



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Commitments Report 2024/25

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our latest Corporate Plan, '**Our Sustainable Future**' 2023-25, recognises the wide range of challenges faced by the sector, our organisation, our customers and colleagues. It outlines how we will proactively meet these challenges, maintain high standards of customer service, and continue to provide, safer, cleaner, greener homes and neighbourhoods. The commitments outlined in this document support our corporate priorities in relation to optimising our service delivery model, ensuring that the right service is provided at the right time and the provision of an inclusive working environment.
- 1.2 We believe that being inclusive is everyone's responsibility at Salix Homes and have reaffirmed this commitment through the development and launch of a new values and competencies framework. '*We are Inclusive*' is our new value through which colleagues are encouraged to advocate for others whilst embracing and promoting inclusion. The other core values include '*We are Successful*' and '*We are Trustworthy*' both of which also promote the importance of positive customer experiences. These were formally launched in October 2023 alongside our Corporate Plan.
- 1.3 It is commonly accepted that commitment from the top is vital in establishing an inclusive organisation and our Board and Committees model our values, in particular they play a crucial role in providing guidance, feedback and oversight of our collective activities relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) ensuring that this is considered within strategic decision making.
- 1.4 When preparing the latest version of the Inclusion Strategy for Salix Homes, this influence became evident. Inclusion had featured in many of the key

strategic decisions in newly developed strategies and action plans. In setting the strategic direction of their services, our wider leadership team had considered opportunities to reduce barriers to accessing services and promote positive practice. In short, there was evidence that commitment to inclusion was present and becoming embedded in critical thinking and decision making.

- 1.5 This is positive progression. Inclusion is a cross cutting theme for all service areas and although there is recognition of the need to capture this activity in one place, it is now felt that a separate Inclusion Strategy is no longer necessary. Instead, this document sets out our fresh approach of collating approved strategic activities, and other commitments, in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in one place to enable visibility and transparency of the work that will be undertaken.



2. Salix Homes – In Context



2.1 Salix Homes is a place-based organisation, and we are proud of our roots and the difference we make within our communities in Salford. In considering the positive impact we make and can continue to make in relation to EDI, it is important that we have a clear appreciation of the challenges our communities face.

2.2 Our understanding of these challenges has been informed through a number of sources, including insights taken from the 2011 and 2021 Census data sets, which illustrates how Salford has changed over a decade, and the Index of Multiple Deprivation, (IMD) which assesses areas based on how they fare on multiple domains including housing, employment, and health.

2.3 Using the IMD, we know that 73.5% of our homes are within the top 10% of the poorest neighbourhoods in England, and 92.2% are in the 30% of most underprivileged neighbourhoods nationally. This means that our communities experience significantly more social and economic challenges when compared to other communities.

2.4 As we present our EDI commitments through the themes of, our customers and our colleagues, we will take the opportunity to explore some of the contributing factors and consequences of supporting communities with a high concentration of deprivation through a summary of some of the known challenges and the responses we have taken.



3. Our Customers

3.1 We recognise that a higher level of deprivation within a community often corresponds to a higher level of vulnerability for those who live within them. The communities where our homes are located, and the experiences of these communities, therefore have an influence on the services we provide and the decisions we make.

3.2 We have robust processes and schemes in place to support customers who may be experiencing financial difficulties, as the following assessment for 2022/23 demonstrates:

- **£75,458** of benefits and grants gained for customers.
- **£30,000** given to customers through our customer support fund, helping 127 customers.
- **£25,000** of energy vouchers issued.
- **159** free sim cards issued.
- **386** customers supported with furniture packages.
- **436** referrals made to third parties for specialist support.

3.3 We will continue to provide access to financial support where possible and appropriate to do so.

Responding to the housing crisis

3.4 The current national housing crisis has been well documented. We know that those who do not have access to an affordable good quality home do not have the security that this can bring, which makes it much more difficult for them to achieve other things in life such as good health, a good education, and a good job.

3.5 The 2021 Census has highlighted that in the last decade Salford has experienced significant

population growth (36,000) and household growth (11, 561), which due to the limited social housing available, has been met almost entirely by the private sector. The quality of homes and services provided by private sector landlords has come under intensive scrutiny in recent years, and like others we have been concerned about the standards experienced of those who live in homes provided by the private sector.

