

Your guide

to Equality and Diversity

Equal opportunities statement

L&Q is committed to equality and diversity. We aim to end discrimination, promote equal opportunities and positively value difference within the organisation. We also expect everyone who works for us, and with us, to support us in this.

To achieve this, we will:

- Promote equal opportunities, whatever a person's race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, religion, beliefs, sex, gender reassignment status, age, sexual orientation, HIV status, physical or mental disability, state of health, pregnancy or maternity status, appearance, marital or civil partnership status, family circumstances or offending behaviour.
- Deliver services which are accessible to all and meet the needs of our diverse residents.
- Provide a range of different opportunities for residents to become involved in L&Q, and apply our commitment to equal opportunities in any resident involvement recruitment and selection processes.
- Regularly review our policies, procedures and practices to ensure they do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against any groups.
- Encourage groups and individuals that are disadvantaged in housing and employment to apply for jobs, homes and work contracts.
- Keep a record of the ethnicity, sex, disability and age of everyone who applies to us for a home or job.
- Give all staff equality and diversity training.

- Make sure everyone we work with, or who works for us, is aware of our policy and adheres to it.
- Identify and incorporate good practice in equality and diversity.

Accessible services

We make our services accessible to our residents by using ramps, lowered counters, assisted door openers and Minicom services. We also provide information in a range of formats and languages, including translated leaflets, interpretation services, Braille, large print and audio tapes.

Meeting housing needs

L&Q uses a range of information to identify the housing needs of black and minority ethnic (BME), disabled and older people. This information is used to plan our services and to set performance targets. We compare the data we collect on our residents with information taken from the census to monitor whether the ethnicity of our residents fairly reflects that of the boroughs, or wards, in which they live.

To ensure our homes are accessible, new homes are built to 'lifetime homes' standards. We also incorporate specific features in more specialist homes, and make adaptations to existing homes, to enable older or disabled residents to remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible.

By working with a range of agencies L&Q is able to provide homes for disadvantaged groups and support residents with specific needs.

Involving our residents

We believe it is important that all residents, whatever their background or experience, are able to influence the way we deliver services. We offer a range of opportunities for this, from participating in L&Q governance, to being an estate champion.

Where traditional methods of participation are not suitable, we seek alternative ways to consult and engage residents. This may include using interpreters, covering child minding or care-giving costs, and using telephone and internet communication to enable participation.

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

L&Q is committed to reducing anti-social behaviour and aims to respond to reported incidents quickly and effectively. We recognise that some of our residents are more likely to experience anti-social behaviour than others and have support in place for vulnerable victims and witnesses. We also work to make our estates safer and promote cohesive communities.

All cases of harassment, hate crime and domestic violence are taken seriously and we take action where appropriate. We provide access to a free Violence and Hate Crime Reporting Service (0800 015 6536), which allows residents to talk to a trained member of staff outside our normal operational hours.

Where the behaviour is a criminal offence, we also work with the Police and any other relevant agencies. Further details can be found by referring to our anti-social behaviour and domestic violence leaflets.

Recruitment and training

We take a consistent approach to all job applicants to ensure that no present or future employees are discriminated against, or treated more favourably. We also monitor the ethnicity, sex, disability and age of all applicants to help us assess whether our recruitment methods support equal access.

We have a specific 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.

For our staff, training on equal opportunities takes place on several levels. Equality and diversity training is compulsory for all new staff as part of their induction programme. This provides an understanding of the Equality Act 2010, as well as covering skills such as responding sensitively to the diverse needs residents and colleagues, and recognising harassment and bullying in the workplace. There are also specific courses available for managers, team leaders, and staff involved in recruitment and selection.

L&Q contractors

Our Contractors' Charter and Code of Conduct sets out the service standards that we expect our contractors to meet, including how they approach equality and diversity issues. All building contractors, regardless of size, must sign and agree to comply with both the Code of Conduct and the Contractors' Charter. A handy credit card sized summary of the Code of Conduct is also given to all contractors' employees to carry for reference.

Where maintenance contractors have their own Equality and Diversity policy, we make sure it fits in with ours.

L&Q 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. 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.

Equality and Diversity Working Group

The Equality and Diversity Working Group (EDWG) is made up of a cross-section of staff who meet regularly during the year to oversee equality and diversity work at L&Q. The EDWG monitors our progress against our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Equality and Diversity Policy.

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L&Q is an exempt charity