

## Connswater Homes Ltd



### Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties Annual Progress Report 2014-15

#### Contact:

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

<http://www.connswater.org.uk/index.php/equality/equality-scheme>

#### Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cath', is written inside a rectangular box.

**This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.**

**It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties, and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.**

**This report reflects progress made between April 2014 and March 2015**

## **PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme**

### **Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice**

- 1** In 2014-15, please provide **examples** of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

*Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.*

For the period 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015 Connswater Homes continues to promote equality of opportunity and good relations through all its policies and direct service provision to its customers.

The Association's Director of Corporate Assurance continues with her responsibility for Section 75 as well as promotion of the Association and its work.

The Association's Annual Report was published in line with RNIB Clear Print guidelines. Tenants are kept informed of policy changes and revisions via the tenants newsletter which was published three times in the past year and also via the Association's website where screening decisions are also published.

Tenants and customers are made aware that all documents can be made available in alternative formats, if required, and the Association had a contract with a translation service (Language Line) who provide translation and interpretation if required.

- 2 Please provide **examples** of outcomes and/or the impact of **equality action plans/** measures in 2014-15 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Examples during the reporting period are:

Age: A play park had been incorporated into the design and planning stage of a new development (former site of Dunmurry High School) which will see the Association provide the land and pay for the installation of a play park for the new housing development comprising initially 98 new units of housing stock. Upon completion the play park will be hand over to Lisburn City Council to manage.

A review of the preferred methods of communication for tenants was undertaken as part of the Association's Tenant Satisfaction Survey and it was found that the number one method still for communication with its tenants is by letter and then by phone.

Housing for older people was provided for in two CAT 1 housing schemes (housing for over 55's). These were allocated in line with the NIHE common selection scheme and help address the needs of a growing older population.

Welfare Reform continues to be an ongoing debate within Northern Ireland and the Association continues to maintain and update its comprehensive tenant profile information in readiness for implementation and the consequences this could bring for its tenants who are over 60 years old.

Dependents: Welfare Reform and and impact the single room rate could have on single parents under 35 years old, especially males - the Association continues to ensure that its tenant profile information is up-to-date in readiness for the full implementation of welfare reform and the impact this will have on this proportion of its tenants and in particular those tenants between 25 - 35 who may be affected by the Shared Room Rate.

Lack of play space for children is being addressed by the provision of a play park in the housing scheme currently on-site and under construction at the site of the former Dunmurry High School which will provide new housing for 98 families.

Lack of two bedroom accommodation had been monitored within the plans for all new build schemes to ensure a housing mix that meets the needs of single parents, elderly/disabled people needing carers. This is highlighted to the DSD and NIHE Development Programme Group to held aid in their support for a housing mix within new development schemes.

## PART A

**Disability:** the Association continues to work with the NIHE Development Programme Group to identify at planning stages families who have complex needs and require specialised housing purpose built. Where possible the Association incorporates these into its plans, during the reporting year there were 6no complex needs identified and incorporated into the plans for the housing stock at the site currently under construction at the site of the former Dunmurry High School.

During the reporting period the Association has embraced the use of social media to ensure maximum inclusivity of communication with all service users and customers. The Association has also incorporated a new electronic payment system to enable customers and tenants to pay rent or recoverable charges using their debit card over the phone.

All staff received training on Mental Health Awareness to raise their awareness and skill in dealing with tenants and customers who may have mental health issues. This will help with those tenants being able to access services and also help the staff engage better with them.

**Political Opinion:** during the reporting period two senior members of staff had training from NIACRO with regard to the employment and resettlement of offenders and those with conflict related convictions.

**Race:** The Association continues to provide translation and interpretation services for those tenants and customers whose first language is not English or who have visual or hearing impairments. Signing services in particular have been very useful for communicating with tenants over repair issues or planned maintenance programmes and choices for the tenants. The Association also employs a member of staff whose first language is not English who aids with translation services.

**Religion:** The Association continues to encourage tenants to sign Good Neighbour Agreements at their sign-up meeting and manages anti-social behaviour tightly to ensure that issues are resolved as quickly as possible.

**Cross Category:** while the Association aims to try and recruit Board members from a cross section of the community based on skills and experience, it should be noted that is it still difficult to get voluntary members who are willing to serve on Boards and therefore while the gender balance may seem unfair at times, the Association has to work with those who have the required skills and who are willing to give of their time, without pay or reward.

PART A

**3** Has the **application of the Equality Scheme** commitments resulted in any **changes** to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

Yes                       No (go to Q.4)                       Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

**3a** With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what **difference was made, or will be made, for individuals**, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

**3b** What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? *(tick all that apply)*

As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy *(please give details):*

As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise *(please give details):*

As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details):*

As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details):*

Other *(please specify and give details):*

**Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans/measures**

**Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)**

**4** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

In every member of staff's job description there is a statement under General Duties that reads: "ensure adherence to the policies and procedures of the organisation, particularly those regarding equal opportunity, health and safety and confidentiality"

**5** Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes, organisation wide
- Yes, some departments/jobs
- No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Equality of treatment of all tenants and customers in relation to the provision of services is an inherent element of the duties of each and every member of staff and is core to the provision of good customer services.

**6** In the 2014-15 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- Yes, in some departments/jobs

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- No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2013-14 report
- Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

**Equality action plans/measures**

**7** Within the 2014-15 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions completed:

Actions ongoing:

Actions to commence:

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

Some actions can be completed but by their nature are also ongoing eg while the Association has incorporated a play park into its plans which have been approved, the next stage will be to identify further opportunities to provide play spaces & while properties have been identified and are currently under construction to provide purpose built complex needs accommodation on one scheme, this is also an ongoing process to continue to identify other opportunities at each of our new build schemes and also where possible by the addition of purpose build extensions to homes where possible.