3.6 To help improve this situation, we have been active participants of 'Let Us' the **Greater Manchester Ethical Lettings Agency** which works with landlords to maintain standards and let homes at affordable rents and ensure that those homes meet these standards.

3.7 We have also been involved in the development of Greater Manchester's **The Good Landlord Charter** which is intended to be the first of its kind. An ambitious new voluntary standard for landlord excellence intended to support and work with landlords to achieve higher standards.

3.8 Our ambitions to lessen the impact of the current housing crisis cannot be met alone, and we are therefore proud to support Greater Manchester's plans to become the **UK's first housing first city region**. This will bring together a broad range of interested and crucial stakeholders to develop a strategy to drive up standards and availability, supported by funding from the new flexibility granted to Greater Manchester as part of the single settlement with government.

3.9 However, with almost 5,500 people on the housing waiting list in Salford, there is simply not enough social housing available for those who need it. The housing crisis and availability of truly affordable homes therefore remains a concern and building new affordable housing has long been a priority for us.



- 3.10 Of those waiting for housing in Salford, 76% are seeking 1 or 2 bed properties. Since 2015, we have built or acquired new homes and the vast majority of which have reflected this demand. In doing so we have been innovative, making use of disused buildings, as well as developing new, which has enhanced our communities and promoting eco-friendly solutions which are greener and more energy efficient, supporting customers to better manage their energy costs. Recent accreditation to the SHIFT, the sustainable standard for the housing sector to gold level, is recognition of the good work we have undertaken to reduce fuel poverty and improve financial resilience of customers. Our aim is to continue to deliver a minimum of 100 new homes each year.
- 3.11 The homes we have built, and are intending to build, have been designed and developed with current and future customer needs in mind.
- 3.12 The latest housing waiting list in Salford identified 467 applications for **accessible housing**, the vast majority of these were for 1 or 2 bed housing. In recognition of the limited access to accessible housing for people with disabilities we have recently established 4 new wheelchair accessible homes in our Greenhaus development. All new homes are informed by the concept of a home for life and are built to make future adaptations easier to accommodate.
- 3.13 Further, we know that some of the homes that would be suitable for families are currently under-occupied by older customers who have remained and are alone in what was their family home. There is, understandably, resistance to moving from a longstanding home with many memories, however, often these homes no longer meet the needs of the individual and can be more costly to run.
- 3.14 In response to this, **a new and improved older persons offer** is being designed which will involve 5 key estates across Salford. The first of these developments is planned for Arrow Street

in Lower Broughton and will include a doctor's surgery on the ground floor. It is intended that these homes will be attractive to older people who are under-occupying larger homes and support the redevelopment of our existing over 55's independent living schemes, and as they move into these new more appropriate properties, the original homes can be let to those who are seeking larger accommodation.

3.15 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to:

- Continue to inform the development of the Greater Manchester (GM) Good Landlord Charter in 2024.
- Continue to inform the development of GM plans to become a housing first city region.
- Deliver a minimum of 100 new homes a year.
- Firm up our plans for our older persons housing offer.

Homes and Health

3.16 A comparison of the 2011 and 2021 Census information shows an improved position in relation to health and disability. For example, 45.1% of Salford residents described their health as 'very good', an increase from 41.7% in 2011. Additionally, those citing as 'bad' decreased from 7.0% to 5.7%, and those citing 'very bad' decreased from 2.1% to 1.7%.

3.17 In terms of a positive impact on the community in relation to health and disability, one of the key actions we have been able to take as a housing provider has been the repurposing of **Alexander Gardens** as affordable housing for doctors, nurses and other clinical staff who work at Salford Royal Foundation Trust. This has supported them to fill vacancies where access to affordable housing locally has been a concern in attracting people to the area.

3.18 We have also undertaken an extensive programme to identify and address damp and



mould within our properties. We have retrained all relevant colleagues and reviewed literature for customers following advice to make leaflets more accessible. Further, we have commenced a programme installing Switchee devices in our homes which are at higher risk, they provide data on energy usage, which in turn can allow insight into potential problems with damp and mould, allowing for a proactive management approach.

3.19 In terms of disability, Salford saw the third largest percentage fall in the Northwest for the proportion of residents who identified as being 'disabled and limited a lot', 13.3% in 2011 to 10.3% in 2021.

