**Draft Notes KHG Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group 31 October 2023, Microsoft Teams Call**

**Present**: Louise Humphrey, Chair and MHS Homes; Norman Alcide, Vice Chair and Social Interest Group; Brian Horton, SELEP and Chair of KHG; Mushtaq Khan, Housing Diversity Network; Anna Williams, Moat Homes; Helen Miller, KHG; Carol Cook, Kent County Council; Hannah Gaston, Maidstone BC; Claire Jones, Interventions Alliance; James Prestwich, CIH; Abigail Agba, Canterbury Council; Philippa Curtis, Dartford BC; Jo Wood, Interventions Alliance; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice, and Dover District Council; Rachel Valerio, The Riverside Group; Joanne Burns, Ashford Borough Council; Sharon Irvine, KHG.

**Apologies:** Mike Bailey, Folkestone & Hythe District Council; Nicola Bowen, Choice Support; Melanie Anthony, Kent County Council; Noreen Blackstone, Southern Housing; Shola Alao, Hyde Housing; Ashley Jackson, Thanet District Council; Eleanor Dacey, Moat Homes; John Littlemore, Maidstone BC and vice chair of KHG Exec Board; Louise J. Taylor, Dover DC; Mike Barrett, Porchlight; Sharon Williams, Ashford Borough Council; Ellen Schwartz, Kent Public Health;

