



EQUALITY PROMISE

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EQUALITY PROMISE

1.00 INTRODUCTION

Melin Homes is a registered social landlord (RSL) whose aim is to provide quality affordable homes which contribute to the creation of the kind of communities that people want to play an active part in and are happy to live and work in.

Melin has a fresh and dynamic outlook and intends to make a positive difference in the communities in which it operates. Melin is a quality homes and service provider in Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport, Powys and Torfaen. We own and manage over 3,700 homes and employ over 220 staff.

Our Vision



Our Values.....our work is underpinned by



Melin is committed to ensuring that Equality & Diversity is at the forefront of all our services. This document represents Melin's Single Equality Scheme and sets out our current achievements and what we aim to do in future.

Melin believes that all those that Melin has contact with have a right to be valued equally and to have equality of opportunity.

2.00 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUALITY & DIVERSITY?

2.01 Definitions

Equality is about making sure that everyone is treated fairly and given the same opportunities. It is not about treating everyone the same; but instead recognising that people are different and have different needs.

Diversity is recognising that everyone is different and using those differences in a positive way that helps Melin tailor our services in a way that meets everyone's needs

2.02 Equalities Act 2010

The **Equalities Act 2010** applies across England, Wales and Scotland and brings together nine pieces of legislation and around 100 statutory instruments into a single piece of legislation. The aim of this is to make the law more simple and help tackle discrimination and inequality; helping to make society fairer. It provides a single approach to discrimination by extending the circumstances in which a person is protected against discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of "protected characteristics", which means that people are now protected by the law from discrimination on the basis of the following "protected characteristics":

- **Age:** makes sure certain ages or range of ages is not treated unfairly
- **Disability:** a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out day to day activities.
- **Gender:** being a man or a woman and making sure both are treated fairly
- **Gender reassignment:** this is the process of transferring from one gender to another.
- **Race:** this includes, colour, nationality or national origins
- **Religion or belief:** this includes the religious beliefs that affect

the way you live your life and the choices you make. This includes people who have no religion.

- **Sexual orientation:** This includes people who have a sexual attraction to their own sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.
- **Marriage and civil partnership:** This means that civil partners must be treated the same as same sex married couples on a wide range of legal matters.
- **Pregnancy and maternity:** This protects women from being treated unfairly because of maternity leave in a work context and now includes unfair treatment for mothers who are breastfeeding. This also ensures that maternity leave will be granted.

3.00 WHAT IS AN EQUALITY PROMISE?

Our Equality Promise (EP) is a single document that outlines how we plan to meet our legal and regulatory duties to promote equality and remove unlawful discrimination. Our EP sets out our goals and achievements for Equality & Diversity in one document. It sets out how we promote good practice throughout our operations and highlights our plan of action for future improvements.

This is Melin's first EP and acts as a live document that will be continually developed and improved. Together with its action plan, our EP will help us to ensure we achieve the following:

- We have effective leadership and governance arrangements in place to scrutinise performance on equality and diversity and set challenging targets;
- All our services are non-discriminatory by assessing the impact of all front-line policies, procedures, strategies and core services;
- We provide excellent customer service that responds to the individual needs of our customers;
- We offer diverse ways for all of our customers to engage with us;
- We grow knowledge of our customer profile, ensuring services are shaped and reviewed by the understanding we have of our customers;
- Our workforce will understand our vision and aspirations for equality and diversity and their roles in achieving this;

- We promote safe and secure environments that are free from any form of harassment, bullying and hate related crime;
- Our procurement processes and supply partners reflect our commitment to equality and diversity;
- We are recognised in the external environment for being an organisation that treats people fairly and is proactive in assessing the impact of our activities in equality issues.

4.00 WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED SO FAR?

Although this may be our first EP, we have been actively promoting Equalities and Diversity since the creation of Melin in 2007. Melin has an equality promise statement (**Appendix 1**) which is a public document and is available to all our staff and customers.