**8** Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan/measures during the 2014-15 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

n/a

**9** In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2014-15 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

**Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)**

**10** Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- All the time                       Sometimes                       Never

**11** Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2014-15 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

During the reporting period all tenants were consulted on the Association's new Strategic Plan and what was going to be included in same.

**12** In the 2014-15 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- Face to face meetings
- Focus groups
- Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- Questionnaires
- Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- Internet discussions
- Telephone consultations
- Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

No comments received from any tenant in relation to the development of the Association's Strategic Plan.

**13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2014-15 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- Yes                       No                       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

14 Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2014-15 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes       No       Not applicable – no commitment to review

**Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)**

*[insert link to any web pages where screening templates and/or other reports associated with Equality Scheme commitments are published]*

15 Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year (*as recorded in screening reports*):

18
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16 Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2014-15:

0	Policy consultations conducted with <b>screening</b> assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted <b>with an equality impact assessment (EQIA)</b> presented.
0	Consultations for an <b>EQIA</b> alone.

17 Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

I've included this link here to the screening documents to accompany Q15 above as there is nowhere above that will let me insert this.

<http://www.connswater.org.uk/index.php/equality/equality-screening>

18 Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? (*tick one box only*)

- Yes       No concerns were raised       No       Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:



- 23** Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Data and information held and monitored by the Association have been taken into consideration during strategic planning for development of the Association's Strategic Plan 2015 - 18. Some key areas to be achieved are the development of a tenant & community engagement strategies which the Association would hope will enable our tenants and customers to contribute more to, and gain more from, enabling vibrant and sustainable communities to be developed where people find a secure home in areas where they want to live, in neighbourhoods that are safe and have decent facilities. We want to engage with our tenants and the wider communities to build wherever possible in mixed communities and in carefully considered environments that meet the expectations of those who will live there.

#### **Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)**

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2014-15, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

Staff training for screening policies took place in the Association's office, delivered by John Kremer and was attended by staff from Triangle Housing Association and Rural Housing Association as well.

The Association also has an e-learning platform for all staff to use and a new Equality & Diversity Module has been developed and rolled out to all staff.

- 25** Please provide any examples of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

The screening training has been particularly successful in enabling and upskilling staff to be able to screen policies now, and raised awareness overall of its importance and also of staff understanding of how policy development has an impact on all areas of the Association's business and also on its tenants and stakeholders.

#### **Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)**

- 26** Please list **any examples** of where monitoring during 2014-15, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation **to access to information and services**:

n/a

**Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)**

**27** How many complaints **in relation to the Equality Scheme** have been received during 2014-15?

Insert number here:

0
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Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

n/a

**Section 3: Looking Forward**

**28** Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

August 2017

**29** Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

A complete, comprehensive reivew of the consultee list

**30** In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what **equality and good relations priorities** are anticipated over the next (2015-16) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

- Employment
- Goods, facilities and services
- Legislative changes
- Organisational changes/ new functions
- Nothing specific, more of the same
- Other (please state):

**PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans**

**1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:**

**7**

Fully achieved

**0**

Partially achieved

Not achieved

**2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.**

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs <sup>i</sup>	Outcomes / Impact <sup>ii</sup>
National <sup>iii</sup>			
Regional <sup>iv</sup>			
Local <sup>v</sup>			

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact

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1	Equality Screening Training	8 current staff trained	Improved knowledge and skills and awareness of the importance of screening in policy development and review
2	Equality & Diversity Training	21 staff had refresher or new training	Improved knowledge and skills
	Mental Health Awareness Training	21 full time staff trained	Improved awareness, skills and knowledge

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Diversity in communication methods	The Association has embraced and utilised social media to target a wide range of tenants and customers	Reaching sections of our tenant base who are younger and who are using alternative methods to communicate rather than the traditional
2	Use of interpretation services	Enabling those whose first language is not English to communicate or those who need signing services	Delivering excellence in customer services by providing the right service at the right time because the communication was accurate for the individual customer (language and signing services during the reporting period)
	Establishing a tenant group in one scheme	Better communication, reduction in anti-social behaviour, engage tenants	Reduction in anti-social behaviour, raising awareness of problems with tenants and addressing issues with taking responsibility for the scheme

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to ‘**encourage others**’ to promote the two duties:

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	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1			
2			

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Adaptations made for tenants with disabilities	14 tenants had physical adaptations made to their homes	Ease of use or access to facilities within tenants home to make living conditions more accessible and enjoyable
2			

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestonesvi / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
1				
2				

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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	Establishment of an Association wide Tenant Forum	No interest or uptake form tenants
2		

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

All tenants who have adaptaiton work carried out on their homes are surveyed and and their comments recorded on the quality of the workmanship, the speed of the process and their satisfaction with the outcome and the positive impact that the adaptation has made to their lives and to them being able to remain in their home and enjoy living their. Enabling them to stay within their community and not having to leave it.

(b) Quantitative

Number of adaptations carried out to tenants homes to improve facilities and to give them better access to and from their home and rooms within that home, enabling them to remain living there. Cost of adaptations at present is covered in grant funding by DSD.

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6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

No

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

n/a

## PART B

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- <sup>i</sup> **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.
- <sup>ii</sup> **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.
- <sup>iii</sup> **National** : Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments
- <sup>iv</sup> **Regional**: Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level
- <sup>v</sup> **Local** : Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.
- <sup>vi</sup> **Milestones** – Please outline what part progress has been made towards the particular measures; even if full output or outcomes/ impact have not been achieved.