3.20 However, this position is not reflective of our experience, as there has been significant demand for **aids and adaptations**. In 2023/24 alone, we invested over £500,000 in aids and adaptations. This is a significant investment, but one we know is important in enabling our customers to remain in their homes for longer and continue to be part of their local communities, which are often the source of established and familiar support networks. The

demand for this service shows no sign of abating, therefore we are **exploring with Salford City Council how this could be funded in the future** to support us to meet the volume of requests we receive.

3.21 To make the process of minor adaptations easier and quicker there is no need for an occupational health referral. However, we want to be assured that there are no barriers to access and therefore will undertake **research to better understand the experiences of customers**.

3.22 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to:

- Continue with our commitment to allocate a budget towards the adaptation of properties over the next three years, working collaboratively with Salford City Council and Greater Manchester Housing Partnership (GMHP) on a new approach to adaptations standards.
- Further review our Aids and Adaptations Policy using insights from customer experiences.





Younger People

3.23 We know that overcrowded homes can result in children spending less time in the home, this can make neighbourhood management more challenging, particularly where there are limited affordable activities for young people to engage with. We have in the past provided holiday club activities, which whilst beneficial have not been of a scale or frequency to make a notable impact.

3.24 To improve the difference we can make, we have recognised the need to work with external partners for a more sustainable solution. Salford City Council has recently approved the building of a new multi-million-pound **Salford Youth Zone**, which is expected to open in early 2025. This facility will provide young people with somewhere safe to go, something positive to do and someone trusted to talk to. We have been asked to become a patron of the Salford Youth

Zone, this means that beyond the financial support, our patronage would also provide us with the opportunity to directly engage with young people, invest in the community and build connections.

3.25 We also recognise the added disadvantage that care leavers can experience. We have signed up to a set of Greater Manchester care leaver pledges and committed to a number of actions, but are now exploring whether The Hive can be repurposed for shared independent living, which could include dedicated housing for care leavers to provide additional support. The Hive as an affordable housing solution launched in 2017 that was initially aimed at those aged between 18 and 25, this was the first of its kind in Greater Manchester and among only a handful in the country who provide a similar offer.

3.26 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to:

- Become a patron of the Salford Youth Zone.
- Review the future of The Hive.

Inclusive Customer Services

3.27 At Salix Homes, we are committed to providing first-class services that put our customers at the centre, and our Customer Services Strategy 2024-27 sets out how we will continue to achieve this. Included in this, as a central pillar, are the new consumer standards, which require the treatment of all customers with fairness and respect, considering their diverse needs in the design and delivery of services.

3.28 This has long been a priority for us and, most recently, has been evident in the use of **insights from analysing customer journeys within our processes** to streamline services and trigger the launch of a 'root and branch' review of our repairs service, which incorporates the diverse nature of our customer base.

3.29 We have also **established a team dedicated to complaints handling**, which promotes respect and the rights of customers within the management of complaints, and captures learning that is shared throughout the organisation to improve services. This is now supported by a regular review of complaints using customer demographic information to understand whether different groups have different experiences of our services.

3.30 To better respond to individual vulnerabilities and enhance the service we provide, it is essential that we hold this relevant information in our systems for our colleagues to act on. We have also started a journey to better understand who is in our properties through **tenancy audits** and collating '**Getting To Know You**' census data, **neighbourhood days** and a **high rise month of action**.

3.31 Based on the information collected, the following is a summary of our customer profile:

- **56%** female and **44%** male.
- **28%** of customers are over 60 years old.
- **15%** have informed us that they have a disability.
- **71%** of customers have declared their ethnicity as White British, the remaining **29%** citing other ethnic groups.

3.32 There are gaps in our data; therefore, as part of our Customer Service Strategy, a strategic objective is to **gain accurate insight into our customers by collating information to provide tailored and reliable data-driven services that are fit to serve the diverse needs of our communities**. To support this, we will continue to deliver our Getting to Know You campaign to collect data on customers and their needs and ensure changes are made to systems to make this data more easily accessible and reportable.

3.33 To be useful, this insight must translate into action. Vulnerability workshops with colleagues have identified the tools they need to respond effectively and consistently. Key documents, such as a Customer Vulnerability Policy and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, have been reviewed and introduced. We will continue this work and include a cross reference of Tenancy Satisfaction Measures with demographic information to again, understand if high levels of service provision are being experienced by different demographic groups, and the changes we make are being effective.

3.34 Ensuring our communication with customers is proactive, transparent, consistent, and compassionate to build trust, increase customer satisfaction and prevent avoidable contact by getting things right first time is another key strategic objective. Central to the delivery of this will be the review of current communication channels, including for those where English is not their first language.