4.01 Contractors

It is a requirement that all of the Melin approved contractors adopt and adhere to the Contractors Code of Conduct. A requirement of this code is that all contractors must provide a copy of their own Equality and Diversity Policy or adhere to our policy. The code also includes guidance for contractors on communicating with Residents who have learning disabilities.

Also, as part of the tendering process for new works, contractors are assessed based on their Equality & Diversity activities and regular Human Resources (HR) audits are undertaken for our open book contractors.

4.02 Our Homes



All our homes are built to the Lifetime Homes standards. Lifetime Homes are ordinary homes designed to incorporate 16 design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life.

Melin also carries out a comprehensive program of Physical Adaptations, both at build stage and on our older properties.

4.03 Communication with Residents

Melin makes every effort to communicate to our residents in varying different formats depending on customer needs. In the past, Melin has transferred documents onto braille, tape or translated into different languages.



We use the services of The Big Word translation services to ensure we communicate with Residents and prospective Residents in the language of their choice.

Our Housing Management system also has the functionality to flag resident requirements, for example printing letters in large font, hearing difficulties and email requirements, disabilities resulting in taking longer to answer the door etc.

Melin acknowledges that residents should be able to express their opinions and needs most effectively in their chosen language. We also acknowledge that enabling our Residents to use the Welsh language is a matter of good practice and that denying our residents the right to use their chosen language could place them in a disadvantaged position.

Melin's Welsh Language Scheme:

- Enables our residents to contact Melin through the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so;
- Ensures high quality services through the medium of Welsh;
- Aims to treat the Welsh and English language as equal in key documents and on our website.



Our Welsh language scheme is reviewed every 3 years and has a rolling action plan that is monitored by the Board. Melin is required to produce an annual monitoring report to the Welsh Commissioner following approval by the Board.

Melin's key documents are translated into Welsh and all other documents are available in Welsh upon request.

4.04 Resident Participation

Melin are required to produce an annual Resident Engagement Strategy, which encourages residents from all protected groups to get involved by reviewing relevant policies, procedures and working practices if required.

The Melin Residents Panel currently has disabled members and actively promotes further membership. Melin also pays for all transport costs for all resident panel members and arranges dedicated transport that meets all individual requirements.

In addition to this, Melin has undertaken the following to aim to provide the same opportunities to all our residents:



Melin Bus – We have a dedicated branded bus that is utilised to take our services to the residents & our communities and is both disability adapted and WiFi enabled.



Hearing Loop – we have a hearing loop system in our Boardroom and reception areas.



Events – all our events are assessed for access issues and are varied for times of the day or week i.e. evening or weekend events.



AGM – Our AGM is held in a large hotel with easy access for disabled.



Youth Forum – Melin has a Youth Forum made up of residents in order to engage young people in our activities.



Disabilities – all our offices and buildings are DDA compliant and we have close relationships with the Disability Advice Project (DAP).

4.05 Recruitment

Melin has a consistent approach in all areas of recruitment and selection. All personal details are removed from the application form prior to short listing. Equality & Diversity information is also collected which is separated from the application forms and used for monitoring purpose.

The Association will take positive action to address any under-representation in the recruitment of staff and to tackle any gaps in the success or retention for any equalities group. Any applicants with a disability will be invited to interview as long as they meet the person specification.

Melin advertise vacant posts in various locations, both offline and online, to ensure that no-one is discriminated against in terms of access to information and being given opportunities. Melin also promotes all job advertisements with the Equality & Human Rights Commission, Tai Pawb and Chwareteg.

Melin has both Male and Female staff employed as part of our Direct Work Force (DWF) and actively encourages both male and female applicants in our recruitment process.

4.06 Employment

Every member of staff has compulsory Equality & Diversity training

on an annual basis and Equalities forms a vital part of the new staff induction. All staff and managers are required to adhere to the staff & managers code of conducts which specifically refers to Equality issues.

Melin treats all staff on a fair and equitable basis in relation to:

- terms and conditions of employment;
- opportunity for promotion, transfer, training or other benefits;
- unfair dismissal;
- not treating employees less favourably than others;
- not tolerating harassment in the workplace.

