

Homes England to build more inclusive industry that meets the needs of diverse communities

Homes England has put communities at the heart of its work to improve diversity and inclusion in the housing sector as it launches its first annual [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report](#).

The government's housing agency has pledged to work with its partners to create a more inclusive industry that addresses the needs of the diverse communities it serves as part of the five objectives it will focus on over the next four years in order to become a more inclusive, equal and diverse workplace.

One of the organisation's main measures will be to set expectations of its partners by requesting diversity and inclusion commitments from panel members for all future panel procurements.

Homes England is currently developing a replacement for its Delivery Partner Panel of developers and contractors (DPP3), which is due to go live next financial year. Alongside other non-financial requirements, such as design quality, the project team is developing criteria to support greater diversity and inclusion in the industry and include these as a condition for joining the panel.

Homes England has also promised to better meet the needs of diverse communities by identifying gaps in the current market and taking steps to address them.

The agency says it will commit to making sure its services represent not just the society it serves, but the society we all want to see, and will review how well it is fulfilling its duty to create inclusive, equal access to its services, making the changes necessary to ensure this.

In a further step, Homes England hopes that by improving its methods of gathering data about the communities it works with it will be able to better address specific housing needs.

Recruitment and the creation of a more inclusive employee experience are also on the agenda, with the organisation committing to develop a diversity and inclusion recruitment strategy and improve its mandatory diversity and inclusion training.

Olivia Scanlon, Homes England's Board Sponsor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion said: "Issuing our first equality, diversity and inclusion report is a real step forwards and demonstrates how far we've come as an agency: we've been named one of Stonewall's Top 100 employers, a Top 20 Trans Employer and have undergone significant cultural change.

“At Homes England we want to make homes happen for everyone, and we can only truly achieve that by creating a workplace– and an industry –where everyone is able to be themselves.

“Work is already ongoing to deliver positive change to our procurement process and determine how we can improve diversity and inclusion through our supply chain. This sends a clear message to our partners about our expectations of them and will ensure the homes we deliver truly fit the requirements of the people who live in them.”

The document is a significant milestone for the Government’s housing agency, setting out its commitment to improving equality within the organisation, the wider sector and the communities where it delivers its projects.

The report has been launched on the same day as the agency’s [Gender Pay Gap Report](#), which shows Homes England is continuing to close its pay gap.

Commenting on the gender pay gap, Nick Walkley, Homes England’s Chief Executive said: “The report shows lots of improvement and achievement thanks to hard work and energy of colleagues...but we can do far better and Executive are committed to doing so.”

Homes England has already taken a number of steps to set an example to the housing sector on the issue of inclusion, revising its policies and processes and developing its employee networks, as well as building its wellbeing support for staff.

The agency’s latest gender pay gap report shows continual improvement with its mean figure at 31 March 2020 at 16.9% and median figure 15.3%. In March 2019, the figures were 18% and 15.5% respectively.