- 3.35 This is particularly important as we are now operating in more ethnically diverse communities. Salford, like the whole of Greater Manchester, is becoming much more diverse in relation to its ethnic makeup. In the 2021 Census, 82.3% of people in Salford identified their ethnic group as 'White', compared to 90.1% in the 2011 Census. The Census data also showed that 6.1% of Salford residents identified their ethnic group within the 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African' category, up from 2.8% in 2011. The 3.3%-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in Salford.
- 3.36 Data we hold about our customers indicates that 7% don't use English as their first language.
- 3.37 Support is already in place to reduce barriers to communication, such as LanguageLine for translation services, Minicom for hearing impaired customers and tools on our website which can translate and improve accessibility of the pages and information held.
- 3.38 In addition to a review of potential language barriers, we will continue to **take a customer-centred approach by listening to and learning from the wider customer voice within complaint handling and other sources of customer feedback**. This further strategic objective helps to ensure our communication with customers is proactive, transparent, consistent, and compassionate. This will allow us to build trust, increase customer satisfaction and prevent avoidable contact by getting things right first time. This will include accessibility considerations to provide an effective customer service to all our customers.
- 3.39 Finally, we will **Empower our people with the knowledge and tools they need to provide customers with a high quality, positive experience when they interact with us**. This will be delivered, in part, through new customer service training which will help equip colleagues to effectively use and recognise

customer vulnerability. Where a customer's vulnerability is identified as complex, colleagues will be able to refer them to a new Customer Support Team which will be established in 2024/25 and be dedicated to such cases.

- 3.40 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to deliver the following strategic objectives, as detailed in the Customer Service Strategy 2024-27:

- Gain accurate insight into our customers by collating information to provide tailored and reliable data driven services that are fit for purpose to serve the diverse needs of our communities.
- Ensure our communication with customers is proactive, transparent, consistent, and compassionate to build trust, increase customer satisfaction and prevent avoidable contact by getting things right first time.
- Taking a customer-centred approach by listening to and learning from the wider customer voice within complaint handling and other sources of customer feedback.
- Empowering our people with the knowledge and tools they need to provide customers with a high quality, positive experience when they interact with us.

Inclusive Customer Engagement

- 3.41 Our Corporate Plan, Our Sustainable Future 2023-25, sets out our objective to support our customers and communities by ensuring a strong and influential customer voice through our customer engagement arrangements. Our Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-27 details that commitment.
- 3.42 Salix Homes has a strong track record of customer engagement and involvement. In 2020 we further developed our approach to customer voice and influence to ensure customers are at the heart of decision making. This included the

establishment of a Customer Committee as a key part of our governance structure, with delegated responsibilities from our Board and representation on the Board through the chair of this committee. A new approach to scrutiny was also established with the support of a recruited pool of Customer Connectors from our community, who carry out this work and, together with the Customer Committee, make recommendations on their findings to inform service provision. To date, this has included six pieces of scrutiny including anti-social behaviour, repairs and customer service.

- 3.43 A number of specialist groups have been developed that sit under the Customer Committee and are chaired by committee members, this includes the Apartment Living Forum, a Complaints Oversight Group, and a Procurement Panel.
- 3.44 As a result of this work, we have seen increased customer satisfaction with being kept informed, rising from 79% in 2022/23 to 85% in 2023/24. We have also seen improvements in customer satisfaction that the landlord listens and takes customers' views into account, with this increasing from 60% in 2022/23 to 77% in 2023/24.
- 3.45 We understand each customer has as much right as any other to participate in the decisions that affect the services they receive, and the strategy aims to provide customers with an ability to shape and influence the services we deliver, on matters such as the safety of their homes and how we spend their rent to deliver services and maintain and improve their homes.
- 3.46 Therefore, a strategic objective of this strategy is to **develop our customer engagement framework to give customers the opportunity to shape what is important to them**. One action is to publicise our customer engagement framework and menu of opportunities to ensure customers are aware of the different ways that they can share their views and influence services.

3.47 A further strategic objective is to **collaborate with our communities to better understand the customer experience**. Collaborating with community groups and networks helps us to reach customers who may not engage or who may face barriers to engagement, such as customers with disabilities, customers from ethnic minority backgrounds and young people. Therefore, we will map such organisations in Salford and make best use of partnership working to reach a wider range of customers with diverse needs.

