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ریس ایکواٹی
اسکیم - اے سری
(نسلی برابری کی
اسکیم - ایک خلاصہ)

رےس ایکویالیٹی سکیم
- اے ساماری

(جاتیگت سمتاسنگراسنت سکیم) -
اے کٹی سار-سنگفپ

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1 INTRODUCTION

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) is a company wholly owned by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. Established in April 2002, the company employs in excess of 600 staff and operates at arms length from the Council. The company provides a wide range of management and maintenance services to council tenants. RBH has its own board of directors, made up of tenants, council members and independent people.

Our mission is “to provide high quality, customer focused housing services that lead to measurable improvements in the quality of life for Council tenants across the borough of Rochdale”.

The Board has adopted a series of key values to shape how it operates and delivers services. RBH will be:-

- *Open, participative and accountable*
- *Caring and responsive to individual needs*
- *Committed to equality of opportunity*
- *A learning organisation (valuing and developing staff)*
- *Effective - seeking value for money and high quality*
- *Democratic - encouraging local involvement*
- *Acknowledging the Borough's diversity of cultures*

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a duty on public sector organisations such as Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) to promote race equality. To comply with this duty RBH must have due regard to the need to:

- *Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination*
- *Promote equality of opportunity and*
- *Promote good relations between people of different racial groups*

RBH is also committed to meeting the Local Government Equality Standard developed jointly by the Commission for Racial Equality, Equal Opportunities Commission, Disability Rights Commission and the Audit Commission. The requirements of this standard go beyond those of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. RBH aims to reach level 3 of this standard by March 2006.

This Race Equality Scheme (RES) sets out how we will ensure that race equality is given due regard in our policymaking, working arrangements, employment practices, staff training and service delivery. Through the application of this scheme we are aiming to mainstream the subject of race - making it a core consideration in everything that we do.

The RES outlines:

- a. Our assessment of the relevance of the functions we carry out and,**
- b. Arrangements we have in place for:**
 - *Monitoring our policies for any adverse impact on race equality;*
 - *Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of proposed policies;*
 - *Publishing the results of our assessments, consultation and monitoring;*
 - *Making sure that the public have access to information and services;*
 - *Training our staff on the general duty; and,*
 - *Employment arrangements for monitoring by ethnic group:*

RBH does not simply wish to meet the minimum legal requirements but aims to provide excellent services, which are accessible to the whole community via an inclusive workforce, which reflects the diversity of the local community.

RBH and Rochdale Council have a reputation for responding positively to the housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents living in Rochdale. We have been proactive in implementing recommendations and good practice in the field of racial equality (such as the recommendations from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the Code of Practice for Social Landlords Tackling Racial Harassment).



We want to ensure that BME communities have a real opportunity to shape the development of their future housing service. RBH has an established BME Focus Group that meets quarterly and involves BME tenants and residents in improving the housing conditions of BME people living in the Borough, and influencing the way services are provided to them. The BME Tenants and Residents Participation Compact aims to address the under representation of minority communities in formal structures for tenant involvement. The Compact sets out how BME tenants and residents can get involved in groups and as individuals in local decision making on housing issues.

The RBH Equality and Diversity Plan and the Council's BME Housing Strategy Action Plan set challenging short and long-term race equality targets for RBH. These plans are reviewed regularly and following consultation with staff, key partners and stakeholders are published in April of each year.

RBH has made arrangements to ensure that people have access to the information and services it provides. This means that, to meet the general duty, it will make sure that everyone, (whatever their racial group), can get information about its services. In practice, RBH may have to identify and focus on people who do not appear to know about its services, or who face barriers in accessing them (such as language barriers).

THE RBH RACE EQUALITY SCHEME (RES)

The current RES was developed in 2002 and has been reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet legislative requirements, reflects the current activities undertaken by RBH, and builds on best practice. This scheme will remain in force for 3 years from 2006 to 2009.

Progress against targets set out in the RES will be reviewed at least annually and reported to the RBH board.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the RES. Co-ordination of the day-to-day running of the scheme rests with the Deputy Director of Operations. An RBH Board Member, together with an independent Board Adviser, has lead responsibility for Equality and Diversity issues at Board level.

Services and policies that are relevant to the scheme

Every RBH service and policy has been individually identified. Each service manager is required to consult staff and partner organisations to assess the relevance of its services and policies to race equality. Priorities for action are then agreed. New policies and services will be subject to similar evaluation.

Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies

We aim to ensure that every one has equal access to services and receives the same standard of service.

Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken to:

- ensure that all services or employment practices which RBH follow, meet the needs of specific groups and do not have discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs (eg does not lead to a lower uptake of services by particular groups or provide a poorer service to particular groups).
- fulfil our statutory duty, under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.
- achieve level 3 against the Local Government Equality Standard.

All existing and any new company policies services and procedures, and those that are subject to significant change, have been assessed.

For each function we have:

- Listed all policies, procedures, and practices, which we follow;
- Grouped the policies, procedures and practices into service areas. Each group then represents one impact assessment.
- Assigned a priority to all the policies, procedures and practices. Priorities were allocated based on the level of potential risk each policy, procedure or practice may have of giving rise to a discriminatory outcome.

The following principles were followed to assign a priority to all relevant policies, procedures and practices:

1 All new policies, procedures, and practices, and all those, which are being reviewed during the year 2005/06, should be assigned a high priority.

2 Policies, procedures and practices which have major discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs should also be assigned a high priority if:

- *There is no justification for this*
- *No controls have been put in place to remedy this*

3 Policies, procedures and practices which have some discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs should be assigned a medium priority if:

- *There is no justification for this*
- *No controls have been put in place to remedy this*

4 Policies, procedures and practices which have few discriminatory outcomes or unmet needs should be assigned a low priority if:

- *There is no justification for this*
- *No controls have been put in place to remedy this*

5 All remaining policies should be assigned a low priority.

All policies, procedures and practices, which are assigned a high priority, are to be assessed first.

RBH will work with relevant agencies such as the Rochdale Centre of Diversity to decide whether there is a need to carry out a full equality impact assessment, RBH has made an initial assessment or “screening” based on information available. If this screening showed that racial groups will not be affected differently by the policy, or that the policy has a very low relevance to race equality, then RBH will not move to the next level of assessment. However, RBH will reassess this if it finds evidence that contradicts this during other monitoring or consulting exercises.

When carrying out a full equality impact assessment, RBH will:

- *set clear policy aims and objectives;*
- *collect existing ethnic data and commission research if necessary;*
- *use the data to decide whether the policy is likely to affect different racial groups, directly or indirectly, in different ways;*
- *consider changes to the policy to prevent any adverse impact or unlawful discrimination, while still delivering the aims of the policy;*
- *consult interested parties, service users, trade unions, and BME tenants groups on the preferred policy;*
- *take account of all equality assessments and consultations before making a final decision on the policy;*
- *monitor and review the policy and its impact; and*
- *publish the results of the equality impact assessment, consultation, and monitoring.*

Who will RBH consult and when?

RBH's work has a potential impact on every individual and community in the Borough. To make any consultation process realistic, it will regularly consult those groups that are likely to be most affected by proposed policies. These could include:

- *Tenants and Residents Associations through RoFTRA*
- *BME groups - in particular the BME Network and Multi-faith Partnership*
- *RBH staff*
- *Trade union representatives*
- *Ethnic minority organisations*
- *Faith groups*
- *Government organisations*
- *Other relevant organisations*
- *Rochdale Centre of Diversity*

RBH will revise these lists and establish a database of those consulted.

RBH will consult stakeholders on policies as they are developed. A range of consultation methods as contained within RBH's consultation strategy may be used, such as surveys, open meetings, group discussions with partners, conferences, and written documents. These methods apply to both staff and public consultations.



How will RBH carry out consultation?

RBH will decide how to consult in each case. This will include:

- *Select proposed policy for consultation.*
- *Set clear aims for consultation.*
- *Set consultation timetable linked to decision making process.*
- *Select consultation methods.*
- *Carry out consultation.*
- *Analyse consultation results promptly.*
- *Feed results into decision making process.*
- *Publish results.*
- *Consider and take action, if necessary.*

Monitoring RBH policies for adverse impact

RBH has:

- *set up monitoring systems for all relevant functions and policies for impact on race.*
- *analysed data from monitoring;*
- *decided what action is needed to deal with issues identified by the monitoring data;*
- *changed policies or functions as appropriate; and*
- *published the results of monitoring.*

This includes monitoring:

- Right to buy applications
- Applications on the rehousing list
- All tenancy allocations
- All current tenancies
- Termination of tenancies
- Employment from recruitment to termination
- Complaints
- Tenant satisfaction
- Repairs satisfaction

This information is used to analyse trends and compare performance with previous years. The information is used to set targets to improve services for people from BME backgrounds.

