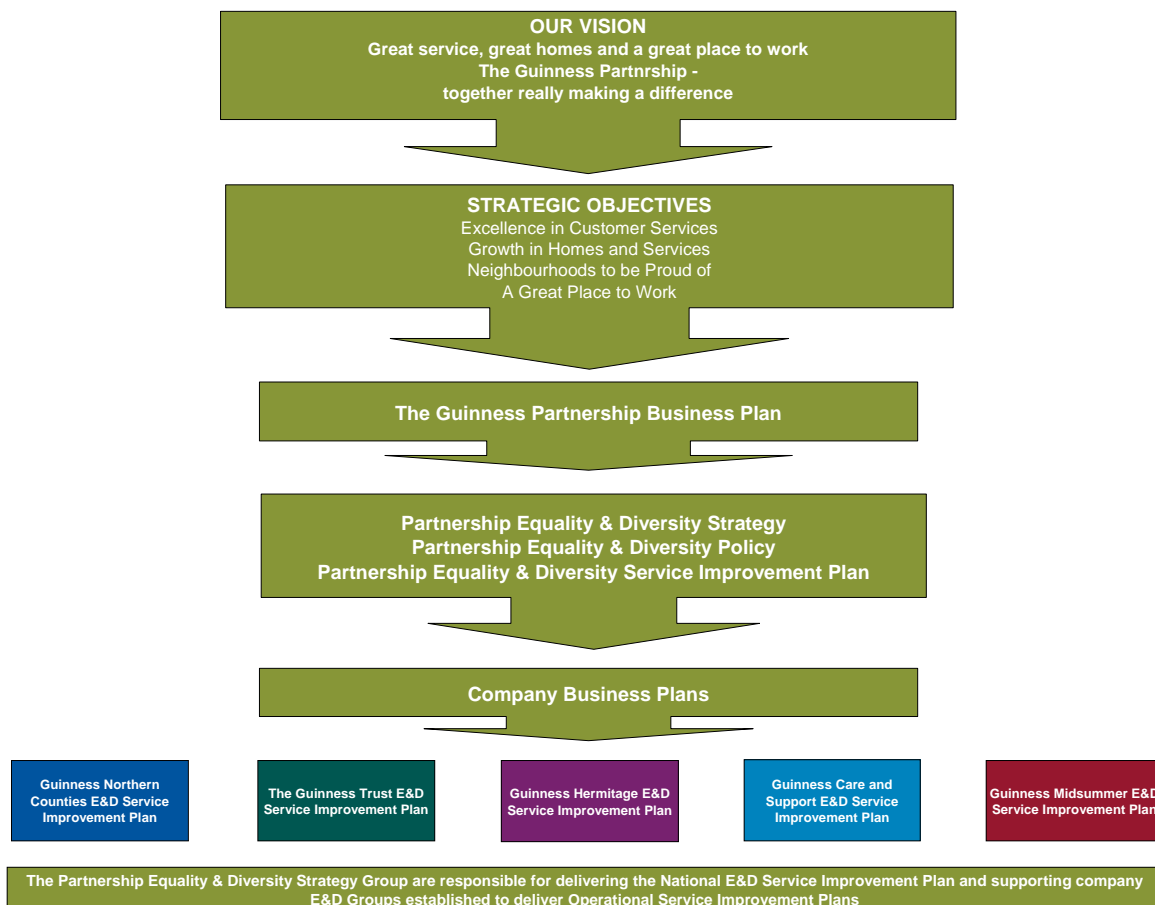


1. Introduction

The Guinness Partnership is a large, diverse organisation. We have more than 3,000 employees within our five operating companies, working with many agencies, consultants, contractors and other organisations to provide homes and services to over 100,000 customers and service users.

The chart below demonstrates how Equality and Diversity are fundamental threads of The Guinness Partnership's vision 'great service, great homes and a great place to work'.



As a developer of homes and regeneration initiatives, a provider of housing and care and support services and as an employer, together The Guinness Partnership has a wealth of history and experience of working with the most vulnerable and socially excluded communities in the UK.

We also believe that our commitment to promoting and mainstreaming equality and diversity will help us to secure new business opportunities, continue to build relationships with our customers and continue to attract and retain a capable and talented workforce.

This strategy sets out our vision and commitment to promote and mainstream equality and diversity and how we will address the inequalities that can be experienced by people because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

2. Delivering our Equality and Diversity Strategy:

We will deliver this strategy by developing a service improvement plan that enables The Guinness Partnership to continue to embed and mainstream Equality & Diversity.

This Strategy sets out the actions that we will take to deliver positive outcomes against the following objectives:

Objective 1 – Achieving excellence in customer service that responds to the individual needs of our customers.

