

**VECTIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

**POLICY ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

**STATEMENT**

The Board of Vectis Housing Association recognises the importance of equality of opportunity within the community, and wishes it to be known that it governs an organisation supportive of such principles in all its manifestations. The Board further recognises that discrimination exists against certain sections of the community in this country. It is the Association's intention to assist with the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and to take positive action to provide equality of opportunity for all, in the processes of its governance, the services it provides, and as an employer. It will support appropriate campaigns against all forms of discrimination to the best of its ability, and will work with other organisations towards that objective.

With particular regard to discrimination in respect of race, the Board is committed to the recommendations contained within the documents listed under Section 10 of this Policy, but its strategy in fulfilling the Association's role is measured against the facts which are prevalent in its sole area of operation. The members of the Board, and the Association's staff, are all local people living, working, and participating, in the Isle of Wight, and given the factors outlined in Section 11 of this Policy, the Board considers that the Association's governing and operational structure fairly represents that community at the present time.

The Board will continue to monitor such data as is relevant to these statistics, and will take such action as is appropriate to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to the cause, if and when those circumstances change.

K. Boyes, Chairman  
For and on behalf of the Board  
Vectis Housing Association Limited  
November 2003 (last reviewed March 2009)

## **VECTIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

### **POLICY ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

#### **THE POLICY**

1. In the provision of housing services and employment of staff to provide these services, the Association will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all persons.
2. No person, or particular group of persons, applying for membership, for housing, for employment, or for contracts with the Association, will be treated less favourably than any other person, or group of persons, because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, religion, belief or lack of religion or belief, gender, transgender, being married or civil partner, pregnancy, paternity or maternity leave, sexual orientation, disability or age.
3. In fulfilling the responsibilities implicit in this Policy, the Association will actively assist disadvantaged minority groups in benefiting from its services.
4. The Association will seek to identify the needs of disadvantaged minority groups in its area of operation, where such exist.
5. To help it fulfil its commitment to equal opportunity, the Association will collect and monitor records of the categories identified in 2 above, of all those applying to it for housing and all those seeking employment from the Association, in so far as such detail is available.
6. In hiring contractors and other agencies to work for it, the Association will be mindful of its commitment to equality of opportunity, and of the equality policies adopted by such organisations.
7. In the composition and operation of its Board of Management, the Association will be mindful of its commitment to equal opportunity, and seek to ensure that the Board's structure fairly represents the diversity of the community in which the Association works.
8. All eligible groups shall have equal opportunity to the Association's tenancies. The criteria adopted shall be solely on the basis of the criteria contained within the Association's published housing policy. This is primarily an objective assessment of housing need based upon an approach adopted universally by all participating Island based housing associations.
9. As a matter of good practice, the Board will, on an annual basis, and in accordance with the Business Plan, receive any information regarding issues relating to this Policy, and its implied procedures, in order to assess its adequacy for the purpose.

10. In pursuance of compliance with this Policy, but subject to section 11 below, the Board will have regard to the content of, and recommendations contained within, the following documents:
- (i) 'The Race Inquiry Challenge Report 2001';
  - (ii) 'The Race Equality Code of Practice for Housing Associations' published jointly by the Commission for Racial Equality, the National Housing Federation, the Federation of Black Housing Organisations, and the Housing Corporation;
  - (iii) 'The Commission for Racial Equality code of practice and guidance', produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission
  - (iv) The Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code, particularly Sections 2.7 and any related sub-sections;
  - (v) The Corporation's Good Practice Note: Equality and Diversity published November 2007;
  - (vi) Corporation Circular 10/07 in relation to disability and gender actions plans, and
  - (vii) Any relevant succeeding regulation and legislation, of which the Board is aware.
11. The Board will not develop targets in respect of which the necessary criterion does not exist. Available research relating to the Association's area of operation (exclusively the Isle of Wight) reveals that **"the Island represents one of the least ethnically diverse areas in the South East. The 2001 Census data indicates that approximately 98% of the community is white."**\* There is no more recent data to suggest that this has altered significantly in the intervening period. Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that there are any BME communities living as 'groups', such small population being distributed widely across the Island. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that these individual households have specific housing need which is at all different from the general population.

On the basis of this data, targets in the form of those laid down in the documents under 10 above are likely to be meaningless, in that, in relation to this Association's average annual lettings totals, staff, and Board structure, the requirements would lead to less than one whole person being housed/employed/ or represented on the Board.

In an attempt to defer to regulatory requirements, however, the requisite targets in respect of BME representation, will be annexed to this Policy each year. Such targets notwithstanding, the criteria laid down in sections 1 to 9 of this policy will be applied.

The targets will be modified as statistical data relating to the population changes.

\* Source: 'The Isle of Wight Council's Housing Strategy 2003-2008'

**(Revised) November 2003**  
**(last reviewed March 2009)**

**VECTIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**  
**(Incorporating East Cowes Housing Association)**

**EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

**TARGETS FOR BME INCLUSIVE ACTIVITY 2008/2009**

	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>Lettings, proportionate to BME housing need 100% (Being 2% of approximately 20 annual lettings = 0.4)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Tenant satisfaction, at least as high as for non BME tenants</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Dealing effectively with racial harassment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Staffing, new appointments and promotion opportunities ( Being 2 % of 9 staff = 0.018)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Board representation, appointments of BME communities (Being 2 % of 15 – maximum board membership = 0.3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Representation in tenant/residents associations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Employment performance of suppliers, contractors and consultants –</b>	<b>TBA</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**November 2003**  
**(Last reviewed March 2009)**