

Equality for Disabled People

**Trans-Pennine Housing
Disability Equality Scheme**

This document is available on our websites www.ph2k.org.uk or www.greenvalehomes.co.uk

Also available:

- **Summary Version**

- **Easy Read booklet**

If you need a copy of this document translating or in larger print, Braille, audio tape or by email, please contact any Pennine Housing or Green Vale Homes office.

If you would like to make any comments about our Disability Equality Scheme or would like to be invited to any future Involvement Events, then please contact either:

Sue Lewis
Head of Supported Housing Services
Pennine Housing
Park View House
Woodvale Office Park
Woodvale Road
BRIGHOUSE
West Yorkshire
HD6 4AB

Tel: 01484 824322
Email: sue.lewis@ph2k.org.uk

Or

Peter Johnson
Green Vale Homes
Green Vale Court
New Hall Hey Road
Rawtenstall
Rosse dale
BB4 6HR

Tel: 01706 836 304
Email: peter.johnson@greenvalehomes.co.uk

Contents	Page
Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Social Model of Disability	6
The Legal Context	7
Involving disabled people	8 - 10
Our Aims	11
Our Disability Action Plan	12
Summary	13
Appendix 1 – The meaning of disability	14 - 15
Appendix 2 – Statistical Information	16 -17
Appendix 3 - Key Performance Indicators	18

Abbreviations used in this document

- DDA – Disability Discrimination Act
- DED – Disability Equality Duty
- DES – Disability Equality Scheme
- DAP – Disability Action Plan

Foreword

Trans-Pennine Housing is delighted to be able to present its first Disability Equality Scheme (DES). We are fully committed to providing equality of opportunity and embrace diversity. “**Everyone’s different, everyone matters**” is one of our core values. Getting it right for disabled people is therefore fundamental to achieving our aims, both as a service provider and as an employer.

However, we recognise that there actually a lot more that we can do to ensure that our disabled customers have an equal experience, be that as customers of our services or as employees. As a Company that prides itself on being a learning Organisation with a strong culture of continuous improvement, we believe that the DES will help us address our gaps and make real improvements for our disabled customers.

Disabled people are already a significant part of Trans-Pennine Housing’s customer base and we realise, with changing demographics, numbers will increase. Getting it right for disabled people must therefore be an essential part of our mainstream activities. We must also drive forward cultural change throughout the Organisation, based on the social model of disability. Disabled people are not a “*special needs*” group with “*special requirements*”. They are ordinary people who want to live ordinary lives and participate equally in all aspects of society. We therefore need to play our part in breaking down the barriers and improve our approach,

“*Thinking like a customer*” underpins our approach to customer care. We need to strength this, to reflect the disabled customer’s perspective. “*Thinking like a disabled customer*” is what we aim to do, in everything that we do. Of course, getting it right for disabled people will help us get it right for many of our other customers too.

We also want to ensure we fully recognise the talent and potential of disabled people and encourage them to become our employees and value those who do.

Trans-Pennine Housing therefore welcomes the Disability Equality Scheme. We believe this provides a significant catalyst and an excellent framework to drive forward improvements to our services for disabled people.

Most of all, our Disability Equality Scheme it’s about helping us to make a real difference to the lives of our disabled customers. We would therefore like to thank all those customers, staff and partners who have given their time to help develop Trans-Pennine Housing’s first Disability Equality Scheme. And also for their continuing involvement which will make sure we do indeed improve the lives of disabled people.

Chair of the Trans-Pennine Board
RB Metcalfe

Chief Executive Trans-Pennine Housing
Tom Miskell

Introduction

This is our first Disability Equality Scheme. We believe it gives us an excellent framework to drive forward improvements to our services, for both disabled customers and staff. It is a crucial document that clearly sets out what we need to improve and how we will achieve this. The detailed actions for improvement can be seen in our Disability Action Plan.

Our Disability Equality Scheme also sets out how we have involved disabled people in developing our action plan and deciding on the priorities. We have also used the development of our Scheme to capture and acknowledge what things we already do well for disabled people and to raise awareness of disability equality with customers, staff, partners and our Board Members.

Trans-Pennine's Disability Action Plan will not be standalone document, divorced from mainstream activities or remote to mainstream staff. We will *make it real* and *make it happen* by incorporating the relevant actions into service-specific action plans across the Group.

