	
Sex / Gender		%	%
Female		51	51
Male		49	49
Religion		%	%
Buddhist		0.4	
Christian		56.6	
Hindu		1.6	
Jewish		0.1	
Muslim		4.2	
No religion		29.4	
Other		0.5	
Sikh		0.5	
Religion not stated		6.7	
Sexual Orientation		%	%
Bisexual		2011 Census did not cover questions relating to sexual identity	2% of Northampton's population are thought to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender
Gay man			
Heterosexual			
Lesbian			
Other / prefer not to say			



The 2011 Census found the following about living arrangements for Northampton's households:

Property tenure	%
Home ownership	
Owned outright	25.1
Owned with mortgage or loan	37.5
Shared ownership	1.2
Rented	
Social rented from the Council	12.7
Social rented from Registered Providers	4.2
Rented from private landlords	17.8
Living rent free	1.1

About our tenants

We know everyone is different and has different needs. Thus, providing the same services, in the same way, does not always mean that everyone has equal access to our services. A key priority is to understand the needs of our individual residents and diverse communities to enable us to tailor services to meet individual needs as far as possible.

Therefore, we collect profiling data about our residents. Information is gathered when new tenants join NPH and when existing tenants make contact with us. There has been a real drive to collect as much data as possible within the first year of our operation. Further work is underway to fill key gaps, especially around physical disabilities and support needs of our residents.

An initial assessment of the data collected to date has helped to develop NPH's Equality and Diversity Policy and Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan includes actions to further interrogate data to get an insight about gaps in services, operational priorities and service improvement. The analysis will also support us to make evidence-based decisions.

The following table provides an overview of the information we have about our current tenants and those who participate in resident engagement opportunities.



Protected characteristics	%	%
Age	All Residents	Involved Residents
Under 25	5.91%	2.40%
25-55	56.83%	50.48%
Over 55	37.66%	47.12%
Gender	All Residents	Involved Residents
Male	39.41%	42.72%
Female	60.58%	57.28%
Transgender	0.00%	0.00%
Ethnicity	All Residents	Involved Residents
Non-White/Black & Minority Ethnic	15.51%	17.37%
White	84.49%	82.63%
Sexual Orientation	All Residents	Involved Residents
Heterosexual	97.54%	94.33%
Homosexual	1.05%	1.89%
Bisexual	1.41%	3.78%
Religion	All Residents	Involved Residents
No religion	32.96%	18.89%
Christian (all denominations)	56.48%	71.11%
Buddhist	0.48%	1.11%
Hindu	0.23%	0.00%
Jewish	0.11%	0.56%
Muslim	6.96%	3.33%
Sikh	0.06%	0.00%
Other religions	2.75%	5.00%



Examples of our commitment to fairness and inclusion

Proving accessible services

- Researching best practice before launching a new website in June 2015 and ensuring that it is user-friendly and caters for a wide range of needs such as dyslexia and eye-sight problems. For example, it includes facilities such as an interactive dictionary, text-resize, read-aloud facilities and translation.
- Tenants visit our staff based at the One Stop Shop at St Giles Square in Northampton City Centre. The building is fully accessible for people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams, has hearing loops and type-talk facilities, accessible toilets and baby changing facilities.
- Customers who request information in large print, alternative formats and different languages are provided information in the appropriate way.
- We use plain language in all published literature.

Providing housing to those in greatest need

NPH manages the Council’s Housing Register. The profile of people who are on the Housing Register has been collected. Plans are in place to interrogate the information to see if any particular groups are under-represented on the Housing Register and review questions relating to disability-related housing needs in a way that allows comparison with population trends.

The breakdown of those on the Housing Register is as follows:

Protected Characteristic	
Age	%
16-18	1.25
18-25	19.5
26-45	49.5
46-55	15.5
56-65	8.25
66-74	3.75
75-84	1.6
85 and over	0.65
Race / Ethnicity	%
Asian / Asian British / Indian / Pakistani	3.6



Black / Black British / Caribbean / African	10.3
Chinese / Other ethnic group	0.3
Irish	0.9
Mixed	3.7
White British / English / Scottish / Welsh	57.7
Prefer not to say / don't know	23.5
Sex / Gender	%
Female	56
Male	44
Religion	%
Buddhist	0.53
Christian	37.92
Hindu	0.5
Jewish	0.12
Muslim	5.87
No religion	34.86
Other	3.63
Sikh	0.18
Prefer not to say	5.43
Unknown	10.97
Sexual Orientation	%
Bisexual	1.31
Gay man	1.03
Heterosexual	82.54
Lesbian	0.94
Other / prefer not to say	5.19
Unknown	8.99

The following case studies provide an insight into how we meet deal with diverse needs and prevent people from becoming homeless.