Melin works to eliminate any barriers that might inhibit the success or progression of any staff. In accordance with the requirements of the **Equalities Act 2010**, the Association will make reasonable adjustments for disabled job applicants or disabled staff if required.

We will make every reasonable effort to:

- alter the person's working hours;
- acquire special equipment or modifying existing equipment;
- allow absences during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- supply additional training;
- modify instructions or reference manuals;
- provide additional supervision and/or support;
- make physical adjustments to premises.

A commitment to equality and diversity is included in the staff and managers code of conduct and any discriminatory behaviour is taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the Dismissal and Disciplinary policy and procedure.

4.07 Resident Profiling

During 2012-13 we embarked on a Resident Profiling exercise by way of a comprehensive questionnaire which asks our Residents detailed information in order to understand the diverse nature and to help us tailor their needs. At this current time, we have achieved a response rate of 70% and are planning to increase this to ensure we gather as much information as we can and gain a better understanding of our residents needs.

We collect profiling information from our residents on most of the protected characteristics in order to ensure that residents in all groups are accessing and receiving the same level of service.

The provision of personal information is entirely voluntary. Residents are not obliged to provide personal information to us but the law requires us to gather this information if we can. All personal data held by Melin remains confidential and is dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Details of our resident profiling information are shown in **Appendix 2**. We hold good quality information on the age, gender and race of our residents but we need to collect more information on the other protected characteristics, including disability and religion. We also need to find out more about our residents' requirements, such as preferred means of contact, so we can improve the way we communicate.

Some of the headline statistics that we have gathered are as follows:-

- 46% of our Residents are Male with 54% Female
(Wales: Male 44%, Female 56%);
- 18.9% of our Residents are over 65 **(Wales: 19.5%);**
- 30% of our Residents have stated that they have some form of disability.

4.08 Reporting

Equality monitoring reports are produced on an annual basis for the Human Resources Committee of the Board, which covers both lettings and recruitment. Further reporting is also available through the HR and Housing Management systems on an on-going basis.

4.09 Partnership Working

Melin continues to work closely with a number of local partners including:-



Tai Pawb is an organisation that promotes equality and social justice in housing in Wales and believes that all people have the right to access good quality housing in cohesive and safe communities.

Supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, Tai Pawb is committed to working in partnership with the providers and receivers of housing services, local authority partners, third sector (voluntary organisations) and the Welsh Assembly Government. Tai Pawb works to promote equality in housing across the equality strands. We consult with Tai Pawb on policy changes, promote our job adverts with them and seek advice when needed.

Monmouthshire Equality & Diversity Network (MEDN)

We are an active member in the MEDN and this enables us to meet with multi agencies such as the Police and social services and share best practice.



Stonewall Cymru is the all-Wales Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual (LGB) Charity, whose aim is to achieve equality for LGB people at home, at school and at work. Melin has an on-going relationship with Stonewall Cymru in terms of attending training events and conferences and getting regular updates about legislation proposals and good practice.



Chwaraeteg is the leading professional agency for the economic development of women in Wales. They have assisted us with ideas on attracting both male and female applicants for our Direct Work Force (DWF) and they also actively promote our job advertisements on our behalf.

4.10 Accreditations



Melin achieved Rainbow accreditation in 2011, which confirms that the needs of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) residents are met. The RainbowMark is an equality mark sponsored by the Welsh Government and supported by the Welsh Local Government Association and Tai Pawb. It is a signifier of good practice, commitment and knowledge of specific needs, issues and barriers facing LGBT people in Wales.



Melin has been awarded RNIB Visibly Better accreditation for our sheltered schemes. Visibly Better is a comprehensive accreditation scheme developed by RNIB Cymru to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of people with sight problems who live in sheltered housing and extra care homes.



The Customer Service Excellence (CSE) model is a Government standard which tests how well the citizen is placed at the heart of service provision. Melin have held the CSE accreditation since 2011. Equality issues and ensuring that customers are treated fairly forms a core part of the assessment and feedback from the assessors was that Melin operates a transparently fair points system to ensure that allocations are made equitably.

