RHP Group Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group Strategy

2025-2028









INTRODUCTION

At RHP our **purpose** is providing safe, secure homes - opening the door to life opportunities.

Our **vision** is to be trusted as a **socially responsible** housing provider which is **high- performing**, **community-connected**, and **values-based**.

We also want to support the delivery of the purpose and vision of our subsidiary Co-op Homes (CHS), using their values, which align with the RHP Group.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are integral to us achieving this:

- To be community-connected we need to understand our customers and their individual and collective needs, so that we deliver our services in a tailored way to meet those needs.
- Making decisions guided by our values means practicing equality, celebrating diversity, and being inclusive in everything we do. We want RHP to be an organisation which people love being part of.









EDI COMMITMENT

It is important to RHP Group that whether you are a customer or an employee: you feel valued, respected, appreciated, and free to be who you are - regardless of your background, identity, or other aspect which makes you who you are.

We understand that this is a commitment that we need to constantly work on and seek to improve. As a result, this is our updated EDI Strategy for 2025 - 2028, designed to build on what we have already started, and continue to address the areas we still need to improve.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The RHP Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring an inclusive organisation which practices its commitment to EDI.

The Chief Executive has lead responsibility for ensuring that RHP Group's EDI strategy is in place and being implemented.

The Executive Director of Operations is the operational lead for the customer side of the strategy.

The Executive Director of Corporate Services is the operational lead for the employee side of the strategy.

For Co-op Homes, the operational responsibilities fall to the Managing Director with the oversight of the CHS Board, both working in partnership with the RHP Group to ensure groupwide compliance with this strategy.

All RHP Group colleagues have a responsibility to practice equality, diversity and inclusion in their everyday work for the Group.

Background

In order to prepare this EDI Strategy, we have undertaken some extensive research with an organisation called Housing Diversity Network (HDN), to review the extent to which EDI is embedded in RHP.

HDN has undertaken a desktop review of our corporate strategies, governance documents, external communications across different channels, and our internal policies - to understand whether our commitment to EDI is reflected in the way in which we conduct our business. HDN also held a number of focus groups with RHP's customers and colleagues, to understand whether practicing EDI is genuinely part of the culture of the organisation, and what they believe we can do to improve.

HDN also put together two surveys for us which we sent out to customers and colleagues, to gain a wider range of views on EDI.

The themes and actions in this EDI Strategy have come directly from this work, which was then shared with some RHP Board members who further helped to co-create this approach. We therefore believe this strategy is firmly evidenced based and should enable us to move forward on the next stage of our EDI journey in a focussed way.

The strategy covers both customers and colleagues. The internal side focussing on colleagues covers the whole of RHP Group, including CHS.



WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED SO FAR

In our previous EDI Strategy, we focussed on getting our internal foundations for EDI right.

We set 3 key goals:

Goal 1:	Goal 2:	Goal 3:
Develop & sustain an inclusive organisation	Recruit, retain & advance a diverse organisation	Integrate diversity, equity & inclusion into what we do

We recognise that the work so far has been more internally focussed. RHP provides a strong set of HR policies to support its diverse workforce, and this has resulted in high colleague satisfaction levels (80+%). Colleagues are clear on the organisation's values (93.5%) and believe that RHP would make reasonable adjustments to support their individual needs (92.5%). Colleagues describe RHP as an inclusive workplace where they are free to express themselves. The diversity data for RHP's Board and colleagues (which can be found in Appendix 2) broadly reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve, although this needs to be further validated when updated customer data is available. We therefore feel that we have come a long way towards achieving our previous Goals 1 and 2.

However, Goal 3 was about integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into what we do - and we believe we still have more to do to achieve this. In contrast to colleagues, our RHP customers are less satisfied with our approach. As of the end of December 2024/25, 66.4% of customers feel that we treat them fairly. 65% of customers are satisfied that we keep them informed but only 46.4% are satisfied that RHP listens and acts on their views. Only 26% of customers are satisfied with our complaints handling which is a key source of feedback. Just over half (58.8%) of customers are satisfied that RHP makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood.

We therefore recognise that our next EDI Strategy needs to prioritise our **external** approach - that means the way we make our services accessible; how we engage with our customers; and the positive role we play in our communities.



EDI GOALS FOR 2025 - 2028:

External Goals

Goal 1:
Improve accessibility of services

Goal 2:
Broaden customer engagement

Goal 3:
Become an EDI community leader



Internal Goals

Goal A:
Governance housekeeping

Goal B:
Data & analytics

Goal C:
Supporting a diverse workforce



EXTERNAL GOALS

1. Improve accessibility of RHP services

Our future focus will be around ensuring our services are more accessible and better meet individual needs.