Practical examples of what we do

Rough sleeper

Mr D, aged 64, has been a rough sleeper for several years following a relationship breakdown and loss of his home. We worked with him and housed him in temporary housing during severe weather. He was provided with washing facilities, warm clothes and hot meals. Routine and regular intervention resulted in Mr D's welfare benefits and private pension funds to resume and prepare him for permanent housing. He now lives



in a sheltered housing scheme where he continues to receive support from NPH staff.

Mental health

Ms S, aged 30, has not lived in a permanent home since she was a teenager. She has a mental health condition, a long history of addiction to Class A drugs and significant debts. We have placed her in temporary accommodation and are working with her to apply for welfare benefits and make life-style changes. She plans to attend training sessions to help her with money management and enrol college courses to improve her English and Maths skills with a view to enhancing her employment prospects. Our aim is to get Ms S in a position of living independently in a permanent home.

Comment from Council staff

'I would like to pass on personal thanks to colleagues at NPH who are always co-operative and helpful, and make a tough job easier with their continued support.'

Enabling tenants to maintain tenancies and preventing homelessness

Our operations are based on the fundamental aim of housing people. This often means intervening to support tenants to live independently and maintain their tenancies. Here are just a handful of examples of how we do this.

Practical examples of what we do

Enabling people to live independently

Ms X, our tenant, appeared to be isolated, unwell and agitated. She had stopped seeing the Community Psychiatric Service as she had discharged herself because of fear of being placed in a mental institution. We worked with her and her medical team. She now receives home visits from the Community Psychiatric Nurse who monitors her health. Providing such support means that people are less likely to be 'institutionalised'.

Reducing isolation

During a tenancy visit we found Miss D living in inhabitable conditions due to severe arthritis and significant mobility issues. We worked with her to claim Attendance Allowance. The successful claim means that Miss D now employs someone to help her with cleaning and other tasks. She is well and lives in a clean and pleasant environment. Having a carer also means that Miss D is visited by someone frequently and regularly, thereby reducing isolation.



Stopping eviction

Mr P is our tenant and was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He had significant rent arrears and was facing a court case which was likely to result in him being evicted as he was not willing to engage with us. We did not want Mr P to lose his home so, with his permission, we worked with Mr P's son. NPH adjourned the court hearing as Mr P agreed to accept help from an independent financial advice agency. Mr P is now paying off the rent arrears, is making regular rent payments and receives help from a specialist psychiatric service provider.

Reducing fuel costs

NPH is improving the condition of properties by investing significant sums of money to provide modern, warm and well-maintained properties. We know that heating costs are a particular concern for older and vulnerable people, many of whom live in our bungalow. Therefore, we prioritised bungalows for the installation of Solar Panels. A large proportion of the work to the bungalows is now complete.

Celebrating diversity

NPH staff, Police and members of the local community celebrated Mr B's 104th birthday. Mr B regularly attends a Breakfast Group where he can meet his friends and play dominoes.

The Winter 2015 edition of NPH Voice, the quarterly magazine for tenants and leaseholders, included contributions from customers and staff about how different communities across the world celebrate Christmas, for example Polish, Russian and South American.

Maximising partnership working

NPH works in partnership with a range of statutory, community, voluntary, faith and private organisations to deliver our strategic objectives. We work with partners who share our commitment to equality and diversity. We have a responsibility to ensure that anyone who works with us or acts on our behalf do not discriminate unlawfully. We especially value working with those agencies who help to enhance our tenants' lives and their homes.



Practical examples of what we do

Access for people living in rural areas

NPH was represented at the recent 'Market Day' held at the Duston Library and Children's Centre in November 2015. The event involved a wide range of organisation who came together to show-case their work to local residents living in a rural setting. A key partner was the Spurgeons Children's Charity that works with families across Northampton. The event also provided the chance for staff to network with other agencies and discuss best practice.

