

Black and Minority Ethnic Action Plan 2005–2008



AFFORDABLE HOMES STRONG COMMUNITIES



Introduction

This Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Action Plan covers the period between 2005 to 2008 and sets out the Housing Corporation's continuing commitment to the vision and objectives set out in the Race and Housing Inquiry Challenge Report 2001, as well as our existing BME Housing Policy. The actions set out here are also key to delivery of our statutory Race Equality Scheme.

At the start of 2004, the Housing Corporation commissioned an evaluation of its 1998 BME Housing Policy. The results of that evaluation have informed this Action Plan, as have the Race and Housing Inquiry Challenge Report and the Chartered Institute of Housing's report *The Future of BME Housing Associations* (which we funded through our Innovation & Good Practice programme).

This Action Plan was published in draft for consultation in March 2005. The Housing Corporation is grateful for the comments and suggestions received in response to the consultation. Responses were analysed and used to inform the final BME Action Plan. A summary of the responses received is published on our website.

Vision

Our vision for race and housing is that:

- People from all ethnic groups have equal access to services and to providers' decision-making processes and that BME communities are equally satisfied with the choices available and the quality of services they receive;
- BME communities are fairly represented at all employment levels within and across the housing sector and that there is equal access to training and career development opportunities. BME staff feel equally valued, supported and respected;
- BME communities are fairly represented on providers' governing bodies, and governing body members feel equally valued, supported and respected;
- Suppliers, contractors and consultants to the housing sector reflect the communities they work in.

This vision recognises:

- The need to broaden our approach to include wider equality and diversity policies towards other groups;
- The need for more coherent, co-ordination and better dissemination of good practice;
- A stronger focus on housing association activities and achievements within procurement, engaging with BME youths, working with emerging new communities such as refugees and asylum seekers, the needs of gypsies and travellers and better promoting BME resident involvement;
- Increasing the role of BME housing associations within our investment programme in recognition of the important role BME housing associations play in meeting BME community needs and in building capacity, leadership and management talent within the housing sector.

The Housing Corporation aims to lead by example, provide support and guidance to the sector, and to challenge its own performance. We aspire to be recognised as a world class organisation in this area.

Monitoring

The Housing Corporation will monitor and report progress in implementing this Action Plan on an annual basis, as part of our corporate Race Equality Scheme. We will also report on a regular basis to our National Advisory Board on BME Housing Issues. We will ensure that this process feeds into our corporate and business planning processes.

Contact

Queries and requests for further information should be addressed to kurshida.mirza@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk

or

**Kurshida Mirza,
Head of Involvement and Diversity,
Housing Corporation,
149 Tottenham Court Road,
London W1T 7BN.**

Action Plan

Commitment	Actions
<p>1 We will work to ensure that the principles of equality and diversity extend to all groups in relation to the provision of affordable homes.</p>	<p>During 2006 in line with new equalities duties, we will broaden and update our published Equality and Diversity policies towards other groups who may encounter adverse treatment in relation to housing.</p> <p>We will ensure that issues of faith are considered in the provision of housing, alongside those of race. We will work to highlight the needs of differing faith communities, and promote recognition of the need to address them in the provision of social housing.</p>
<p>2 We will ensure that our commitment to BME and wider equality and diversity issues is mainstreamed within the work of the Housing Corporation as integral to our business.</p>	<p>All Housing Corporation Directors will incorporate actions to implement the commitments in this Action Plan within their operational plans for 2005/06 and successive years. This will include appropriate local mechanisms for consulting and involving BME HAs and other relevant interests.</p> <p>From May 2005 all reports to senior management committees and the Housing Corporation Board will include an assessment of the equality and diversity implication of proposals/policies and procedures.</p>

Commitment	Actions
<p>3 We will proactively assess the impact that our policies and procedures have on BME communities and ensure that we act on lessons learnt.</p>	<p>We will in 2005/06 subject four key policy areas to race equality impact assessments, in line with statutory requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. These will cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk based regulation • vulnerable people • investment partnering programme • grants to non-RSLs. <p>We will publish the outcomes of these race equality impact assessments on our website</p>
<p>4 We will effectively promote best practice advice on BME issues to housing associations, ensuring that it is well publicised and easy to access.</p>	<p>We will seek to work with the NHF, FBHO, CIH and other stakeholders to ensure that good practice advice on equality and diversity issues is in general easier to find and access.</p> <p>We will review existing material on BME housing issues produced through our Innovation and Good Practice Programme as part of our wider review of the way we present and disseminate best practice. We will aim to complete this work during 2006/07.</p> <p>We will ensure by March 2007 that the best of this material is well signposted and easy to access.</p> <p>We will actively promote the CRE's statutory <i>Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing</i>.</p>

Commitment	Actions
<p>5 We will champion and promote individual associations' and the sector's achievements and good practice.</p>	<p>As part of our commitment to effectively promote best practice, we will seek to highlight individual associations' achievements and celebrate their successes.</p> <p>We will over the period of this Action Plan survey housing associations to identify good practice and innovation in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procurement • engaging with BME youth • working with emerging communities • fostering community cohesion • better promoting BME resident involvement • community cohesion <p>Where appropriate, we will publish the results of these surveys through our 'Sector Study' format to promote wider awareness of good practice within the housing association sector and the issues facing housing providers.</p>
<p>6 We will work with the sector to address the issue of BME representation in the workforce and promotion of BME suppliers and contractors.</p>	<p>We will develop, in partnership with the sector, models of good practice for harnessing Housing Corporation investment and housing associations' own spending (for example on maintenance and refurbishment) to boost BME businesses and BME representation in the wider workforce. This will include developing and using the skills of BME residents.</p>