Customers told us they wanted greater access to non-digital communication, and also better promotion of the different formats they can request it in. In order to respond to this, we'll be offering the option to receive our monthly e-newsletter via the post and in alternative formats such as different languages or larger fonts. We'll also be introducing quarterly paper newsletters for our larger estates with specific information tailored for them, and in the top non-English languages spoken on that estate.

We have made progress in collecting more resident data, particularly on vulnerabilities, which has included improving how we store the information on our CRM system. However, some colleagues fed back that they didn't know how to retrieve or record this information on the system, so more education around it is needed internally.

We are working on developing a new customer portal to be plugged into our website. As part of the portal's functionality, customers will be able update their details themselves, which will then feed into our CRM system. We will need to make sure that when encouraging customers to do this, we clearly explain what we are using the data for and that it'll be kept safe and secure.

We already have a Vulnerable Customer Policy that is aligned to the Ombudsman Spotlight report on Relationship of Equals, and we are also working on producing a Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

We will also undertake a specific review of our approach to disabled customers as from our EDI survey we know a large proportion of customers report having a disability, and they are less satisfied overall with our services. We also recognise that we need to hear the voice of disabled people on RHP's Board and in the workforce.



2. RHP Customer engagement

We really value the team of engaged customers that currently work with us to scrutinise and provide feedback on our services. However, both they, and we, recognise that they can never be completely reflective of our wider customers.

We will therefore refresh our Customer Engagement Strategy to expand the different ways that customers can engage with us and enable us to hear the voice of more residents to inform our decision making. We want to find new ways to hear from under-represented groups, particularly younger and disabled residents, so we need to find different and innovative ways to engage.

We will make this EDI Strategy available on the website and in paper or other formats on request so that our residents understand how we are working to improve our approach.







3. Becoming an RHP EDI community leader

At RHP we already undertake many community initiatives that go beyond our role as a landlord, however there is more we could do to more widely promote this work.

Going forwards we want to be more vocal about this as we believe it is important for RHP as significant landlord and employer in the area, to be a leader on the importance of EDI.

We will be more targeted about how the community work we do promotes equality of opportunity e.g. providing apprenticeships to support young people into training and employment; promoting inclusive communities; tackling fuel poverty with practical support such as access to our hardship fund to help manage energy costs; our annual Winter Warmers campaign to support older people to stay safe, warm, and connected during the colder months; and RHP's Skill's Academy which offers free employability and skills training.

We also want to do more to celebrate the diversity of our customers, colleagues and the board. We operate, live, and work in some amazingly vibrant mixed communities and we believe that this in itself is something we should be promoting and celebrating more overtly, possibly in partnership with other organisations.









INTERNAL

A. Governance and housekeeping

In order to integrate EDI into everything we do, we need to ensure that EDI is embedded in our governance arrangements, strategies and policies.

We already refer to our RHP organisational values in our corporate documents, but we want to be more explicit about these including EDI.

We will create a 'golden thread' through more explicit reference to EDI in our next RHP Corporate Strategy. We will also add a sentence to our formal Operating Regulations to make clear our commitment to EDI and our intention to comply with the Equality Act 2010 in all of our activities.

Our EDI Policy needs a rewrite to reflect the latest governance, legislative, and regulatory context. As an employer, we need to make sure our HR documents are correct and reflect good EDI practice so we will update our Disciplinary and Grievance policy to ensure the Reasonable Adjustments section refers to all protected characteristics. We want to ensure we retain a diverse board that broadly reflects the residents and communities we serve, so we will add this into our Board succession, skills, and recruitment policy.