Stronger support for residents of Ecton Lane Traveller site

Over the last few months we have been working towards a more inclusive approach to managing the Traveller Site. For example, residents now receive general communications, such as NPH Voice, our regular magazine for customers, to traveller communities living at the Ecton Lane site. Residents are actively encouraged to attend training courses organised for NPH tenants.

Northamptonshire Centre for Independent Living

Training events held at the Council's Guildhall for the general public are well publicised to our tenants. These include the opportunity for people to find out more about the work of the Northamptonshire Centre for Independent Living, a subject that affects a significant majority of our residents.

Resident safety

Hoarding is recognised as a mental health condition that poses significant risks for property owners and neighbours and is costly to deal with. In order to enable staff to deal with such issues we have worked in partnership with the Chartered Institute for Housing who delivered training and briefing for key staff. Cases would need to be dealt with in partnership with local agencies to ensure an effective and speedy approach.



Creating the right culture for employees

In November 2015 NPH has 240 employees. Their profile is as follows:

Protected Characteristic	
Age	%
Under 21	Less than 1%
22-30	10
31-40	25
41-50	30
51-60	27
61 and over	8
Race / Ethnicity	%
Asian / Asian British / Indian / Pakistani	2
Black / Black British / Caribbean / African	3
Chinese / Other ethnic group	0
Irish	0
Mixed	1
White British / English / Scottish / Welsh	56
Prefer not to say / don't know	38
Sex / Transgender status	%
Female	45
Male	55
Religion	%
Buddhist	0
Christian	32
Hindu	Less than 1
Jewish	0
Muslim	Less than 1
No religion	14
Other	Less than 1
Sikh	0
Prefer not to say	50
Sexual Orientation	%
Bisexual	Less than 1
Gay man	0
Heterosexual	44
Lesbian	0
Unknown	55



Practical examples of what we do

Bring Back Pride – Staff Charter

Our Staff Charter includes a range of ways in which staff are expected to take personal responsibility and ‘make a difference’. These include to:

- Deliver excellent customer services to our diverse range of communities;
- Support victims of anti-social behaviour;
- Make a difference with and for the community;
- Offer access to the same level of service to the whole community.
- Empower our communities.

Doing the right things for staff

From time to time, and depending on the needs of the organisation, staff can work from home.

All staff are offered free flu jabs once a year.

Staff have access to Confidential Care, a telephone advice service that is available 24 hours a day throughout the year.

Reasonable adjustments are made to enable staff with disabilities to so that they are able to carry out day to day duties.

Whenever possible, flexible working arrangements are considered for people.

Supporting staff to do the right thing

Staff are encouraged to organise and take part in a number of charitable initiatives. These include:

- Donating to the local Foodbank, especially towards the Christmas Appeal.
- Organising events to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Charity though coffee mornings.
- Supporting staff to work with 16 young people aged 16-25 from the Princes Trust’s Personal Development Programme to transform a community facility known as the Arbury Community Hub.




Equality objectives

Equality and Diversity Strategic aims

The Company’s overall Delivery Plan for the next 5 years is based on the Council’s priorities to invest in Council properties and improve the standard of services provided to tenants and leaseholders, Equality and Diversity is an integral part of what we do at NPH. The following table demonstrates the links between NPH’s strategic objectives and what we aim to achieve under this policy:

Strategic Objective 1: Deliver and maintain high quality homes and estates	
Equality Objective 1	Take into account diverse needs when dealing with property repairs, maintenance, planned works and property development
Strategic Objective 2: Deliver high quality and customer focused housing services	
Equality Objective 2	Ensure that homes and services are accessible and in a way that meets customers’ needs
Strategic Objective 3: Improve empowerment, opportunity and access for all	
Equality Objective 3	Provide opportunities for diverse customers to engage with and provide views to NPH
Strategic Objective 4: Develop and maximise partnerships to build stronger, safer and thriving communities in Northampton	
Equality Objective 4	Work with external stakeholders to meet diverse needs and reflect good practice
Strategic Objective 5: Be an open, inclusive, effectively managed and trusted organisation	
Equality Objective 5	Ensure that board members, staff and agents are appointed in a fair and transparent manner, are appropriately trained to help deliver equality priorities, reflect good practice, monitor performance and demonstrate accountability to all stakeholders





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