

Your guide

to Equality and Diversity

This leaflet outlines L&Q's work into Equality and Diversity.

L&Q is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all our services and to give equality of opportunity to our diverse customer and employee group. This leaflet will outline some of the work that we are doing in our key areas to achieve these goals.

Equal opportunities statement

L&Q is committed to equal opportunities. We aim to end discrimination and promote equal opportunities for everyone and positively value diversity within the organisation. We expect everyone who works for us to support us in this. This is what we will do:

- Provide and promote equal opportunities, whatever a person's race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, beliefs, sex, age, sexuality, HIV status, physical or mental disability, state of health, appearance, marital status, family circumstances or offending behaviour
- Give all staff equality and diversity training
- Encourage groups and individuals that are disadvantaged in housing and employment, to apply for jobs, homes and work contracts
- Keep a record of the ethnic origin, sex, disability and age of everyone who applies to us for a home or job
- Apply our commitment to equal opportunities when we decide who serves on our committees

- Make sure everyone we work with or who works for us knows about our policy and keeps to it. If any of these people have their own policy, we will make sure it fits in with ours
- Take into account good practice in equal opportunities when we update our housing and employment policies and procedures

Recruitment and Training

All staff are trained to take a consistent approach to all job applicants to ensure that no present or future employee is discriminated against by being treated less favourably. We also aim to ensure equality of access by monitoring the ethnicity and gender of all applicants. There is also a specific black minority ethnic (BME) traineeship named after a former employee, Johanna Cole. This was set up with the aim of placing BME candidates into management positions where historically there has been under-representation.

Training on equal opportunities takes place on several levels. Compulsory diversity training is given to all new staff as part of their induction programme. The course is called 'Equality and Diversity' and helps to strengthen our ability to provide staff with skills such as understanding their rights and responsibilities at work, how to be sensitive to the diverse needs of both residents and colleagues as well as how to recognise harassment and bullying at work and put a stop to it.

There are also courses available for managers and team leaders following the same course outline but with specific training on how to address possible problems and how to promote understanding of diversity in the workplace.

Equality and Diversity Working Group

The Equality and Diversity Working Group (EDWG) comprises of a cross-section of staff, who meet regularly during the year to monitor that L&Q's commitment to equality and diversity in our housing services, recruitment and training is being kept. The EDWG monitors progress against our Equality and Diversity strategy and our Equality and Diversity policy.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

We aim to respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) quickly and effectively. We will treat all cases of harassment or hate crime seriously and take action where appropriate. Many forms of harassment are criminal offences, and we work with the Police and any other relevant agencies to stop the offending behaviour and take legal action where necessary. Work is being carried out with other housing associations focusing on how we can more effectively address and manage ASB. L&Q also provides access to a free hate crime incident report line, which allows residents to talk to a trained member of staff outside of our normal operational hours. The telephone number is 0800 056 3451. Further details can be found by referring to our anti-social behaviour leaflet.

Accessing our services

We try to make all of our services accessible to everyone who wishes to use them. We work with external agencies to make our information available in a range of formats and languages including:

- Written translations of many of our leaflets and key newsletters in the languages commonly spoken by our tenants
- An interpretation service upon request
- Braille or large print versions of our main documents and audio tape transfer for the visually impaired
- Telephone interpreting for the hard of hearing
- Staff can also be contacted by minicom in some of our offices

Meeting housing needs

L&Q uses a range of data and research to gather information to identify the housing needs of black and minority ethnic people, disabled people and older people. This data is used to plan our services and to set performance targets.

We monitor the ethnicity and gender of everyone that we house or transfer.

We compare this data with information taken from the census to see how fairly the ethnic profiles of our tenants reflect the boroughs in which they live. Where there are homes in a specific area within a borough we change our comparison to wards rather than boroughs. We try to take account of the needs of our residents by using agencies that work with disadvantaged groups to help provide homes or to help our residents settle in.

Involving our residents

L&Q views resident involvement as giving all residents, whatever their background or experience, the opportunity to influence the way their home, scheme or estate is managed. We monitor the ethnicity of all active members of our resident associations to ensure all groups of residents have fair access to involvement.

L&Q is aware that traditional residents' associations may not be the most appropriate way of engaging some BME residents, as English may not be their first language. We aim to engage residents outside the traditional context of residents' associations, for example, by running focus groups in the languages of the different groups.

Maintaining our homes

L&Q seeks to ensure that the housing needs of all our disabled residents are met. It aims to do this by:

- New developments: Building homes to 'lifetime homes' standards and incorporating features in more specialist homes designed to support people to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible
- Existing homes in management: Assisting residents to enjoy independence, privacy and dignity by obtaining disabled adaptations to make their home more suitable for their needs or, where this is not practical, seeking to provide other solutions

L&Q has a Code of Conduct for maintenance contractors, which includes a section concerning our Equality and Diversity policy. L&Q also has a Contractor's Charter, which includes a reminder card, which will be given to all of the contractors' employees, setting out the service standards that we expect our contractors to meet including how they act towards our residents. All building contractors, regardless of size, must sign and agree to comply with both the Code of Conduct and the Contractor's Charter.

If any maintenance contractors have their own Equality and Diversity policy, we will make sure that it fits in with ours.

L&Q also monitors the ethnicity of all our maintenance contractors and their employees in order to gauge whether there is fair representation of the communities in which they work. As part of our commitment to equal opportunities, L&Q actively works with BME contractors where possible. We work in partnership with the London Equal Opportunities Federation (LEOF) to promote equal opportunities in construction. BME contractors who have registered with LEOF can be included on L&Q's register of approved contractors and consultants.

Contact us

L&Q Direct
PO Box 194
Sidcup
Kent
DA15 0AJ

Phone
0800 015 6536

E-mail
L&Qdirect@lqgroup.org.uk

L&Q is an exempt charity