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5.00 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Melin is committed to being transparently fair in providing all our services, to fully understanding and supporting our diverse customer base and to proactively assess the difference we make.

The following section sets out our aspirations for dealing with Equalities within Melin and sets the foundations to enable Melin to be a leading force within the Equalities and Diversity arena.

5.01 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

We will ensure that relevant front-line policies, strategies, events and new projects have an EIA. This will ensure that we treat everyone fairly and each of the characteristics are taken account of in our actions. Our EIA's will be termed Equality Reviews (ER) and will be promoted for full usage throughout Melin.

Equality Reviews will form a vital way for us to look at what we're doing and to make sure our policies and actions take all protected characteristics fully into account. It is one of several ways we make sure we talk with people from a range of backgrounds and use information to do our very best to deliver fair, equitable and need sensitive services.

An ER toolkit will be developed so that everyone involved in the relevant activities will fully understand their responsibilities. Following the ER utilisation, we will also maintain a register of suitable locations for future corporate events that are 'equality friendly' and widely accessible to all.

5.02 Profiling information

We aim to further develop reporting on the information that our residents and staff provide us. We are committed to tailoring services to the needs of our customers and the information provided will be vital to ensure that our current and future aspirations meet expectations. The Resident profiling will be an on-going process and will play a major part in developing our services and activities.

5.03 Partnerships

We will be working more closely with our current partners as identified above to further develop our services, ensure our activities are accessible and delivered in a fair manner and utilise accreditation processes to drive continuous improvement.

We also aim to work as closely as possible with any identified groups across the spectre and ensure that we engage with local community groups in an effective manner. These will be identified through customer and community engagement, links with our current partners and diversified networking.

5.04 Focus Group

A Task & Finish Group, made up of staff & resident representatives, was established to develop this Equality Promise and the ER Toolkits. It is proposed to ensure that this group continues as the Equality Focus Group and meets on a 6 month basis to review activities and ensure that Melin remains a driving force in the world of Equalities.

5.05 Equality Networks

We will be part of the new All Torfaen Collaboration on Equality group to ensure that we play an active role in Equality matters in Torfaen. This mirrors the work we do with Monmouthshire Equality & Diversity Network and we will aim to replicate these in other local authorities that we operate.

We are taking part in the New Welsh Housing Equality Network Consultation through Tai Pawb. Tai Pawb is currently looking at facilitating a new network designed for housing providers in Wales to share best practice, discuss innovation and overcome challenges in equality. If this network is developed, we will aim to take a lead role and gain maximum benefit from the opportunity.

5.06 Access to Information

As part of our current Welsh Language Scheme action plan, Melin are committed to developing a fully bi-lingual Website by April 2014. Our new website will also be universally accessible and incorporate easy navigation. We will ensure that the website utilises high visibility colours and font sizes will be changeable dependant on needs.

Our Equality Promise will be translated into Welsh and available via our website. The document will also be available in any other language upon request.

5.07 Transparency

Melin are committed to providing open and transparent services to all our customers and will openly share our performance measures in a constructive manner. Melin will publish regular updates via our website on Equality data to promote the fairness of our services. Melin will also prepare an annual Equalities monitoring report which provides progress against our targets and review the effectiveness of our services. This will be prepared for HR Committee in December each year and published via the website shortly afterwards.

6.00 TARGETS

A summary of our targets and relevant timescales is provided in the table below:

Action	Section link	Timescale
Establishment of the Equality Focus Group	5.04	October 2013
Publish the Equality Promise in both English & Welsh via our website	5.06	October 2013
Equality Review Toolkit developed	5.01	December 2013
Prepare Annual Equalities Monitoring Report	5.07	December 2013
Identify a diversified spectrum of groups to engage with and enhance networking	5.03	January 2014

Identify relevant Equality accreditation processes	5.03	March 2014
Equality Review embedded into policy review process and evaluation of new projects & events	5.01	April 2014
Develop a suite of Equality reports that are regularly updated, reviewed & reported upon	5.02	April 2014
Development of a bi-lingual website	5.06	April 2014
Participate in all relevant Equality Networks across the areas we work in	5.05	On-going

7.00 MONITORING & REVIEW

This Equality Promise will be reviewed on an annual basis and progress and implementation will be monitored by the Equality Focus Group and Leadership Group on a six monthly basis.

