



Cardiff Community Housing Association

BME Housing Strategy and Race Equality Plan

HIGH QUALITY FOR ALL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cardiff Community Housing Association's (CCHA) Vision is to deliver affordable, good quality homes and services to our customers in an accountable manner and, by working in partnership with other agencies, help develop and sustain thriving communities.

CCHA recognises the diversity of cultures and needs within the areas that it operates, and is committed to ensuring that race equality is promoted at every level throughout the organisation.

Through this Strategy CCHA aims to improve its own performance and that of its agents and partners, to provide quality housing and services that meet the needs of BME communities and individuals.

The Strategy and the Race Equality Plan are applicable to all types of housing and services provided by CCHA. The benefits and good practice arising from implementation of this Strategy should be absorbed into all of our services and thereby benefit all our customers.

This Strategy sets out all of CCHA's aims regarding services to BME communities and individuals. Some are already operating effectively and we are committed to implementing those that are not yet in place as set out in our Annual Race Equality Plan. Some proposals are aspirational and will take time to implement.

2. OVERVIEW

This strategy should be viewed within the context of CCHA's Equal Opportunities Policy. CCHA is determined that all individuals and groups have equal opportunity in housing, employment and all other matters. We recognise that action is needed to prevent unfairness that often happens because of ethnic origin, sex, race, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, age, disability and religion.

We fully support the Welsh Assembly Government's aim to ensure that discrimination and disadvantage is eliminated across Black, Minority Ethnic communities living in Wales. We aim to integrate with the BME strategy being developed by Cardiff Council.

CCHA recognises that BME groups and individuals may have particular needs, and housing associations must demonstrate their openness and fairness in meeting those needs.

This document explains CCHA's aims and how we expect to achieve our goals. The Strategy will be responsive to the changing needs of black and minority ethnic communities. The Strategy and the Race Equality Plan and its implementation will be regularly monitored and appropriate action will be taken in the light of experience and changing needs.

The Strategy and the Race Equality Plan are based upon, and aim to comply with, legislation, Commission for Racial Equality Codes, the Welsh Assembly Government's BME Housing Action Plan Regulatory Code, and good practice.

CCHA, aims to work within the spirit of the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 to promote race equality.

By developing, implementing, promoting and monitoring a BME housing strategy, CCHA expects to:

- Work to eliminate racial discrimination and disadvantage.
- Provide clarity to CCHA's staff, board members, tenants, contractors and partners about what it is seeking to achieve in the field of race equality.
- Demonstrate CCHA's commitment to race equality by setting out objectives and targets that can be monitored and will show the extent of progress made.
- Involve staff, tenants and partners and increase their awareness of racial equality issues and to improve services for all our customers.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the BME Housing Strategy are:

- To eliminate all racial discrimination.
- To promote equal opportunities for all ethnic groups.
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from BME communities within a framework of Best Value (involvement and continuous improvement).
- To provide services that are sensitive to different needs, languages and cultures.
- To recognise the diversity of local communities, support multiculturalism and to foster good relations between different communities.

4. IDENTIFYING NEEDS

CCHA will work with the BME community groups and existing tenants, Cardiff Council, the Welsh Assembly Government and other housing associations to gain an accurate understanding of the needs of BME people in Cardiff.

This understanding of needs will be the basis for specific aims and to prioritise objectives which will be reflected in the Race Equality Plan.

Operational targets will be set after consultation with relevant service users and staff. Targets will be measurable in order to allow progress to be assessed.

CCHA will be innovative in its approach to the achievement of targets.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

An annual Race Equality Plan is drawn up to identify responsibilities and establish a timetable for achieving objectives. The Plan is set out under the following headings:

- General
- Housing Development and Provision
- Housing Services
- Contractors and Consultants
- Staff - Employment and Training
- Openness and Accountability
- Monitoring and Review.

6. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND PROVISION

CCHA will implement best practice guidance, and will consult with BME groups and individuals, to identify particular needs in relation to property design, location, site layout, dwelling mix and tenure.

Where appropriate, community development and tenant participation initiatives will be used to assist BME applicants to articulate their needs and make best use of our accommodation and services.

We will be flexible and innovative in seeking solutions to meet identified housing needs. This can include new-build, rehabilitation of existing homes, purchasing of existing homes, purchasing of existing satisfactory dwellings or management of existing buildings and a mixture of tenures.

Where possible, we aim to offer choice in meeting identified needs.

CCHA will offer accommodation to BME applicants in any area where they state a preference. However, where these areas are away from support networks and facilities, we will work with other relevant agencies and organisations to endeavour to develop needed support and appropriate facilities.

We will publicise our housing services broadly and with a variety of techniques to ensure that BME groups and individuals are aware of the accommodation and services that we can offer.

