**‘LGBT+ @ Housing 21’ Resident Forum - Minutes**

**14 April 2025**

**Via Teams**

**Attending:** Mabelle House (Housing 21), AM and JM (residents)

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| **Item** |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and introductions** |  |
|  | Introductions took place. Low attendance for this meeting. | N/A |
| **2.** | **Establishing our objectives as a forum for 2025** |  |
|  | JM discussed that it’s important that ideas from the forum are shared beyond the group, and actually go somewhere, to avoid Housing 21 ‘paying lip service’.  Both are reasonably open to what the objectives of the group are.  Later on, there was discussion of the benefits of forum members being LGBT+ only – not allies. Confidentiality, protecting members, being of ‘our group’. | MH to discuss further at next meeting with ToR. |
| **3.** | **Should a resident chair this group? How involved should Housing 21 be?** |  |
|  | AM and JM agreed that they would prefer a Housing 21 facilitator to chair the group (keep the same as is).  They felt that with a Housing 21 employee as chair, they could be more forthright, and that a resident chair could run the risk of being biased. They feel that a Housing 21 facilitator has to remain unbiased so is the best person to chair.  They discussed that if a resident was to chair, there would need to be a vice-chair, as if the chair can’t make a meeting, then it won’t go ahead, and forum members will miss out.  MH, AM and JM discussed a potential link between the employee LGBT+ ERG group and residents’ group – what is the benefit for both parties?  AM and JM felt that there is an established power dynamic between Housing 21 employees and residents – residents pay their rent, which plays employees salaries. They question if relaying stuff between groups would mess up power dynamics, or be an uncomfortable situation.  MH suggested an ad-hoc basis for consultation between groups / relaying information where relevant and in need if resident feedback. | MH to ask all forum members for feedback on this via email, to see what the consensus of the group is.  For now, Housing 21 will facilitate. |
| **4.** | **Gender identity fields on resident information forms** |  |
|  | Housing 21 are updating the list of possible gender identity fields recorded on our system that can be selected by residents to describe their gender.  The proposed gender identities are:  - Female  - Male  - Non-Binary  - Other  - Trans Man  - Trans Woman  - Prefer Not To Say  Residents in attendance were asked for their thoughts about the options given, and if there are any gender identities missing from the list that should be included.  JM and AM both agreed that the list of proposed gender identify fields was fine as is, and gave people the opportunity to identify as they wish.  They discussed that gender is a social construct, whereas biological sex assigned at birth is binary (male and female), and so biological sex is more important for Housing 21 to collect in terms of delivering housing services.  AM suggested that if residents identify as ‘trans man’ and ‘trans woman’ on Housing 21’s system, it could mean that they aren’t given the services they need (i.e. medical assistance). For example, that NHS services for trans identifying people are not being targeted correctly, i.e. trans women who were male at birth are not being put forward for checks for prostate cancer etc. at potentially negatively impacting their health and wellbeing. And felt a similar situation could also happen for housing services.  They also recognised that residents identifying as trans may be considered more vulnerable or require more support, so it’s important to collect gender identity in order to ensure their needs are met, which wouldn’t otherwise be picked up from just biological sex assigned at birth.  AM discussed that recording ‘non-binary’ identities may not be as relevant in terms of delivering housing services. And argued the same for other fields such as religion. Asked why they are important for Housing 21 to record.  MH explained demographic information is useful for research and creating resident profiles to understand why some groups of residents may be more satisfied than others, and how we can target our services better. MH explained that the gender identity fields proposed are in line with those used in the census and UK standard.  AM and JM shared some potential concerns around how someone’s recorded gender identity would impact resident relations i.e. pointed out that some residents are old fashioned (including themselves) and won’t understand or recognise trans/non-binary identities. And wanted to know how this would be managed by scheme managers etc.  AM and JM wanted to know what other identity fields are being recorded on the system i.e. religion, sexuality, biological sex, etc.  AM felt that biological sex should be asked on the form first, as it’s important in terms of providing services, and then gender identity so residents can share how they want to identify / be perceived by others. | MH has fed back resident sentiment to relevant stakeholders and asked what other identity fields are also being recorded on the system to feedback at next meeting.  MH to read Respect & Inclusion Charter and speak to Tahir Idris (Respect and Inclusion Partner) to see guidance on respect around trans / non-binary residents. |
| **5.** | **How can Housing 21 help LGBT+ residents feel welcome at their scheme?** |  |
|  | MH discussed the current project to implement ‘welcome’ signs across Housing 21 schemes, as a means to ensure residents and visitors feel welcomed by the schemes MH asked the forum attendees if they felt this could help LGBT+ residents feel welcome at their scheme. JM and AM asked to see the designs at the next meeting.  AM and JM posed the questions: ‘How do you explain to a 90 year old with early stage dementia about pronouns?’ ‘What are legitimate expectations of residents and Housing 21 employees?’ and Where is the line drawn? They felt that you can’t change people’s view, but there should be a level of respect between residents.  They felt that being welcomed has to come from both sides- Housing 21 as an organisation (including its employees) and residents.  AM and JM discussed that they know not every resident will accept LGBT+ residents at their scheme, and that as it’s social housing, residents do share communal spaces and there are sometimes disagreements, but residents have to be tolerant of each other.  AM and JM explained they have not had any negative experiences with other residents at their scheme in terms of their sexuality. So they don’t know how other LGBT+ residents feel and if they are welcomed at their schemes. | MH to bring the ‘welcome sign’ designs to next meeting.  MH to review the respect & inclusion charter and discuss with Tahir Idris (Respect and Inclusion Partner). |
| **6.** | **Date of next meeting** |  |
|  | Monday 14 July at 2pm |  |