An Annual Equalities Monitoring Report will be prepared for HR Committee which will monitor progress against actions, review the effectiveness of our process and provide assurance that our services continue to be delivered fairly.

EQUALITY PROFILING INFORMATION

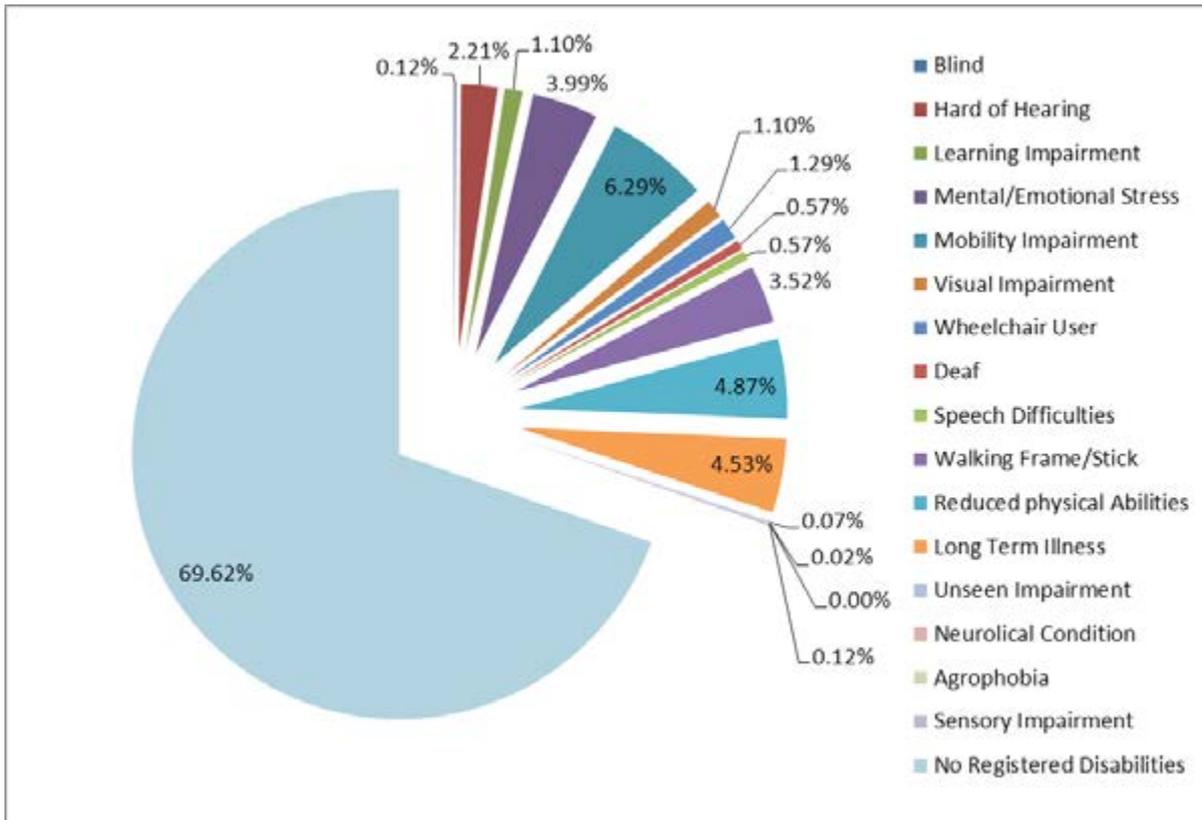
We have gathered a great deal of Equality information on our Residents and have compared this with available Census information relevant to Wales wherever possible.