| **Item** | **Notes/Outcome** | **Who** | **Action/Decision** |
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| Welcome & introductions |  | LH |  |
| Matters arising from meeting 10 July 2023 | No matters arising from meeting on July 10th 2023.  HM shared the link to the KHG press release on the EDI group: [Making sure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) has a place at the centre of the social housing sector in Kent and Medway](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/making-sure-that-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-has-a-place-at-the-centre-of-the-social-housing-sector-in-kent-and-medway/) | All | Meeting notes signed off |
| Joint NHF and CIH action plan in response to the Better Social Housing Review May 2023 - update | James Prestwich, Director of Policy and External Affairs, Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) gave a verbal update on the [Joint NHF and CIH action Plan in Response to the Better Social Housing Review - May 2023](https://www.cih.org/media/lmzdndty/nhf-cih-action-plan-bshr-2023-final.pdf). JP acknowledged that report made for uncomfortable reading and reiterated that the CIH and National Housing Federation (NHF) can only leverage influence; it’s not about policy people telling housing practitioners what to do. He briefly commented on six recommendations from the panel and stated the 7th is about reporting every year on measurements against the previous six recommendations:  *One - Every housing association, and the sector as a whole, should refocus on their core purpose and deliver against it* – There are some shocking failures in social housing that need to be put right, but the good in the sector has to be recognised. Somewhere along the way, either because the systems used, the processes, procedures, the training, the way we think and the way we interact with people that live in social housing, some of that fundamental core purpose has been lost. Social landlords should decide on what they think their services deliver, how those services align with their sense of social purpose and deliver against it. Outcomes for people of colour are below what should be expected in social housing.  *Two - Housing associations should work together to conduct and publish a thorough audit of all social housing in England* - James stressed the importance of this recommendation. Social housing landlords need to know their stock conditions, tenants etc in order to deliver better service. There is also an issue of the quality of stock and service delivery. Though there are organisations that are good on this.  *Three - Housing associations should partner with residents, contractors and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an outstanding maintenance and repairs process looks like* – identify areas of best practice and develop what needs to be done. Race and ethnicity, stigma, language, understanding and taking account of different people’s needs to provide services that will work for everyone and deliver across the board.  *Four - CIH should promote the traditional housing officer role as a supported and valued employment opportunity with a Chartered Institute of Housing recognised programme of training and continuing development* – culture in housing has to be professional, have respect for and take account of different backgrounds and needs; organisational culture is important. The housing officer role is key, yet the role has been devalued over the years and this needs to be worked on. The core service in housing is the key relationship between the people living in our homes and between the organisations serving those communities.  *Five - Housing associations should work with all residents to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation, through both voluntary and paid roles* – This is about the tenant voice. NHF has done a lot of work on this, with their Together with tenant’s charter; there is a drive to compliance with the charter and to deliver better outcomes for residents of our homes.  *Six - Housing associations should develop a proactive local community presence through community hubs which foster greater multi-agency working*- there can be a disconnect because of the distance from tenants, and ways of working/ culture in organisations. James asked if community hubs are the way to go? Social landlords would have a viable presence in their communities; need to be rooted in communities to deliver effective service.  *Seven - Housing associations should support residents and frontline staff to undertake an annual review of the progress each organisation is making in implementing this review’s recommendations.*  An interim progress report on the action plan will be released in December 2023.  MK said this review reflects that people from minority backgrounds are affected by the type and quality of the housing allocated and neighbourhoods, and thinks that for the first time, it's a report that mentioned structural racism and inequality and he is fully supportive of the report and recommendations.  BH thanked JP and commented on the problems in obtaining and retaining good quality staffing in housing. Need to avoid a one size fits all approach; need to engage with and listen to residents. Senior teams in housing need to really know and understand what it is like for people living in social housing and learn from that.  AW – asked for clarity on cultural needs in the review’s point that housing associations may need to provide training on cultural needs; is there e-learning around cultural needs? If it's being coordinated across sectors, is there a way to pull this together effectively?  JP agreed, the principle of working together can be applied to all of the recommendations. CIH and NHF work with housing associations, but have also made connections with local authority housing, the LGA. The scope and differences within the housing sector are well known, but fundamentally a lot that is done is recognisable regardless of geography, regardless of size, scale etc.  LH said this will be explored at a national level, so it would be useful to get a regional spin on this to set up training suitable for different areas. LH asked, does Housing Diversity Network (HDN) offer this kind of training? MK – we need to contact CIH and NHF, think of all the recommendations and all of the training that can be done (e-learning, videos etc). MK will take this matter forward in his next meeting with Chloe from HDN business training.  LH asked about the progress with the Core Common Indicators, for housing associations to produce an outline on housing quality. JP answered the challenge is balance - not to end up with wishy washy actions and to avoid being over prescriptive. Be aware of similarities and differences as no one size fits all - repairs, and maintenance is a good example of that; landlords and residents should get to a place where the services work for them. Note good practice does exist! Organisations need to be brave enough to admit what is needed.  JP is happy to join the EDI group meeting in the new year after the publication of the Interim Progress report, to get the group’s collective reflections on what’s been done, the direction it’s going in and what more needs to be done. |  | MK to consider the recommendations from the review and take forward the matter of training;  SI - set up meeting for MK LH, NA to meet with CIH and NHF  SI - Circulate the interim progress report and invite James to the meeting February 2024. |