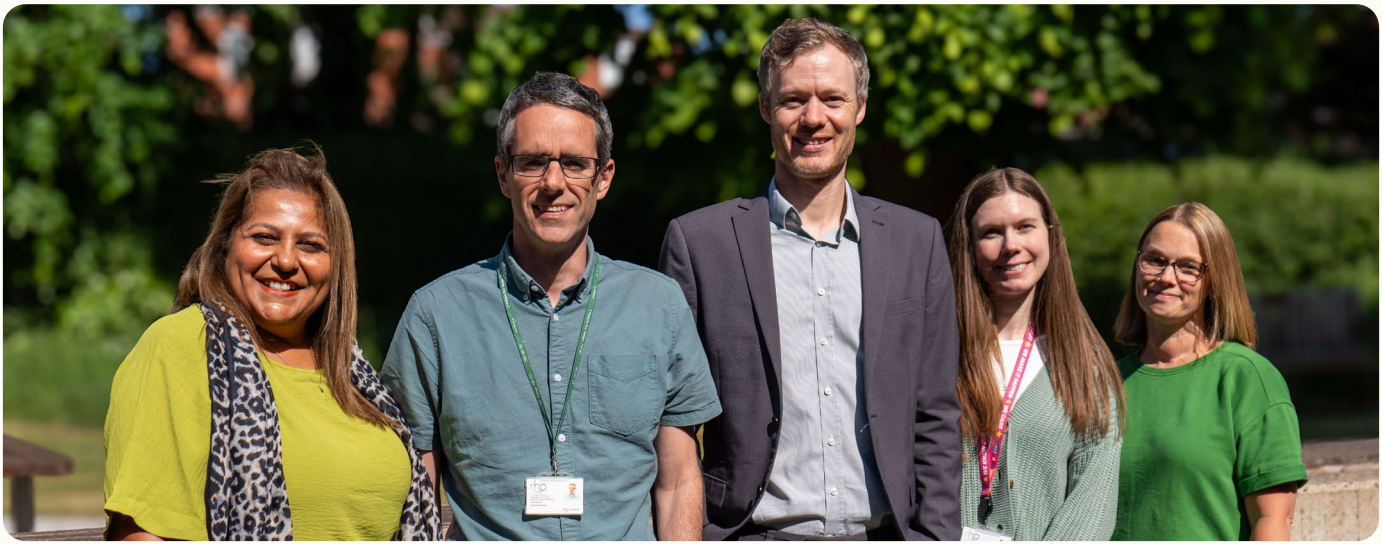
We will also report on the diversity of RHP's Board at least annually, and identify any characteristic gaps to target in future recruitments. This principle also applies for our workforce which we want to be diverse and reflective of the residents and communities we serve. So, we will undertake a review of recruitment practices and outcomes to ensure that there are no unfair barriers to people's career progression within RHP.

The CHS Board will similarly take diversity into account with its approach to board succession, skills and recruitment as well as receiving information relating to the diversity of the CHS workforce.

B. Data and analytics

We acknowledge that we can't provide a bespoke service unless we understand more about our residents, their characteristics, and any vulnerabilities they may have. We recognise we have gaps in our customer data and will continue to work to fill these, including making sure we have up to date information on any vulnerabilities.

We will map RHP's resident data against that of RHP's Board and workforce to make sure the organisation is broadly reflective, and hearing the different voices of our diverse customers, including those that are marginalised or harder to reach. Where there are gaps, we will seek to target these in future recruitments. We will develop tailored services to meet the specific needs of key customer groups.



C. Supporting a diverse workforce

Whilst we have made good progress in our last EDI Strategy improving our HR approach to colleagues, there are still some additional EDI actions that will help us support and sustain a diverse workforce.

This includes working with our refreshed Inclusion Champion Group, which contains representatives from across each directorate and CHS, who are passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion. We'll support the group to use their voice to make suggestions on how we can connect more with a diverse range of customers, employees and communities. We'll also work with them to promote and celebrate diversity throughout the year, as well as holding us to account where they believe we could do better.

We know that some of our colleagues still don't feel confident about their knowledge and understanding of EDI, so we will ensure that EDI training is compulsory for everyone and that it is refreshed at least annually.

Although we have strong engagement levels with our internal communication channels, we know we can do more to improve accessibility for non-desk based colleagues such as our Caretakers and Repairs Operatives. This will include making sure they have access on their phones to our intranet and internal social network Viva Engage, as well as being able to watch back our weekly all company briefing (if they are unable to access live).





We will update the Learning and Development Policy making specific reference to our fair and equal access for colleagues to undertake the new housing management (and other) qualifications necessary for them to be successful in their role.

We will add reference to our commitment to the Equality Act 2010 to the front of all HR policies.

In 2024/25 we gained 'Committed' status from the Disability Confident Employers Scheme. This means we are committed to making our recruitment processes more accessible and inclusive. We also agree to support existing employees and communicate job roles effectively, including providing reasonable adjustments.

Our aim is to achieve the next level up which is reaching 'Confident' status. At this level, we'll go further, actively seeking out disabled candidates, offering them interviews, and ensuring they have access to the same opportunities as non-disabled candidates. We'll also develop links with Jobcentre Plus and disability organisations to further promote our commitment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At RHP we progressed our EDI journey in the last strategy with a focus on getting our internal house in order. We believe we have made good progress in achieving this, with a diverse board and workforce, who have high levels of satisfaction working for us.

Although we plan to continue to build on this progress internally, this next EDI Strategy is more externally focussed on our customers and ensuring that our services meet their needs. We hope that with a greater focus on this, we will see improved customer satisfaction, and a renewed confidence that we are delivering on our vision to be trusted as a socially responsible housing provider which is high performing, community-connected, and values based.









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