AGE			RELIGION	
	Melin Residents	All Wales		Melin Resident
0 - 17	12.65%	18.03%	Christian	58.94%
18 - 24	7.92%	14.27%	No Religion	36.80%
25 - 39	24.89%	12.52%	Other	2.13%
40 - 54	22.25%	22.07%	Muslim	1.31%
55 - 64	13.37%	13.61%	Hindu	0.41%
65+	18.93%	19.51%	Budism	0.34%
			Sikh	0.07%

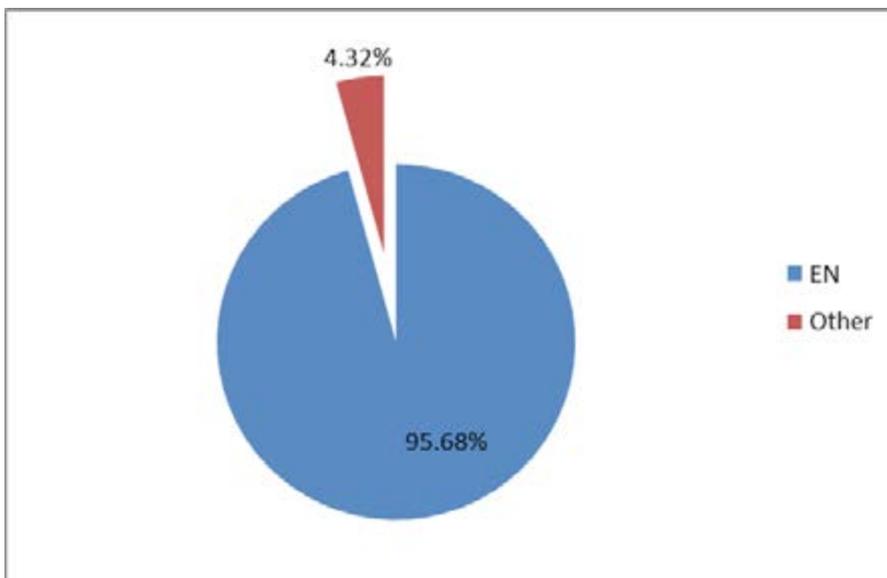
GENDER			SEXUALITY		
	Melin Residents	All Wales Average		Melin Residents	All Wales Average
Female	55.65%	51%	Hetrosexual	97.79%	95.14%
Male	44.35%	49%	Gay/Lesbian/ Bisexual	1.56%	1.21%
			Other	0.65%	3.65%

Row Labels	ETHNICITY									
	White British	Local Population	Other	White Other	PAKIST	Black	INDIAN	Chinese	Asian	ARAB
BGCBC	98.8%	97.96%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
MCC	98.8%	96.7%	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
NCC	90.5%	93.8%	3.0%	1.7%	1.3%	2.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.2%
PCC	93.8%	97.19%	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
TCBC	97.7%	97.79%	1.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Disabilities of Melin Residents



Languages spoken by Melin Residents



Other: Chinese Mandarin, Polish, Gujarati and Welsh

We have gathered information on our lettings in the Local Authorities we operate.

ETHNICITY							
Row Labels	White British	Local Population	Other	White Other	PAKIST	Black	Bangladeshi
BGCBC	97.06%	97.96%	2.94%	0%	0%	0%	0%
MCC	96.83%	96.7%	1.59%	1.59%	0%	0%	0%
NCC	86.49%	93.8%	4.05%	5.4%	1.35%	1.35%	1.35%
PCC	100%	97.19%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TCBC	99.39%	97.79%	0%	0.61%	0%	0%	0%

Staff Information

Gender	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Male	46	49
Female	55	51

Ethnic Group	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
White	91	95
Non White	9	5

Disability	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Disabled	1	13
Non Disabled	99	87

Sexual Orientation	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Heterosexual	54	99.9
Other (Gay / Lesbian /Bisexual)	3	0.01
Not Declared	43	-

Melin Recruitment Data

Gender	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Male	42	49
Female	46	51
Not Declared	12	-

Ethnic Group	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
White	88	95
Non White	3	5
Not declared	9	-

Disability	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Disabled	1	13
Non Disabled	99	87

Sexual Orientation	Melin Homes %	Demographic Information %
Heterosexual	82	99.9
Other (Gay / Lesbian /Bisexual)	3	0.01
Not Declared	15	-