

To: The Management Committee
From: Housing Services Manager
Subject: Equalities Strategy/Data Collection

1. Introduction / Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee with the progress that has been made in the development of the Equalities Strategy including the collection of Equality Data.

2. Background

2.1 In June 2022, committee approved the Equalities Strategy which included an Action Plan of key tasks to be addressed and how we would approach these to ensure that we meet Regulatory Requirements as well as complying with our Equality duty as a landlord.

2.2 After lengthy discussions with our Data Protection Officer (DPO) it was decided that any equalities information would be collected anonymously.

2.3 Since the introduction of the Equalities Strategy, data has been collected from current tenants, waiting list applicants, staff, committee, and factored owners.

3. Suggestions/Recommendations

3.1 To ensure that we use any Equalities Data collected effectively, I have engaged the services of Stuart Eglinton, Equalities consultant. I have been working with Stuart since July 2023. A number of suggestions have been made by Stuart that will assist in the development of our Equalities Strategy and Equalities Policy, ensuring that we are meeting the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Scottish Social Housing Charter, Standard 1 and our legal duties as a landlord. The suggestions are as follows:

- Add a section to our Equality Policy outlining how we will comply with the Human Rights Act and rename the policy to Equality and Human Rights Policy

- Stuart to revise current Equality Policy however this would only require minor tweaks, mainly to include information relating to Human Rights, Data Collection, complaints and appointment of contractors.
- Develop existing Action Plan within Equalities Strategy and Data Collection analysis and use.
- Consider amending our Equality Impact Assessments to include parts stating that the policy being revised developed complies with the following in relation to Human Rights Act:

Article 6 (right to a fair Trial) - usually for cases like evictions or where a tenant can appeal a decision (i.e., allocations), then you should make reasonable adjustments if they need an interpreter, forms in different formats.

Article 8 (Right to respect for private life, family life and home) - this mainly centres around actions taken within policies to deal with anti-social behaviours, or similar issues which might make people feel unsafe / uncomfortable in their home.

Article 14 - (prohibition of discrimination) You ensure that decisions are made on merit and not anything to do with the 9 characteristics set out in the equality act.

4. Process Overview

4.1 The steps in which Stuart will assist me with are as follows:

- Running two training sessions with staff and committee to provide an overview of key legislation and regulation, and discuss and develop our action plan and develop plans in response to data collection
- to run two working groups (mixture of staff, committee, focus group members, etc.) - to discuss and develop our action plan
- to review and update our action plan following the working groups
- to review and update our Equality and Human Rights policy and any other documents (i.e. Equality Impact Assessments)

5.0 Risks

5.1 Failure to have regard to human rights and equalities will mean that the regulatory requirements for the ARC will not have been met.

5.2 By not having robust policies in place or having adequate information on equalities could leave Rosehill open to claims that they are discriminating against anyone who falls within any of the nine protected characteristics.

6.0 Summary

6.1 Committee is invited to note the contents of this report.