



Homes England to make suppliers meet diversity criteria

By [Joey Gardiner](#) | 30 July 2020

Government housing agency says inclusion commitments will be a pre-condition for place on delivery framework

Homes England is to require the contractors, housebuilders and developers it works with to commit to diversity and inclusion targets as part of a bid to improve the record of the industry on employing women and those from diverse backgrounds.

The government's housing agency said that anyone looking to be part of its next delivery partner panel – the current version of which includes many of the UK's largest housebuilders and residential developers – will be required to meet specific criteria as a condition for taking part.



The existing [Delivery Partner Panel 3](#), procured in 2017, is being re-procured this year in time for the start of the next financial year.

Firms on the panel include housebuilders Barratt, Bellway, Countryside, Legal & General, Redrow and Taylor Wimpey; as well as a range of contractors and developing housing associations such as Clarion, Home Group, Places for People and Sanctuary.

Contractors on the panel include Kier, Laing O'Rourke and Mace.

Homes England said the criteria by which delivery partners would be judged was currently being developed, and would sit alongside other non-financial requirements, such as design quality.

The commitment came as Homes England published its first ever diversity and inclusion report, in which it pledged to work with its partners to create a more inclusive industry that addresses the needs of the diverse communities it serves. In the report the agency said it was aiming to create a “culture of acceptance, inclusion and belonging, where our differences are celebrated and where we truly reflect the needs of our diverse communities through the services we deliver.”

Olivia Scanlon, Homes England’s board sponsor for equality, diversity and inclusion, said: “At Homes England we want to make homes happen for everyone, and we can only truly achieve that by creating a workplace– and an industry –where everyone is able to be themselves.

“Work is already ongoing to deliver positive change to our procurement process and determine how we can improve diversity and inclusion through our supply chain. This sends a clear message to our partners about our expectations of them and will ensure the homes we deliver truly fit the requirements of the people who live in them.”

The report included updated figures for the gender pay gap at the agency. These showed the agency’s median gender pay gap had fallen from 15.5% to 15.3% in the past year, while its mean gender pay gap had fallen from 18% to 16.9%.

Commenting on the gender pay gap, Nick Walkley, Homes England chief executive, said: “The report shows lots of improvement and achievement thanks to hard work and energy of colleagues...but we can do far better and executive are committed to doing so.”

He said the agency had already taken a number of steps to set an example to the housing sector on the issue of inclusion, including by revising its policies and processes and developing its employee networks.

The new commitment follows comments by Walkley at a housing conference in Bristol last year where he said the agency prioritised fairness and diversity, and wouldn’t work with firms that didn’t share the approach. “There’s a simple way of describing this, [which] is I don’t work with tossers,” he said.