3.48 As mentioned, it is important that we are able to listen to the views of all our customers, to support the final objective in this strategy is to **continue to develop efficient ways of listening to customer-wide views through understanding surveys, sentiment, and trends**. Through the provision and promotion of a range of different communication channels, barriers to providing feedback can be reduced. It will also enable us to ensure we understand where our 'silence' is, (meaning those customers who are less likely to engage with us) to better understand why this may be and what actions we may be able to take to improve engagement with this group.

3.49 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda, are to deliver the following strategic objectives as detailed in the Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-27:

- Develop our customer engagement framework to give customers the opportunity to shape what is important to them.
- Collaborate with our communities to better understand the customer experience.
- Continue to develop efficient ways of listening to customer-wide views through understanding surveys, sentiment, and trends.

4. Our Colleagues

4.1 Promoting and delivering EDI in the workplace is an essential aspect of good people management. It's about creating working environments and cultures where every individual can feel safe and a sense of belonging, and they are empowered to achieve their full potential. In our People Services Strategy 2024-27, all actions detailed under the strategic priorities are considered through an inclusion lens to ensure that an inclusive environment is maintained, and Salix Homes remains true to its values.

4.2 Based on the declarations made, the following is a Snapshot from April 24 that provides a summary of our workforce demographic:

- **59%** are male and **41%** are female.
- **7%** have informed us that they have a disability.
- **13%** have an ethnicity other than White British.
- **32%** have declared as Christian whilst **29%** have cited no religion.
- **7%** have a sexuality other than heterosexual.
- **25%** are under 35 years of age, whilst **21%** are aged 55 or over.

4.3 This information is valuable in measuring our impacts and understanding where positive action can be taken to improve colleague experiences. For example, following a review of this information and discussions with colleagues, we introduced a Menopause Policy and supporting guidance. We have also used this information to consider workforce planning and wider resourcing requirements to challenge ourselves on where

and how we can improve representation. Another key area where this information is important is in understanding different pay gaps, this is explored in the next section.

Equality in Pay and Benefits

4.4 We were the first organisation in Greater Manchester accredited by the **Living Wage Foundation** as a Living Wage Employer in 2012. We believe in a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and continue to maintain our commitment to the real living wage.

4.5 We now undertake annual **pay gap analysis for gender, ethnicity and disability**. In relation to the gender pay gap, the median average hourly rate for men and women in 2024/25 is now 8.92%, the equivalent of £1.52, in favour of women. In 2023/24 this position was the same.

4.6 For those, who declared a disability the median average pay gap in 2023/24 was also, 8.92%, the equivalent of £1.52 in favour of those who have declared a disability, in 2024/25 this gap has reduced to 2.65%, equivalent of £0.48 but remains in favour of those with disabilities. The number of declarations in relation to disabilities has increased during this period.

4.7 Movement has been observed in the median ethnicity pay gap. In 2023/24, for those who had declared their ethnicity, the gap was 27.91%, the equivalent of £5.18. In 2024/25, this gap has significantly reduced to 11.53%, the equivalent of £2.42. There have been increased declarations for colleagues from diverse ethnic backgrounds than previous years and there is greater representation of those colleagues in more senior roles that attract higher salaries.

- 4.8 Through the strategic priority of **Promoting and Embracing Inclusion**, we will continue to be an active participant in the **Boost Leadership Programme**. This is a reciprocal mentoring scheme developed by Greater Manchester Housing Partnership in conjunction with Manchester Metropolitan University, to share ideas and best practices to promote representation of more ethnically diverse colleagues in more senior leadership roles, as well as wider activities to identify and remove barriers to inclusion.
- 4.9 A key commitment for delivery in 2023/24 was to confirm our approach to agile working by March 24. We have achieved this earlier than anticipated with the launch of our **Hybrid Working Policy in July 23** following a comprehensive engagement process with all colleagues, through which their views were considered and influenced the outcome. We now believe we have an approach that continues to support our commitment to achieving a work life balance without compromising the quality of service provided.
- 4.10 We have also achieved, ahead of target, accreditation to the **Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter**, which is a voluntary membership and assessment scheme that aims to raise employment standards across Greater Manchester. This standard aligns with our values, and we are proud to be part of this movement which positively addresses socio-economic discrimination in areas such as secure and flexible work and pay.
- 4.11 Through the delivery of the strategic priority ensuring **solid foundations**, we will undertake a review of our terms and conditions. As part of this review, consideration will be taken of the workforce demographics to ensure that any proposed changes do not, directly or indirectly, negatively impact different groups of colleagues, and seek opportunities to support colleagues appropriately where opportunities are identified.

