



MIDLANDS DIVERSITY GROUP

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Midlands Diversity Group (MDG)

- To contribute to a forum that allows the sharing of good practice in equality and diversity across the sector to help bring about real improvements to the diverse communities served by social landlords in the Midlands region.
- To promote the equality and diversity agenda alongside related community cohesion activities, staff and social justice agendas.
- To operate a practitioners forum that provides genuine benefits to its members in their efforts to deliver excellence in this field of work.
- To enable members to share performance information and data, this will help to ensure meaningful comparisons.

Membership

- Membership is open to any social housing organisation that delivers the equality and diversity agenda or manages social housing in the Midlands. This includes housing associations, local authorities, ALMO's and other social housing bodies.
- The forum will aim to have a minimum of 12 members so as to ensure that benefits are achievable and that the forum can operate effectively. Although no maximum has been set, where organisations wish to join the forum this will be discussed and agreed by members at the following meeting, so as to remain manageable.
- All members will be expected to sign up to these terms of reference.
- All members will have one main point of contact. Where this changes, members have a responsibility to notify the forum.

Frequency and Venues

- Meetings will be 4 times a year with the host organisation being responsible for facilitating and servicing the meeting unless otherwise agreed.
- The chair in conjunction with group members will be responsible for producing an agenda and forwarding to members in a timely manner.
- The host organisation will meet the full costs of the meeting. The cost of travelling to and from the meeting will be paid for by the attendees.
- The dates and host venues will be confirmed by the Chair for the full year ahead.

Roles and Responsibilities

MDG Members

- The emphasis of the forum is on active participation. This includes trying to attend at least two meetings per year and actively respond to email requests and correspondence and other general MDG activity.
- To attend meetings and promote meaningful discussion.
- To share experience and information with other members of the forum to help them improve their performance.
- To share information on good practice initiatives, projects and policies.
- Ensure all requests for information are headed MDG REQUEST in the subject field.
- Ensure any data that is shared is anonymous and non-identifiable and in line with relevant data protection legislation.
- To report back on projects undertaken by forum members or sub forum members.
- To respect the views shared by members.



MDG Chair and Vice Chair

- A Chair and Vice Chair will be nominated and elected by forum members. The term for both roles will be for a maximum of two years (4 meetings per year), upon which a new Chair and Vice Chair may be elected. A Chair and Vice Chair can be re-elected if no other nominations are received.

Role and responsibility of Chair and Vice Chair

- Liaising with members and co-ordinating the group's activities.
- Be the administrative point of contact for members and potential new members.
- Where the expertise of trainers, consultants or private sector companies is sought, this will be by formal invite from the Chair on a project specific basis.
- Support members and external speakers with the forums meetings activities.
- Collate and co-ordinate agenda items for future meetings.
- Be the point of contact for Housing Diversity Network (HDN).
- Promote the forums existence and activities where appropriate.
- Write a short (e.g.1 page) end of year report to record and celebrate the achievements of the forum for the year of their term and circulate this to the group and HDN.

Administration/Secretariat

- The Chair along with the host organisation will be responsible for arranging secretarial support for the forum including arranging for minutes, agendas, papers and other documents to be forwarded to HDN.



- Administration support will be supplied by HDN. Forum members will respond and support HDN in full including timely responses and responding to any requests made.
- HDN is responsible for ensuring distribution of papers for meetings, agendas and any other supporting documents. HDN will also be responsible for uploading the website area with necessary documentation.
- HDN will assist the Chair and host organisation in securing guest speakers and assist with venue bookings and arrangements where necessary and appropriate.

MDG Sub Groups

- MDG can set up a sub group at a meeting, in order to research a particular subject in more detail on behalf of the forum, or to gather best practice in a specific area. The forum will give a clear remit to such a group and will define its aims and objectives. The task and finish group will then feedback its findings to the forum at a future meeting.

Relationship with Housing Diversity Network

- HDN currently provides support to several other regional equality forums across the country. HDN is a membership organisation and whilst membership of HDN is completely separate from membership of MDG, MDG recognises that HDN needs to keep under regular review its capacity to support such regional groups if membership income is limited.
- MDG acknowledges the benefit of HDN support and the range of added value services it provides to MDG and housing organisations/networks across England.
- MDG is happy to promote HDN service to colleagues who are not HDN members; and externally where appropriate.



Data Protection

- HDN will hold the main database for the group and share a copy with the Chair and Vice-Chair. Whilst the group are encouraged to share information with each other it is required, for the purposes of data protection, that the contact information is not shared with a third party without prior permission from the Chair, Vice-Chair and HDN.

Status

- MDG is a practitioner working group that maintains an independent status. Each member is responsible for reporting to its employer. Any member who implements an idea or initiative within their own organisation that they have picked up from another MDG member should always give credit to the organisation from which the idea originated.