The targets related to the BME community are well established in the Equality and Diversity Service Delivery plan and the Council's BME Housing Strategy Action Plan.

RBH will decide the best method for monitoring each function, policy, or sets of policies according to the circumstances in each case. RBH may often use conventional ethnic record keeping and monitoring, but may also use:

- surveys (qualitative and quantitative)
- public consultation meetings or focus group

If RBH discovers that the impact of a policy goes against any of the three parts of the general duty (see pg 1), RBH will fully investigate that policy, and introduce alternatives or measures to solve the problem.

Publishing the results of assessment, consultation and monitoring

The results of each Equality impact assessment will be made available on request and sent automatically to those consulted. The main arrangement for publication will be the annual report to the RBH board on Equality and Diversity which will be publicly available both on the RBH website and on request.

RBH makes every effort to ensure that information relating to its services is:

- *Accessible and available on request in large print, Braille, Bangla, Urdu, audio tapes or on computer disk;*
- *Freely available.*

Making sure the public have equal access to RBH information and services

RBH offers access to Language Line in all of its offices - allowing non-English speakers instant access by telephone to an interpreter.

RBH has taken positive steps to ensure that its workforce reflects the community it serves. As a consequence RBH has many bi-lingual staff who are able to act as translators in a number of minority languages such as Urdu and Bangla.

RBH also employs dedicated Equality Officers who ensure all members of the community have equal access to and continued enjoyment of all housing services.

RBH provides additional support to new BME tenants moving onto Council estates and participation in the Community Induction Project has led to an increased feeling of safety and improved take up of tenancies in non-traditional areas.

Out of hours support is made available to tenants experiencing or in fear of harassment.

RBH provides a range of information to the general public, interest groups, government, and other organisations. This is in many formats:

- *RBH Business Plan*
- *RBH Annual Report*
- *Leaflets/fact sheets*
- *RBH website, (which is regularly updated and provides information about RBH, as well as links to other useful sites) www.rbhousing.org.uk*
- *Exhibitions/Tenants Conferences/Seminars*
- *Answers to general enquiries provided by the customer services team*
- *Use of the media for advertising, campaigning, and press articles*
- *Information on videotape in community languages on specific service areas*

Meeting the Specific Duties for Employers

RBH is determined to achieve equality in the field of employment.

RBH monitors by racial group the number of:

- *staff currently working for RBH;*
- *applicants for employment, training and promotion;*
- *staff who receive or are denied training;*
- *staff who are involved in grievance procedures;*
- *staff who are the subject of disciplinary action; and*
- *staff who end their service.*

RBH will publish the results of this monitoring annually.

To ensure that RBH has a workforce that reflects the population it serves it has set a target to recruit 14% of its new employees annually from the BME communities. At the end of September 2005, 18.6% of RBH's new starters were from the BME Community, and ...% of all staff. RBH has a well-established Housing Trainee scheme aimed at addressing areas of inequality. At September 2005 there were 8 trainees on this scheme, of whom 4 were from a BME background.

As part of their ongoing commitment to reflect the views of the wider community, the Main Board of RBH has co-opted two non-voting awareness advisors to champion BME and Youth Issues.

RBH are undertaking a process of job evaluation and an equal pay review.

RBH will analyse any patterns of inequality that are shown by its monitoring of employment and report to the Board and its Staffing Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.

Training Staff

It is essential that all RBH staff have a good, basic knowledge of the Act. RBH has provided Equal Opportunities and Cultural Awareness training for all staff and has introduced a brand new comprehensive Equality and Diversity Training Course that all Board Members, Senior Management and staff will attend which will increase awareness of Equality and Diversity issues. RBH also checks the equality standards of all external training providers.

RBH is accredited with Investors in People (IIP). This helps to monitor whether the training offered is properly targeted and accessible to all staff. It also formally demonstrates RBH's commitment to employees' professional development.

RBH will continue to develop and offer training on the general and specific duties in the following ways.

- *Comprehensive Equality and Diversity training for all Board Members, Senior Management and staff to make sure they are aware of the general and specific duties, and how this affects them and their work. This will be part of RBH mandatory training sessions.*
- *Specific skills training for those who will be developing and putting into practice aspects of the Race Equality Scheme (RES), or who are decision makers on policy. This training will ensure that these staff are fully aware of their duties and obligations under the RES. The training will include:*
 - *monitoring systems, both for employment related and service functions;*
 - *carrying out equality impact assessments;*
 - *consultation.*

RBH reviews all its current training programmes, to ensure that race equality is mainstreamed into courses as appropriate.