- 4.12 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to deliver the following strategic objectives as detailed in the People Strategy 2024-27:

- **Ensure Solid Foundations** – Appraise current terms and conditions of employment.
- **Promote Inclusion** – Continued engagement with the Boost Leadership Programme.

Inclusive Culture

- 4.13 It is important that our inclusion activities remain responsive to the environment we are operating within. This year colleagues have highlighted the difficulty in supporting customers who have been adversely affected by the economic crisis and how this is impacting their own resilience. As referenced earlier in this document, work has taken place and will continue to take place to provide colleagues with the knowledge, skills and abilities to positively respond to customer vulnerabilities, giving them confidence and support to operate in this challenging environment.
- 4.14 Difficult external factors not only impact our customers but our colleagues as well. The latest deep dive on reasons for absence identified that mental health accounted for almost half of colleague absence. Through the strategic objective to **champion health and wellbeing** we will continue to support our inclusion agenda by raising awareness of mental health, building on the management academies delivered on this subject, through the development of a mental health action plan. We do have a range of comprehensive mental health services available and they align with best practice as outlined by the Chartered Institute of Personnel, however like many organisations at this time there is a paradox which has identified that even with effective services in place, incidences of reported poor mental health are increasing.

- 4.15 The importance of an inclusive culture was reaffirmed by the introduction of our **new values and competencies** in October 2023. This framework clearly communicated to colleagues our expectations clarifying and rewarding positive inclusive behaviour. In supporting the development of colleagues, we will continue to embed and promote values and competencies which includes the celebration of positive behaviour and share these examples to support colleagues to understand how they can be displayed in carrying out their day-to-day duties.
- 4.16 We will build on these activities through the strategic objective to **promote and embrace inclusion** by annually delivering EDI training. This year, as a consequence of new legislation in relation to sexual harassment, we will also be raising awareness of this particular aspect to all colleagues.
- 4.17 In terms of meeting the strategic objective of **enhancing colleague experiences** we will continue to champion the colleague voice through the delivery of our colleague satisfaction survey. This year, included in the survey are specific questions on inclusion responses that will be reviewed by the Inclusion Group, and where appropriate inform this groups activity for the year.
- 4.18 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 that further this agenda are to deliver the following strategic objectives, as detailed in the People Strategy 2024-27:

- **Supporting People Development** – Embed new values and competencies.
- **Promote Inclusion** – Delivery of EDI training including sexual harassment.
- **Enhance Colleague Experiences** – Act on feedback from colleague satisfaction Survey.

Inclusive Resourcing

- 4.19 There are lower levels of employment and labour market participation within the social housing sector. In areas where Salix Homes is the primary social housing provider the economic activity rate is 60%, this is the percentage of the population who are over 16 and have not retired and are available for work. Of those within this age group, 11.3% are unemployed. Nationally, the main reasons for those in social housing not being able to participate in paid employment have been associated with disability and health issues, and single parent families.
- 4.20 The personal circumstances of customers which permanently or temporarily exclude them from actively participating in paid work is an area where limited action can be taken by Salix Homes. However, what we can do is focus on those who are able to participate and are seeking support to do so. Therefore, we actively participate in several different Salford based employment programmes, such as **Build Salford and Salford Housing Association Partnerships for Employment and Skills (SHAPES)**. These programmes offer a range of opportunities to support people into employment, and we will often also provide funding for courses and, through our contractors, enable placements and apprenticeships. We are also a **disability confident** accredited organisation and offer a wide range of support to achieve a good work life balance.
- 4.21 In addition to the usual online channels, all vacancies within Salix Homes are advertised with **Salford Employ**, which is a service that works with local people to access employment providing additional pre-recruitment training and support, and as an employer we support flexible working arrangements that allow colleagues to achieve a work life balance. This year we are trialling working with local recruitment fairs to understand if they are more effective in engaging local talent.

4.22 **Effective resourcing** is a key strategic objective within our People Services Strategy, and we will be reviewing and evaluating our approach to recruitment and selection which will focus on where and how we recruit, to ensure we attract a wide range of candidates. To better understand candidate experiences, we will undertake candidate research to identify whether there is any further action we can take to ensure that this is inclusive. This insight may prompt a wider review of our practices.