Commitment	Actions
<p>7 We will use our regulatory powers to act against unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.</p>	<p>Within the framework of a risk-based approach to regulation, we will continue to carry out reviews of associations' performance on equality and diversity in relation to the Regulatory Code and Guidance, as set out in Regulatory Code Good Practice Notes 4 and 8.</p> <p>We will continue to publish the outcomes of our Equality and Diversity Reviews, ensuring that housing associations are clearly held to account for their performance.</p>
<p>8 We will publish data on housing association performance to help promote improvement in practice across the sector.</p>	<p>We will continue to publish annually an analysis of data on ethnicity in relation to individual associations':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governing body membership • staffing • lettings • tenant satisfaction
<p>9 We will ensure that our monitoring and definitions are kept up to date and reflect the needs and challenges facing the housing association sector.</p>	<p>We will keep definitions under review and continue to improve our knowledge management systems including making better use of data about the housing experiences of minority households and communities to ensure that the needs of other groups such as refugees and asylum seekers and new emerging communities are recognised and responded.</p>

Commitment	Actions
<p>10 We will seek to promote BME associations and ensure that their role and potential is recognised and valued across the sector.</p>	<p>We will provide BME associations with our assessment of their current and future potential role in development or stock transfer activity.</p> <p>Where associations with an investment programme, and in particular Programme Partner associations, are operating within geographical areas with significant BME communities, we will expect to see them bring forward initiatives to work with and through BME associations in order to ensure that they reflect the communities they work in and meet their needs. We recognise that in some areas the absence of a BME association with suitable capacity may mean that this is not an appropriate route to identify and meet minority community needs. We will expect associations in such circumstances to work with and through other relevant community organisations, including Refugee Community Organisations.</p> <p>We will ensure that the Corporation's Modular Development and Sales Agreement is used to ensure smaller specialist and BME associations can take ownership or management of stock developed on their behalf. We will seek confirmation that these model agreements specify financial and other core terms. The Modular Development and Sales Agreement can be found on the Corporation's website.</p>

Commitment	Actions
<p>10 Continued</p>	<p>We will complete our study of development agreements entered into before the start of this Action Plan and we will use our influence to resolve any problems that remain outstanding.</p> <p>We will act on the recommendations of the research project commissioned by the Housing Corporation <i>BME Housing Associations and Stock Transfers</i> and continue to work with ODPM and local authorities to actively promote and facilitate partial transfers of local authority stock to BME housing associations where this reflects the make up and needs of the local community.</p>
<p>11 We will work with ODPM, other Government Departments and Agencies, our regional stakeholders, and local authorities to highlight the needs of BME groups and the needs of new emerging communities.</p>	<p>We will work, in particular, with Regional Housing Boards to ensure that BME issues are taken into account in Regional Housing Strategies, focussing in particular on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the specific housing needs of BME communities (for example in relation to overcrowding and access to sustainable home ownership); • refugees and other recent arrivals (in particular by focussing on move-on accommodation); • gypsies and travellers; • the needs of new emerging communities.

Commitment	Actions
<p>12 We will take into account the interests of BME communities when promoting implementation of Choice Based Lettings arrangements.</p>	<p>We will work with the ODPM to ensure that Choice Based Lettings schemes are inclusive and do not inadvertently discriminate against marginalised or vulnerable groups.</p> <p>We will produce a Good Practice Note by November 2005 about CBL to encourage housing associations to engage with the choice agenda. We will ensure that this covers key issues raised by BME housing associations as well as issues around access to housing for marginal and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>We will ensure that the Housing Corporation acts on any recommendations relating to access and inclusiveness arising from the ODPM Advisory Group on BMEs and Social Housing (Allocations and Lettings).</p>
<p>13 We will meet our statutory obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act.</p>	<p>In line with our employment duty under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publish annually equality and diversity monitoring information, including by race/ethnic group, and recommendations for action on all relevant areas of equality and diversity of the Corporation’s Board and staff; • carry out an impact assessment of the content and application of new and existing policies and processes, using consultation with our staff group FRESH, and ethnic monitoring, to make sure there is no adverse impact on BME applicants or employees; • positively support recruitment, retention and development of our own BME staff; • through Learning and Development, increase all our staffs’ awareness and skills to review performance and support and guide the Sector on Equality and Diversity.



Our offices

Maple House

149 Tottenham Court Rd

London W1T 7BN

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 020 7393 2111

www.housingcorp.gov.uk

Central:

Attenborough House

109/119 Charles Street

Leicester LE1 1FQ

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 0116 242 4801

31 Waterloo Road

Wolverhampton WV1 4DJ

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 01902 795001

Trinity House

Cambridge Business Place

Cowley Road

Cambridge CB4 0WZ

Tel: 01223 393 516

London:

Waverley House

7-12 Noel Street

London W1F 8BA

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 020 7292 4401

North:

4th Floor

One Piccadilly Gardens

Manchester M1 1RG

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 0161 242 2001

1 Park Lane

Leeds LS3 1EP

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 0113 233 7101

St. George's House

Team Valley

Kingsway Trading Estate

Gateshead NE11 0NA

Tel: 0845 230 7000

South East:

Leon House

High Street

Croydon

Surrey CR9 1UH

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 020 8253 1444

South West:

Beaufort House

51 New North Road

Exeter EX4 4EP

Tel: 0845 230 7000

Fax: 01392 428201

For further copies of this publication
please call 0845 230 7000 or e-mail
enquiries@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk.
We can also provide versions in other
languages, large print and audio
cassette on request.