| [Proposed consumer standards](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards" \l "consumer-standards) | LH introduced this item as a space for group members to share progress and challenges in preparing for the Consumer Standards. There is crossover with the agenda item on the BSHR, in knowing customer base, understanding diverse needs, the accessibility of information and the accessibility of services and equitable outcomes for residents.  AW said it was important to be honest with ourselves around whether we are meeting the equality legislation in terms of reasonable adjustments? Are we producing false evidence to convince ourselves that all is well? Are any of the organisations truly 100% compliant? The starting point has to be: saying we're not where we need to be.  LH said the EDI task force at mhs is looking at case studies coming from complaints where they have a clear EDI dimension; mapping EDI data against some of their key indicators in terms of complaints and whether they have a disproportionate number of people complaining from particular groups, for e.g. action taken against people for arrears. Then looking at the indicators and identifying areas that need to be looked at in detail. Then trying to triangulate that with a customer scrutiny panel or other customer feedback.  MK has been asking at Boards and Executives, what is being done re the Better Social Housing Review and the new Consumer Standards? MK suggested the EDI group hold 30 minute sessions on what is being done on each of the standards.  AW said there's a huge amount in each one of the standards, so it's worth breaking it down even further, e.g. how are you approaching assisting tenants that need adaptations; are you really challenging yourself, or is it a box ticking exercise? We will have to look at some uncomfortable truths.  HM suggested that this work could involve the Tenancy Management KHG sub group. LH agreed. | LH | LH will look at the standards, pull out key aspects and send it around to assess appetite for being leading on /involvement in an area and set up a discussion. |
| Allyship | Claire Jones, Interventions Alliance, and Norman Alcide, Vice Chair, KHG EDI Group, and Social Interest Group presented slides on Allyship.  LH commented that we have to be proactive, courageous, so doing, not just saying the right things. LH has explored eLearning at mhs EDI training and this followed the guidelines that Claire and Norman shared.  CJ asked if anyone else had any good training they have done?  AW mentioned Race Equality Matters produces bite sized learning and shared links: <https://www.islamophobia-awareness.org> - Islamophobia awareness month starts 1st November  <https://www.raceequalitymatters.com/>  <https://pih.org.uk/> a membership organisation for mixed race people, families and couples.  <https://purpletuesday.co/> - about improving disabled customer experience  NA – had experiences both sides of lockdown that meant bespoke training is required, general training is not always relevant. A formula that is transferable, so can be adjusted - does such a resource exist?  BH – we need spaces in work where people can share experiences safely; we are living in tense times. People think it is not a real issue but we need to be able to provide tools for people to do better at work organisations.  LH – did HDN anti-racism training for organisations. For example, microaggressions are papercuts, these were brought to life.  MK – training has changed and HDN is moving away from somebody talking in front of a group of people; so not a single type of course, training uses actors, more interactive, includes Tick Tock style videos. |  | SI to send presentation |
| Discuss checklist as a resource for KHG members to consider EDI matters in their organisations. | Louise Humphrey, Chair, KHG EDI Group, and mhs homes asked for feedback, comments, explaining that the guidance checklist tries to avoid being prescriptive. Pulling it together involved looking at the EDI aspects of the Consumer Standards, the Code of governance, the EDI data tool and the Better Social Housing Review. It references the work at mhs homes - EDI DATA, training and development covering all different areas of the business, recruitment and retention, the organisational culture and leadership, customers and communities.  BH asked how the commitments made in the checklist were received by senior executive colleagues?  LH – Still having conversations to agree data rules re organisation filling gaps etc. Will set other targets once they have other information. Currently upgrading on Capita. Will launch a webpage to give public commitment to targets, and they will report on a six monthly basis.  HM asked if the checklist could be shared on the KHG website. LH is happy for this to be used as a resource. It will focus on key things to help with compliance with Consumer Standards. |  | The group agreed to adopt the Checklist as a resource.  LH will add a note to the checklist, seek endorsement from BH, KHG Chair.  SI to send revised checklist to EDI group and upload it to KHG site.  MK will share it with colleagues at HDN. |
| Update from members | LH – mhs homes developing a webpage to show commitments and target and how they will be met. EDI data to be overlaid with damp and mould data to see if any EDI issues are flagged.  AW - working on obtaining approval for inclusion policy and working on EDI strategy; Had a really helpful session with MK, with the Moat Homes board and executive team.  MK – Soon publishing online research on how boards drive forward the EDI agenda; at the HDN conference on Monday (6.11.23) HDN will share research on equality and diversity strategies in sector- this looked at top 100 housing associations and found that many of the housing equality and diversity strategies have no milestones or accountabilities and are probably more marketing documents. This will be available on the website and as hard copies. | All | Keep group updated. |
| Ideas for next agenda | * Consumer standards – let LH or SI know if you would like to lead on one of the strands. * LH- we would like to invite Natalie Liddiard to the next meeting to speak to us on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. * LH asked the group to revisit the recommendations in the [HDN's EDI Baseline Report 2022 for KHG](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/assets/uploads/2023/04/HDN-KHG-EDI-Baseline-Report-Nov-2022-1.pdf), for items to be covered in future meetings. * If mapping and EDI regarding damp and mould is useful to hear about at the next meeting let SI know. * Please send your ideas for items for the next agenda to: [sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk). | All |  |

**Next meeting date: Thursday 1st February 2024, 10:00am – 12:00pm, on Teams.**

**Names key**: LH – Louise Humphrey; NA – Norman Alcide; BH - Brian Horton; JP – James Prestwich; AW – Anna Williams; CJ - Claire Jones; MK Mushtaq Khan; HM-Helen Miller; SI – Sharon Irvine.