4.23 This year we have been exploring new approaches which we hope will attract more ethnically diverse candidates and have worked with Unlimited Potential, a local social enterprise, to understand how we can better encourage young adults into employment. We have also briefed our leadership team on unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment practices.

4.24 Further, we recognise that we have fewer younger people within the organisation, and recognising the challenges that they can face entering the workforce and will, as part of a wider workforce planning review, consider the reinstatement of apprenticeships. We will also work more actively with Salford based employment programmes to provide work placement opportunities.

4.25 Our EDI Commitments in 2024/25 to further this agenda are to deliver the following strategic objectives as detailed in the People Strategy 2024-27:

- **Effective Resourcing** – Review and evaluate the approach to recruitment and selection.
- **Effective Resourcing** – Review our approach to workforce planning.

We have briefed our leadership team on unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment practices.



5. Board

5.1 For completeness, the demographic of Salix Homes Board is detailed below:

- Gender balance **70% Male, 30% female**.
- Median age **49** with **10%** of those over **65**.
- Ethnicity **80%** white and **20%** from other ethnic backgrounds.
- No current board member has declared a disability.
- **10%** of our Board are identify themselves as Gay or Lesbian, **90%** are heterosexual.

5.2 Our Board recognises the importance of representing the communities we serve. As an aspiration, we would wish to see the makeup of the Salix Homes Board reflecting that of our customer base and we will seek to achieve this, wherever possible, via open and robust recruitment practices. This aspiration will, however, be tempered with the need to maintain an experienced and skilled Board.

6. Monitoring and Review

6.1 A summary of our EDI Commitments for 2024/25 are detailed in appendix A. Progress against these will be monitored by Board and Governance and Remuneration Committee, and published annually by our Board. Further, SMT will monitor progress on a quarterly basis against these commitments.



Appendix A

EDI Commitments

2024/25 Summary

Our EDI Commitments to Our Customers:

Responding to the Housing Crisis

- Continue to inform the development of the GM Good Landlord Charter in 2024.
- Continue to inform the development of GM plans to become a housing first city region.

As per the Growth and Development Strategy 2024-27:

- Deliver a minimum of 100 new homes a year.
- Deliver older persons housing offer.

Homes and Health

As detailed in our Asset Management Strategy 2024-27:

- Continue with our commitment to allocate a budget towards the adaptation of properties over the next three years, working collaboratively with Salford City Council and GMHP on a new approach to adaptations standards.
- Further review our Aids and Adaptations Policy using insight from customer experiences.

Younger People

- Become a patron of the Salford Youth Zone
- Review the future of The Hive

Inclusive Customer Services

As detailed in the Customer Service Strategy 2024-27:

- Gain accurate insight into our customers by collating information to provide tailored and reliable data driven services that are fit for purpose to serve the diverse needs of our communities.
- Ensure our communication with customers is proactive, transparent, consistent, and compassionate to build trust, increase customer satisfaction and prevent avoidable contact by getting things right first time.
- Take a customer-centred approach by listening to and learning from the wider customer voice within complaint handling and other sources of customer feedback.
- Empower our people with the knowledge and tools they need to provide customers with a high quality, positive experience when they interact with us.



Inclusive Customer Engagement

As detailed in the Customer Engagement Strategy 2024-27:

- Develop our customer engagement framework to give customers the opportunity to shape what is important to them.
- Collaborate with our communities to better understand the customer experience.
- Continue to develop efficient ways of listening to customer-wide views through understanding surveys, sentiment, and trends.



Our EDI Commitments to Our Colleagues:

As detailed in Salix Homes People Services Strategy 2024-27 we will:

Equity in Pay and Benefits

- **Ensure Solid Foundations** – Appraise current terms and conditions of employment.
- **Promote Inclusion** – Continued engagement with the Boost Leadership Programme.

Inclusive Culture

- **Supporting People Development** – Embed new values and competencies.
- **Promote Inclusion** – Delivery of EDI training including sexual harassment.
- **Enhance Colleague Experiences** – Act on feedback from colleague satisfaction survey.

Inclusive Resourcing

- **Effective Resourcing** – Review and evaluate the approach to recruitment and selection.
- **Effective Resourcing** – Review our approach to workforce planning (note this is 2025/26).



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