

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OUR PURPOSE

The Disability Visibility Group (DVG) is a subgroup of Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) launched in March 2021. It follows wide recognition amongst SHAC membership that a specialist subgroup was necessary to tackle the specific disadvantages faced by disabled housing association (HA) tenants, namely those with neurodiversity and other hidden disabilities.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. To contribute to the creation of an enforceable protocol which ensures that HA residents with neurodiversity, mental health diagnoses, and mental/physical disabilities are treated fairly and equally by landlords, and that HAs make appropriate adjustments to remove substantial disadvantage in the implementation of any housing policy.
2. To promote the development of an external, independent system which monitors how well HAs comply to Equality Act 2010 legislation when implementing any of their housing policies.
3. To support the introduction of a Care Quality Commission's person-centred approach on mental health service provision, including through contracts with 'community partners'.

OUR LEADERSHIP

1. We will create a Disability Visibility Steering Group (DVSG) of 4 SHAC members, plus Suz Muna (SHAC Lead) and Jacqueline Parkes (DVG Lead).
2. The DVSG will operate as a collaborative team; contribution and feedback from all DVSG members are welcomed and consideration will be given to all views.
3. DVG will schedule quarterly open meetings to discuss specific points to ensure focus and productivity. DVSG itself may meet more frequently in between open meetings if needed.
4. The DVG will operate with wide consultation and communication with SHAC members. Contribution and feedback from SHAC members are welcomed consideration will be given to all views.

OUR COMMITMENT

This commitment applies to –

- The DVSG
- Any SHAC member who participates in DVG activity or any specific method of operation

We commit to the following at all times:

1. To communicate respectfully with each other and with any external individual(s)/organisation(s) in matters relating to the DVG;
2. To prioritise the DVG's objectives when engaging in DVG activity, and to function in a manner which benefits the group as a whole;
3. To operate with transparency and to engage ethically when fulfilling any DVG activity or method of operation;
4. All disability-related activity launched or branded in the name of the DVG/SHAC should first be discussed and agreed with the DVSG to ensure that we take a consistent approach, and that all activity is consistent with SHAC's aims;
5. To refrain from posting any defamatory (e.g., false statements) or derogatory commentary on social media in the name of the DVG/SHAC with regard to improper HA activity or for any other reason;
6. To engage in any/all group activity with consideration of and compliance to the Equality Act 2010.

OUR METHODS OF OPERATION

1. Linking with other groups to widen awareness and impact;
2. Establishing a pilot buddying system to reduce isolation, improve mental health and promote advocacy amongst members affected by disability;
3. Hosting a monthly DVG blog, ideally written by a SHAC member, to promote awareness and to share experiences;
4. Developing the **Housing Association Disability Charter** outlining a set of commitments by the landlord to recognise and implement its duty of care to disabled tenants where necessary;

5. Providing resources to empower all who access this service through regular updates on DVG page of the SHAC website and through Zoom sessions on various relevant subjects.

OUR COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. If any DVSG or SHAC member takes issue with an individual(s) for personal reasons (whether this individual be a DVSG member or SHAC member participating in a DVG activity), such matters should be addressed in private with that individual or those individuals directly.
2. In the event that any DVSG member(s) have a general concern or complaint regarding the DVG or DVSG, this should be discussed openly at DVSG meetings so that resolutions can be achieved fairly and consensually.
3. In the event that a DVSG or SHAC member remains unsatisfied that their concern has not been fully or properly addressed, complaints should be raised in writing via email and addressed to both Suzanne Muna (shac.action@gmail.com) and Jacqueline Parkes (info@jacquelineparkes.com). If the complaint is regarding either Suzanne Muna or Jacqueline Parkes, please email the complaint to one or two other DVSG members as necessary. Please allow 28 days for reply.