We recognise the value of delivering services which are of a high standard and which meet the needs of a diverse and changing customer base. We aim to ensure that all customers receive services which are characterised by recognition of, and respect for, the individual.

We will achieve this by:

- reviewing our policies, procedures and practices so that we can improve access to services and deliver fair and differentiated outcomes for our customers and our workforce
- ensuring that all our services are non-discriminatory by assessing the impact of all policies, procedures, projects and service delivery reviews
- continuing to develop a profile of our customers and their diverse and changing needs and use this information to provide services that are responsive to the individual needs and aspirations of our customers
- monitoring customer satisfaction with our services to ensure that they are fair and accessible to all our customers and satisfaction rates are equal for all groups

- making sure that where possible all our customer reception areas are accessible and compliant with the public requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and any subsequent legislation
- provide all customers with clear and easily-understood information about our services and offer information in alternative formats in line with our corporate translation guidelines
- produce a single equality scheme in accordance with legislation, equality duties and good practice
- implement a performance management framework to monitor service improvements in relation to equality and diversity to include:
 - performance indicators to assess progress on equality and diversity
 - collecting robust data for performance indicators, analysis of data and providing reports annually to the Partnership and Company Boards.
 - set targets and interventions to deliver improvements

Objective 2. – Support all of our customers to engage with us.

We will support all of our customers to be engage in planning, reviewing and improving services

We will achieve this by:

- identifying minority groups in our areas of operation and ensuring our Customer Engagement Strategy is capable of meeting their needs and aspirations to be involved
- monitoring levels of customer engagement and assessing where there may be under-representation, given knowledge of local community profiles, and addressing any imbalance and report these through an annual customer involvement impact assessment
- where applicable developing appropriate ways to communicate with, and involving, those groups and individuals who are currently under-represented – specifically people who are socially excluded
- making information about opportunities for customer engagement available to all customers and presenting it so that it is accessible to everybody

Objective 3 – Our Board and leadership arrangements will demonstrate a clear commitment to Equality and Diversity.

We will ensure that effective leadership and governance arrangements are in place to scrutinise performance on equality and diversity and set challenging targets where appropriate.

We will achieve this by:

- ensuring that recruitment, selection and succession planning for our governance and leadership structures acknowledges and broadly reflects the diversity of the communities we serve by:
 - monitoring the diversity of our governance and leadership structures
 - reviewing the composition of our governance structures and if appropriate setting reasonable targets to address under-representation
 - encouraging under-represented groups to apply to our governance and leadership structures when vacancies occur
- supporting our Board diversity champions in their roles and forging stronger links with our workforce and customers
- providing new and existing members of governance structures with equality and diversity training
- ensuring that papers and reports submitted to our governance structures demonstrate that equality and diversity issues have been fully considered and scoped and through provision of an annual report for Equality and Diversity
- strengthening the strategic leadership and accountability of the Equality & Diversity Strategy Group by employing a dedicated resource for the Partnership

Objective 4 – Becoming a great place to work.

We recognise that by employing people who are able to deliver responsive and culturally sensitive services, and who reflect the diversity of our customer base, we will enhance our effectiveness and help attract and retain a capable and talented workforce.

We will achieve this by:

- ensuring that our employment policies are underpinned by the recognition of the value and strength of our diverse workforce
- ensuring that all new and revised employment policies are assessed to make certain that they are non-discriminatory
- ensuring that recruitment and development of our workforce is transparent and in accordance with the Partnerships legal obligations and equality and diversity principles
- ensuring that our recruitment exercises include an element on demonstrating knowledge of, and commitment to equality and diversity
- monitoring under-represented groups within both our workforce and applicants, particularly at senior management level, and take action to redress imbalances whilst meeting the Partnerships business needs to employ the best people for the job

- providing all employees with access to personal and professional development opportunities, and monitoring the outcomes and take up for under-represented groups
- providing all employees with initial and ongoing training around equality and diversity issues, particularly in relation to the implementation our equality and diversity strategy and policy, their employment obligations and the provision of services
- ensuring that our bullying and harassment policy is clearly understood and that people are confident in raising issues knowing that the Partnership has zero tolerance of bullying and harassment or inappropriate behaviour
- monitoring and tackling any patterns of discrimination that arise through disciplinary, grievance, capability, bullying and harassment or employment tribunal cases

Objective 5 – Removing barriers to access affordable housing and care services.