For example, actions that are relevant to Asset Management will be incorporated into the Asset Management service action plan and delivered by that team.

Our Scheme is very much a starting point and a framework for both the short and longer term. There is a lot to be done and realistically, we won't be able to address all areas of concern to disabled people straight away. Our action plan will therefore set out our priorities for the next three years, concentrating on those areas of our business that will have the greatest impact on improving the lives of disabled people.

As Trans-Pennine Housing is the parent Company of a Group structure, comprising two subsidiary Companies (Pennine Housing 2000 and Green Vale Homes), our scheme has shared aims, and the associated action plan has overarching priorities for the Trans-Pennine Housing Group. Our action plan does also include specific actions to ensure that it reflects local priorities of tenants in Calderdale, Sheffield and Rossendale.

Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability was developed by disabled people themselves, in opposition to the traditional medical model. The key difference between these two is the perception of the '**problem**'. In the medical model, disabled people are seen to be the 'problem' and focuses upon curing or managing the problem. They are also considered as being unable to participate in society because of their impairments or medial conditions.

In contrast, the social model is based upon the belief that it is society who disables people due to the barriers that it has created and is not due to their impairments or medical conditions. These barriers are not just physical but also attitudinal, organisational and environmental. For example:

- **attitudes** -prejudice and stereotypes
- **organisational** - inflexible policies, procedures and working practices, inaccessible information
- **environmental** – inaccessible buildings, housing, transport

The problem therefore is society's problem and the aim of the social model is to dismantle society's barriers which exclude, disadvantage and limit the life chances of disabled people.

The Housing Association sector has worked hard to improve services and provide homes for disabled people. Indeed, this is part of the reason that social housing is often the tenure of choice for disabled people. However, we need to recognise that we have still got some way to go to embracing the social model. We do often still define disabled people as "*vulnerable*" or "*special needs*" who need "*specialist housing*" or "*specially-adapted properties*."

Our DES acknowledges our need to do more and play our part in breaking down the barriers.

The Legal Context

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The DDA (Amendment) introduced the Disability Equality Duty (DED) which places a statutory duty on *public sector bodies* to promote disability equality and eliminate discrimination.

Whilst the DDA has helped to address issues of discrimination, there is an acknowledgement that the focus is very much on individuals and reasonable adjustments. This does not achieve equality of opportunity.

Therefore, the intention behind the Disability Equality Duty is to ensure that public sector organisations **proactively** improve their services to disabled people and improve services as a whole for all disabled people. This includes taking positive action to promote disability equality.

The Disability Equality Duty is made up of two parts – a **general** duty and a **specific** duty.

A. The General duty

This requires that, when carrying out its functions, public bodies need to have due regard to the need to:

1. promote equality of opportunity
2. promote positive attitudes
3. eliminate discrimination
4. eliminate harassment
5. encourage involvement
6. give favourable treatment, if necessary

B. The Specific duty

This requires public sector organisations to produce a Disability Equality Scheme. This provides a framework to help achieve the requirements of general duty.

Although not classed as public sector organisations, Housing Associations need to be able to prove they are working to improve disability equality by their Regulatory Body, the Housing Corporation. As a minimum, Housing Associations are expected to have Disability Action Plans in place.

However, Trans-Pennine Housing recognises that the most effective way of improving disability equality is to develop a Disability Equality Scheme. The DES provides a structured framework to drawing up an action plan, to make disability a strategic priority and to ensure disabled people are at the heart of it all. For these reasons, Trans-Pennine has developed both a DES and action plans rather than complying with the minimum requirement.

Involving Disabled People

Involving tenants is already one of Trans-Pennine's key strengths and our tenants drive forward service improvements through the many existing consultation and involvement arrangements.

However, we recognised that to develop our DES, we needed to strengthen our involvement arrangements for disabled people, including needing to reach those with hidden or less visible disabilities. Green Vale Homes did not have a specific mechanism in place to involve disabled customers. And whilst Pennine Housing has been involving disabled people since 2004 via its Disability Forum, the membership was not wide-reaching enough. An impact assessment by Pennine's Forum earlier in the year had identified the need for different arrangements to be put into place, in preparation for developing the DES.