7. HOUSING SERVICES

We will provide information about our housing and services which is clear, comprehensive, accessible and easily understood. This will include translation and access to appropriate community languages when required. We will regularly review the mechanisms used for dissemination of information.

We will ensure that we actively publicise our services to BME communities, and we will consult with BME groups and individuals to ensure that our publicity is effective.

CCHA operates a letting policy and procedure that seeks to be fair and accountable. We will monitor performance to ensure that BME communities are featured on the waiting list and allocated housing at least proportionate to their local population profile. We will regularly review our allocation policy and assessment procedures to ensure they are accessible and non-discriminatory to BME individuals or groups.

Applicants from BME groups will not be penalised if they refuse an offer of accommodation in an area with which they are not familiar or where they feel that they would be isolated from their existing support mechanisms.

CCHA will operate a victim-centred approach to racial harassment. We will pursue a policy that accepts that a racist incident is any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. We will ensure that staff are trained in dealing with racial harassment and are made aware that racial harassment can be targeted at people who belong to minority groups who are visible not necessarily by their skin colour. We will regularly review our racial harassment policies and procedures to ensure that they conform to best practice guidance.

We will review all of our policies and procedures (including repairs and maintenance and tenancy issues) to ensure that any BME issues are addressed within the policy and procedure.

We will identify the key service areas to be ethnically monitored, set targets and regularly review these areas to monitor progress.

We will establish regular consultation with BME groups and individuals regarding the delivery of our housing services.

8. CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS

Before accepting contractors, consultants or suppliers on to any of its approved lists, CCHA will make every effort to ensure that all firms with more than 20 direct employees will:

- Have their own written equal opportunities policy based on the Race Relations, Sex Discrimination and Disability legislation and Codes of Practice.
- Take disciplinary action over racial harassment or discrimination at work.

Contractors will be strongly encouraged to ensure, if they sub-contract, that their sub-contractors with more than 20 direct employees also meet the above criteria.

Contractors or sub-contractors with less than 20 employees will be required to sign an undertaking to comply with the above Codes of Practice.

Compliance with equal opportunities requirements will be given the same weighting as financial and quality factors when assessing the suitability of contractors for inclusion on approved lists.

We will actively encourage ethnic minority contractors to apply for registration on the approved lists.

When reviewing contractors' performance, CCHA will take into account any incidents of racial harassment or complaints from BME individuals.

CCHA will take action against any tenant or member of staff who is found to have been responsible for racial discrimination against a contractor.

9. STAFF - EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

CCHA will regularly review its employment procedures and working practices to ensure that it does not discriminate unfairly against any section of the community in its employment practices.

CCHA will take positive action to encourage and/or train ethnic minority job seekers.

We will regularly review our employment practices to ensure compliance with the Welsh Assembly Government's strategies and requirements, and the Race Relations legislation and Codes of Practice.

Each year we will analyse our staff, salary grades, training provision, job applicants and appointments according to ethnic origin, gender and disability.

Our Human Resources Strategy will incorporate race equality considerations in all relevant training; for example in customer care or quality assurance training.

The training for all new and existing employees and Board members will raise awareness of racial equality issues.

CCHA will consult with BME groups and individuals, as well as appropriate organisations, to identify relevant training that will assist staff to deliver services.

We will offer appropriate race equality training for tenants' and community organisations that work with us.

CCHA does not tolerate harassment of any of its staff. We will fully support any member of staff who is subject to racial abuse from tenants or members of the public and will take appropriate action.

10. OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CCHA will review its Board structure and shareholders annually to ensure that membership is as open as possible and that it reflects the composition of the local communities within which it operates. Positive actions will be taken to promote membership from BME communities.

We will seek to establish working relationships with local ethnic community groups and organisations in order that their views are incorporated into the development of our services.

We will report annually to our Board of Management and our tenants regarding the delivery of services to BME communities and individuals.

We will require all tenants' associations, panels or other groups and key tenants to adopt an equal opportunities statement, and to practice the principles of non-discrimination, before being awarded formal recognition or funding by CCHA.

CCHA will devise and implement a programme of publicity that emphasises our commitment to promoting race equality in all our activities.

11 MONITORING AND REVIEW

CCHA has developed a Race Equality Plan (reviewed annually) to assist in the delivery and implementation of this strategy. The Race Equality Plan identifies specific responsibility for each of the actions, and sets a timetable for implementation.

CCHA's Board of Management has overall responsibility for supervision of the monitoring of the strategy.

The officers identified in the Race Equality Plan will have the responsibility to ensure the performance is reported to the Board at least three times per year.

CCHA will develop appropriate IT systems to assist in the statistical monitoring of this strategy.

All staff and Board Members have a responsibility to assist in the implementation, monitoring and review of this strategy. The Chief Executive will be responsible for the co-ordination of the strategy.

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