We recognise that some groups can experience discrimination and barriers when trying to access affordable housing. We will ensure that our lettings, allocations and sales policies recognise the diversity of the communities in which we work

We will achieve this by:

- undertaking the mapping of the communities we work in to ensure that our customer base is representative of the wider population, and set realistic targets to address any shortfalls
- monitoring all nominations and lettings to rented properties in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, ensuring lettings are in accordance with targets and nomination agreements, and that they contribute to creating cohesive communities
- continuing to work with customers and their agents so that individuals and their support needs are identified at the start of their tenancies, and make sure arrangements are put in place to ensure that lettings are sustainable
- monitoring all low-cost home ownership sales in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- developing new rented housing to meet the needs of the individual, in line with strategic housing requirements, while meeting the requirements of a changing population
- monitoring access to care and support services by older and vulnerable people

Objective 6 – Procurement and Supply.

We recognise the challenges and advantages of working within EU procurement legislation and are committed to ensuring that maximum benefit is derived from our size through our relationships with suppliers, contractors and consultants.

We will achieve this by:

- ensuring new procurement arrangements consider an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity
- agreeing standards and monitoring arrangements with our supply chain, to identify where improvements can be made in relation to equality and diversity
- working with contractors and suppliers who provide services directly to our customers, to ensure they are sensitive to different needs and reflect the Partnerships' commitment to equality and diversity
- exploring opportunities for joint initiatives, including training, selection and employment initiatives, which include equality and diversity outcomes
- setting objectives for our main contractors and supply partners to employ a diverse workforce that is representative of our customer base
- encouraging our main contractors and suppliers to sub-contract to minority led organisations

Objective 7 – Tackling Harassment and hate related crime.

We believe that our customers and our workforce should be able to live and work safely without fear of harassment or physical or verbal abuse, and we will take effective action to combat harassment and hate related crime.

We will achieve this by:

- ensuring that customers, employees and agents are able to live or work in an environment free from intimidation or harassment
- collecting and monitoring the instances of hate related crime to ensure that resources are targeted appropriately
- supporting customers who experience harassment or intimidation, and take effective action against perpetrators, making use of all the legal powers open to us
- working with, and exchanging information with, other agencies in order to enhance our ability to provide safer and more confident neighbourhoods
- expecting any agent or contractor employed by the Partnership to observe and respect our policies, and treat seriously any instance of harassment or bullying by an employee or contractor

- publicising and promoting the Partnerships' policies to customers, reporting on our performance in tackling harassment as well as on the outcomes of our actions

3. The outcomes we will achieve through this Strategy.

This strategy will be used to mainstream equality and diversity issues into the business planning process of The Guinness Partnership

The objectives and actions set out in this Equality and Diversity Strategy and Service Improvement Plans will provide the following outcomes:

- The Guinness Partnership will have a positive image
- the way we deliver services will respond to the diversity of our customers
- we will be able to demonstrate improvements in the services that we provide to our customers and their satisfaction with them
- governance, leadership structures and our workforce will broadly mirror the diversity of the communities we work in
- we attract and retain a talented and competent workforce
- our workforce will understand our vision and aspirations for equality and diversity and their roles to achieving this
- our outcomes and progress on equality and diversity will be communicated to customers, our workforce and our partners
- our customers, workforce and partners will recognise The Guinness Partnership as innovative and progressive in relation to our work on Equality and Diversity

4. Monitoring and delivering this Strategy.

The arrangements for monitoring and review will enable us to effectively measure the impact of our actions to improve equality and diversity outcomes for our customers and workforce.

The Guinness Partnership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide leadership for Equality and Diversity • review performance to ensure we meet our obligations • ensure our services are accessible and meet the individual's need
Company Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide company leadership for Equality and Diversity • review company performance to ensure we meet our obligations • ensure services are accessible and meet individual needs
Partnership Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide leadership, resources and

	governance to deliver the Equality & Diversity Strategy and its objectives for the Partnership
Equality and Diversity Strategy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the delivery of the Equality and Diversity Strategy, Policy and Service Improvement plans
Company Management Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure Equality and Diversity is a core theme of all work streams • ensure responsibilities, information and best practice is communicated throughout the business
Company Equality & Diversity Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivery of the company specific aspects of the Equality and Diversity Strategy, Policy and Service Improvement Plans • produce an annual Equality & Diversity report in line with Partnership guidelines • promoting and communicating best practice around Equality & Diversity outcomes
Our Workforce and our Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apply our equality and diversity values and principles and behaviours in their work with customers, colleagues and partners
Equality and Diversity Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide strategic support and advice to the business • produce an annual equality and diversity report • support the delivery of the equality and diversity service improvement plan for the Partnership

5. Period of Review.

A review of this Strategy will be initiated in response to:

- Any future changes in legislation and/or amendments to law
- The publishing of a single equality duty for Public Authorities in October 2010
- Any deficiencies or failures in this policy as a result of Partnership Companies or governance structures, findings or challenges from independent organisations and/or judicial reviews

In any event this Strategy will be reviewed no later than four years from the effective date of approval by the Partnership Board in April 2010.