Our involvement plan included various stages which are explained below:

Who was involved?

In order to put disabled people at the heart of our DES, our starting point was to hold involvement events for our disabled customers across the Trans-Pennine Housing Group. Local events were held in Calderdale, Sheffield and Rossendale. The events were themed around three key questions:

1. **What do we do well just now?**
2. **What needs to be improved?**
3. **Of these, what are the most important?**

Similar events then followed with the Equality & Diversity Steering Group, partners who work with disabled people, Board Members and staff. This helped to ensure that issues to do with the wide range of disabilities were included at the action plan development stage. Details of those involved are listed below to help illustrate the diversity of representatives.

a) Partners involved:

- Calderdale MBC's Disability Liaison Officer
- Tenant Representative from Calderdale MBC's Disability Forum
- Calderdale Council's Sensory Impairment Service
- Calderdale Health Trust Community Occupational Therapy Service
- Calderdale MBC Accessible Homes Agency (via the ongoing review of adaptations service)
- Various Support Services – representing people with learning disabilities and mental health problems.
- Rossendale Council - Housing Services
- Lancashire Council - Social Services reps
- Rossendale Age Concern

b) Staff representatives

- Human Resources

- Tenant Involvement Team
- Housing Management Team
- Antisocial behaviour Team
- Asset Management Team
- Supported Housing Services Team
- Pennine Housing Management Team

Staff's views from the annual consultation with disabled employees have also been incorporated into the action planning process.

C) Board involvement included:

- Board of Trans-Pennine Housing
- Board of Green Vale Homes
- Board of Pennine Housing 2000

The Equality and Diversity Tenant Champion from Pennine's Board attended all the Calderdale events.

Whilst the main purpose of the events was to identify priorities for the Disability Action Plan, the events were also used as a training opportunity to help raise awareness and understanding of disability equality and the principles of the Scheme.

What Next?

Following the involvement events, a draft copy of the DES and action plan were drawn up. A summary version of the DES was sent to tenant representatives and partners, including our Tenant Board Members. The final scheme was then approved by the Boards.

The DES will be available to disabled customers via the website, together with the associated Disability Action Plan, a summary version of the DES and an Easy Read booklet. An article about our DES will also be included in the January edition of our tenants' magazines.

Making It Happen

Our Boards have overall responsibility for the Disability Equality Scheme. The Executive Directors of both Pennine Housing 2000 and Green Vale Homes are responsible for ensuring that is put into action.

Board Members, staff and our key partners all have a role to play in helping us to meet our duty to promote disability equality.

The DES and action plan will be rolled out to all staff via team briefing sessions in February 2008. This will then enable key priorities to be incorporated into service-specific action plans that are developed annually in March. We also intend to develop Disability Champions in each staff team and mainstream impact assessments into service reviews, policy and procedures and working practices.

Monitoring and Review

Progress on the action plan will be monitored every quarter by the Trans-Pennine Equality Steering Group, led by Trans-Pennine's Director of Corporate Services. More importantly, the action plan will be reviewed annually with our customers and partners to check what progress has been made. This review will include an impact assessment by our customers to determine if we have actually made a difference to the lives of disabled people. This will be done through a **Disability Involvement event**, held annually. This event will also allow customers and partners to be involved in identifying what further improvements need to be made.

A summary of the review will be presented annually to the Trans-Pennine Board and its two subsidiary Boards (Pennine Housing 2000 and Green Vale Homes).

