

Item 4

REPORT TO THE CARLISLE SHADOW BOARD
MEETING TO BE HELD ON 25/2/02

Carlisle Housing Association
Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

For Decision

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Carlisle Housing Association Shadow Board for the adoption of the Riverside Group's Equal Opportunities policy statement.
- 1.2 To agree the policy statement set out in Appendix 1.

2. Report Content

- 2.1 The Riverside Group Board has agreed that the Equal Opportunities Policy, adopted by the Group, should apply without exception to all members of the Riverside Group. This policy should be adopted as a matter of formality by each subsidiary as it is established. Therefore the Board of Carlisle Housing Association are asked to accept the Riverside Group's broad policy statement and agree that a separate procedures guide is prepared in due course by Carlisle Housing Association to accompany the Group policy statement.
- 2.2 The policy statement sets out Riverside's broad objectives with respect to equal opportunities and the subsidiary's compliance with statutory legal requirements, performance standards and representation on the Equal Opportunities Working Group.
- 2.3 The issue of equal opportunities has yet to be discussed with the Tenants Advisory Group (TAG) which is due to debate the matter on the 20th of February. The Shadow Board are asked to note amendments to this report may therefore be tabled at your meeting.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 The Shadow Board is asked to approve the policy set out in Appendix 1.

Paul Anson
Assistant Director

Jane Morris
Housing and Regeneration Manager

APPENDIX 1

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Carlisle Housing Association

Equal Opportunities Statement

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Riverside Group has agreed that the Equal Opportunities Policy, adopted by the Group, should apply without exception to all members of the Riverside Group. This policy should be adopted as a matter of formality by each subsidiary as it is established. A separate procedures guide will be prepared in due course by Carlisle Housing Association to accompany the Group policy statement.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 Carlisle Housing Association is committed to equality and will treat all people fairly.

In pursuit of this objective we will:-

- promote equal opportunities through all our activities, in particular through the provision of housing, services, employment and training;
- ensure our policies, practices and procedures do not cause discrimination and will not allow discrimination or disadvantage to be an obstacle to the recruitment, training or promotion of staff;
- adhere to the spirit and legal requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, the Equal Pay Act, the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act and related legislation;
- where necessary, consider positive action to meet the special needs of particularly disadvantaged individuals or groups in any aspect of the service we provide;
- take all possible steps to ensure no individual or group connected to Carlisle Housing Association hinders the provisions of this policy;
- ensure prompt and proper investigation of any complaints of harassment or discrimination brought to Carlisle Housing Association's attention and take any action necessary in relation to this policy;
- ensure effective monitoring and review of the policy by the Board.

3. Legislative and regulatory requirements

- 3.1 Carlisle Housing Association has a duty to comply with all statutory legal requirements in particular in respect of:
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Equal Pay Act (as amended) 1984
 - Race Relations Act 1976 & Race Relations Amendments Act
 - Sex Discrimination Act 1975
 - Age Discrimination (EU Council Directive 20078/EC)
 - Human Rights Act
 - The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- 3.2 Carlisle Housing Association must also comply with the Housing Corporation requirements and guidelines (Performance Standards and Housing Corporation Circular R-02/90 Promotion of Racial Equality), the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) Code of Practice in Rented Housing and Employment Code of Practice. Carlisle Housing Association will be also mindful of good practice advice and codes of good practice (for example the National Housing Federation Tackling Discrimination and Promoting Racial Equality Code of Practice).

4. Performance Standards

- 4.1 Carlisle Housing Association has a duty of accountability to its Board, customers, employees and agencies that it works with on its clear commitment and demonstration of equal opportunities.
- 4.2 Carlisle Housing Association will report annually to the Board on equal opportunities performance.
- 4.3 It is a requirement of the Housing Corporation that Carlisle Housing Association participate in the CORE system and that data is passed to the National Housing Federation as appropriate.
- 4.4 Carlisle Housing Association will provide the following information by ethnic origin, gender and disability, within its Annual Performance Review:
- Employment
 - Lettings
 - Number of harassment case reported and actions taken

5. Equal Opportunities Procedures Guide for Carlisle Housing Association

- 5.1 In due course, Carlisle Housing Association will agree an Equal Opportunities procedures guide detailing appropriate approaches and actions to be taken at a local level across all areas of service delivery, for example ensuring equal opportunities in:
- access to housing
 - dealing with harassment
 - employment and training
 - tenant involvement
 - development works procurement
 - board selection
- 5.2 Staff of Carlisle Housing Association will undertake Equal Opportunities training and will be responsible for delivering services, monitoring and reporting in relation to equal opportunities, according to the agreed procedures guide.
- 5.3 The Board of Carlisle Housing Association will agree an Equal Opportunities monitoring system, it will set local targets and agree methods for collecting, recording and reporting information. Performance will be reviewed and evaluated and appropriate action undertaken as necessary.

6. Equal Opportunities Working Group

- 6.1 The Equal Opportunities Working Group within the Riverside Group is established as a forum for equal opportunities issues. Carlisle Housing Association is required to have a representative on this working group. The group meets quarterly with the following terms of reference:
- To advise the Riverside Group Chief Executive on equal opportunities issues
 - To assist Divisions and subsidiary housing associations in the development and promotion of a strategy for the implementation of equal opportunities across the Riverside Group
 - To review the effectiveness of the association's equal opportunities policy and make suggestions for improvement
 - To assist in the development of effective mechanisms for measuring performance
 - To contribute to the development of good equal opportunities practice and procedures

- To provide a forum for discussion by staff at all levels of equal opportunities issues in Riverside