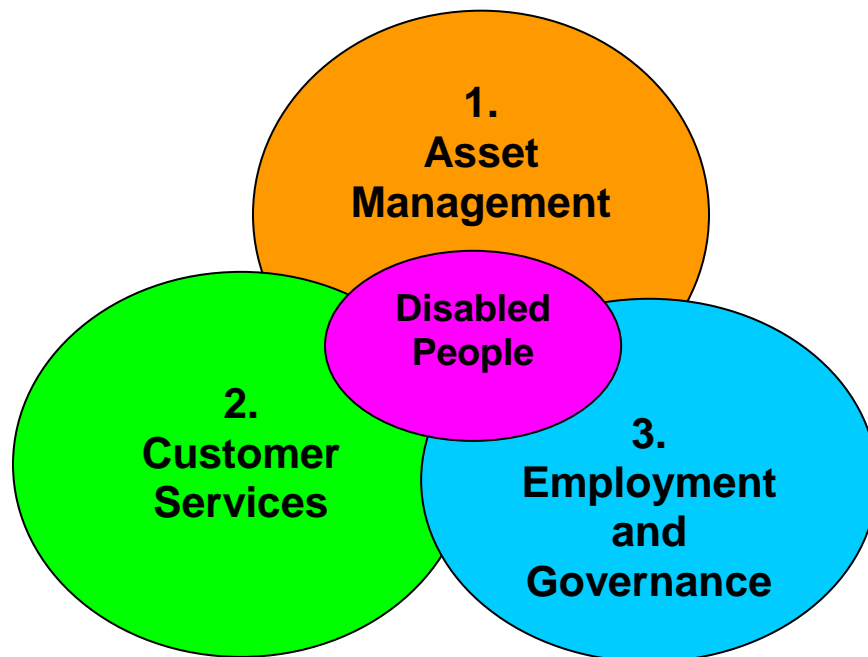
This review will be published on our websites and in our tenants' magazines. Staff will be informed via team briefings.

Our Aims

We want our DES to make a real difference so our approach is outcome-based. It will concentrate on achieving three strategic aims:

1. making our homes more accessible
2. making our services more inclusive
3. Making sure disabled people are brought into the heart of our Organisation, as customers and staff.

Based upon the priorities of our customers, the diagram below sets out the three main areas that we will be focusing upon.



Our Disability Action Plan

The Disability Action Plan (DAP) sets out the priorities for Trans-Pennine Housing's companies, Pennine Housing and Green Vale Homes. The DAP focuses on the key functions that impact most on disabled people and on making real and practical improvements. The DAP brings together both the priorities of disabled customers, staff and the strategic priorities of the Organisation.

The DAP covers a three year timescale. The most important actions will be done in the first year. These Year One priorities are highlighted in red in the action plan. The other actions in the plan will be reviewed with tenants and partners at the annual Involvement event and priorities agreed for Year 2.

- **Year 1 - January 2008 to Dec 2008**
- Year 2 – January 2009 – Dec 2009
- Year 3 – January 2010 – Dec 2010

As shown in the diagram on page 11, the Disability Action Plan has been developed around three key areas. The main objectives are summarised below.

1. Asset Management

- **Design** – incorporate inclusive design principles into new build and refurbishments
- **Repairs** - provide a service that is consistently responsive, flexible and tailored to each person's individual requirements
- **Adaptations** – a timely and easy to access adaptations service, including small adaptations and adjustments.

2. Customer Services

- **Information** - that is accessible and available for disabled people
- **Communication** – develop methods of communication that are tailored to individual requirements
- **Lettings** - fair access and support to disabled people in terms of our Choice-Based Lettings Scheme (Calderdale) and lettings arrangements in Sheffield and Rossendale
- **Anti-social behaviour** – policies, procedures and working practices that recognise and support both disabled victims and perpetrators

3. Employment and Governance

- **Inclusion** - creating an inclusive culture for disabled employees (both current and potential)
- **Customer involvement** – making sure disabled customers have the chance to get involved at all levels within the Organisation
- **Change our culture** – making sure our thinking and approach is based upon the social model of disability
- **Accessible offices** - ensuring that our offices are accessible and adjustments made for disabled customers and employees
- **Mainstreaming** – ensuring our priorities on disability equality are incorporated into our strategic objectives and service action plans.

Summary

- Do nothing for us without us.
- Break down the barriers that disable and exclude us
- Make disability a strategic priority and a mainstream activity
- Be proactive
- Think like a disabled customer in everything you do
- Getting it right for us will get it right for many other customers too
- Make a real difference to our lives

These are the key messages from disabled people. This is the spirit of the Disability Equality Duty. These are the aims of Trans-Pennine Housing's Disability Equality Scheme. We are committed to achieving our aims.

30th November 2007

Appendix 1

The meaning of disability

When is a person disabled?

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

What does 'impairment' cover?

It covers physical or mental impairments. This includes sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing.

It also covers a wide range of impairments relating to mental functioning, including what is often known as learning disabilities.

What is a 'substantial adverse' effect?

It is something which is more than a minor or trivial effect.

What is a 'long-term' effect?

These are effects:

- which has lasted at least 12 months or
- where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months or
- which is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected or

Effects which are not long-term would therefore include loss of mobility due to a broken limb which is likely to heal within 12 months and the effects of temporary infections, from which a person would be likely to recover within 12 months.

What are 'normal day-to-day activities'?

These are activities carried out by most people on a fairly regular and frequent basis. Broad categories covered are:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical coordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, or perception of the risk of physical danger.

People who are automatically treated as disabled under the Act

- Those with severe disfigurements. They do not need to demonstrate that the impairment has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities
- anyone who has a diagnosis of HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis
- people who are registered as blind or partially sighted
- Anyone who has a progressive condition from the moment the condition leads to an impairment, if that is likely to eventually have a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day ability.

Excluded conditions

- addition to or dependency on alcohol, nicotine or any other substance
- seasonal allergies
- tendency to set fires
- tendency to steal
- tendency to physical or sexual abuse others
- exhibitionism
- voyeurism

Appendix 2

Statistical Information

The National Picture

There are an estimated 11 million disabled adults in the UK (1 in 5 of the total adult population) and 770,000 disabled children. Many have disabilities that are less obvious or non-visible.

42% of social housing households contain a person with a disability or long-term illness

The level of disability increases with age. 31% of those aged 50-59 years are disabled

By 2021, it is estimated that over 5 million people will be over 80 years old in the UK

By 2020, 58% of people over the age of 50 will have a long-term illness

Mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, now account for more Incapacity Benefit claims than back pain

25% of all disabled people say that they have experienced hate crime or harassment, and this number rises to 47% of people with mental health conditions

Nine out of ten families with disabled children have problems with their housing

18% of all housing associations' new tenancies in general needs housing was held by households where there was at least one member with a disability (CORE data 2004-05).

The Trans-Pennine Picture

Pennine Housing – Calderdale

57% of Pennine Housing tenants consider that they have someone in their household with a disability or long-term illness (Tenants Status survey Dec 2006)

There are 250 Pennine tenants (Calderdale only) waiting for a major adaptation to their home (CMBC Disabled Facilities Grant waiting list – as at Nov 07)

This amounts to an estimated £1.2m of work (not including the £230,000 already spent between April - Nov 2007)

Over 20% of Choice-based lettings bids (Sept 07) were made by disabled people in Calderdale

19% of those people registered on the KeyChoice Scheme consider that they have a disability or long-term condition (Calderdale)

7.5% of the workforce is disabled (compared to 1.8% average for the Housing Association sector in England)

Green Vale Homes – Rossendale

5.6% of the workforce is disabled (compared to 1.8% average for the Housing Association sector in England)

62% tenants feel they have a long standing illness or disability (status survey March 2007)

77 people on the waiting list for adaptations. This amounts to around £370,000 (based on an average cost of £4,800), as at Jan 08 (with a further £373, 000 already spent from April 2007 to January 2008).

Appendix 3

Key Performance Indicators and Key Data

1. Asset Management

- % of new homes meeting LTH standards
- % of new homes built to wheelchair accessible and full wheelchair-user standard
- Number of tenants provided with an adaptation in last 12 months
- % of adaptations carried out within target times (major and minor)
- % of disabled customers who expressed satisfaction with the repairs service

2. Customer Services

- % of disabled victims of antisocial behaviour
- % of disabled perpetrators of antisocial behaviour
- % of offices meeting DDA standards
- % of complaints from disabled tenants (and relative satisfaction with the outcomes for those complaints)
- % of lettings made to disabled customers
- % of satisfaction rates of disabled customers, in comparison to non-disabled customers

3. Employment and Governance

- % of customers involved in Tenants Associations who consider that they have a disability or long-term condition
- % of those who attend involvement events who consider that they have a disability or long-term condition
- % of Board Members who consider that they have a disability or long-term condition
- % of staff who consider that they have a disability or long-term condition
- % of staff completing a Disability Equality training session in last 12 months
- % of disabled staff who have been redeployed /promoted in the last 12 months

“SMART” targets will be put into place and key data quantified as appropriate for the above, as part of the development of the action plan.