



High Quality For All

Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Action Plan



Cardiff Community Housing Association
www.ccha.org.uk



High Quality For All

Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Action Plan

This report has been written for everybody. We hope it will be interesting and encouraging for White Welsh/British people AND members of our community who are from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

CCHA's Values

Respect and Fairness are two of CCHA's Values. This guide shows how we provide services for everybody including people from minority ethnic groups and all sections of the community.

'High Quality for All' is the name of our Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Action Plan.

Our aims in 'High Quality for All' are:

- To eliminate all racial discrimination.
- To promote equal opportunities for all minority ethnic people.
- To deliver a high standard of service to people from BME backgrounds.
- 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.

How do we work to achieve these aims?

All of our services are carried out according to policies confirming that racial discrimination will not be tolerated. This value is made absolutely clear to all our Staff, Board members and Contractors. There is no place in CCHA for racists. Staff attend diversity training every year. We are working with other housing associations to support maintenance contractors to train their staff.

We take action if a tenant is guilty of racial harassment of a neighbour. We encourage victims

to tell us, and we support them through these distressing times. In serious and persistent cases we take the case to Court for injunctions and eviction orders and we help the Police to deal with this crime. We are also happy to assist in reconciliation between people – we hope that everybody can learn to respect one another.

Communication

- Everybody needs to be able to know and understand what services are available and how to apply for them.
- CCHA needs to understand peoples' needs and requirements so we can provide the right services in the right way, first time.
- Everybody needs to be able to tell us if our service is good, bad or inbetween, or if they can suggest better ways of doing things.



All of this points to good communication. CCHA's main language of communication is English, but we do promise to communicate with anybody in their chosen language. Letters and leaflets can be provided in other languages and we arrange for interpreters when needed. We do the same for Welsh language and for English speakers who have difficulty in reading, hearing or speaking (large print, audio CD's and Braille are provided when needed).

Housing projects

The housing that people need varies. We follow best practice guidance and consult with minority ethnic groups and individuals. This has led us to improve the design of family houses. The improvements needed to cater for the cultural needs of some minority ethnic people – such as showers, separate living rooms and better cooking arrangements – are being incorporated in all new housing so will benefit everybody.



Steffani Court – A scheme we developed in Butetown

We recognise the need to provide larger size houses and hope to be able to build more of them in the future to add to the 154 we already have for larger families in general.

Ethnic monitoring

This is how we check that our services are fair. If the monitoring shows inequalities we can act to prevent them happening in the future. Information about tenants' race or ethnicity is held in a confidential file and used only for monitoring. We currently know the race or ethnicity of nearly three quarters of tenants. From this information, we know that about 18% are from ethnic minorities. We also compare waiting lists and lettings and we will start comparing tenant satisfaction of each ethnic grouping.

In the Tenant Satisfaction Survey (2008) we asked for some personal information (such as race, disability and age). We will use the answers to check that our services are fair to everybody. We will keep you informed of the results of ethnic monitoring and actions we take. These will appear in CHAT and on our website.

Tenants' participation

CCHA is always trying to improve its housing services so participation by a wide range of tenants is important. Tenant participation enables tenants to talk directly with CCHA about housing services and to agree how they can be improved. We really do want more minority ethnic people to be involved with us. We also need younger tenants and disabled people so that we can make sure our services are right for them.

Pictures of events we have organised recently

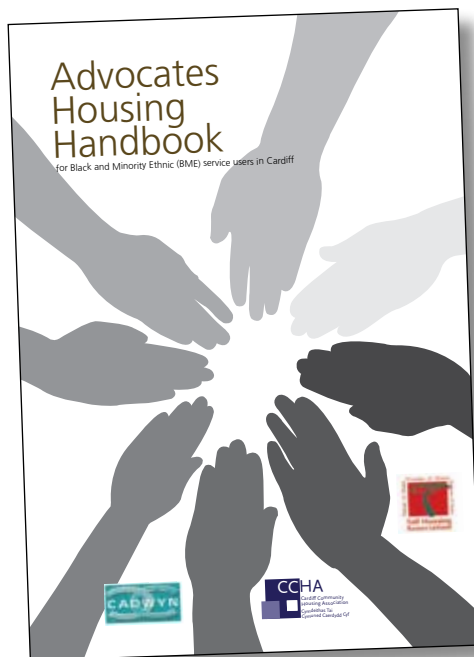


Tenant participation has another benefit: it helps build communities and foster good relations between different communities.

We are currently working with Cadwyn and Taff Housing Associations to improve links with minority ethnic people and their organisations.

Following research work among BME Tenants an action plan has been developed to enhance the contact and support of people from BME communities. Some of the work already being undertaken with that Project includes:

- The formation of a BME Contact Group – The Project has worked hard in forming a Contact Group representing a number of BME Communities. Group membership has now extended to 17. The aim being to enable discussion with BME representatives on services affecting people from BME Communities.
- Development of a website – This is in the final stages and will be available shortly (See above).
- Advocates Handbook – Launched in Spring of this year, it is available for BME service users in Cardiff the book has been developed to assist BME people receiving a housing service to access the various services they might need. It is aimed at advocates of those requiring our services to ensure they are well informed about what is available for them.
- Organising various contact events – For example, we organised events such as the recent 'Taste of Wales' day, and to make direct contact with minority ethnic people in their communities. We arranged an event with those from BME communities to celebrate Eid (See pictures on page 3).



Our existing tenant organisations are open to people from all backgrounds. All service reviews and reports to our Board include a consideration of how the service could affect different groups. We therefore try to anticipate and prevent inequality of opportunity.

CCHA has 14 Board members, and three of them, including one tenant, are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The number of minority ethnic tenant shareholder members is however low, and we are eager to increase their representation. We are also looking for more, younger tenants to become members.

Staff

Our commitment to equal opportunities extends to employment. We are trying hard to increase the number of minority ethnic staff, and to support our contractors to provide training and job opportunities for local people – including minority ethnic people.

We will always employ the best person for the job, so we encourage applications from minority ethnic and local people and we work with other housing associations to assist with training and work experience.

In conclusion:

We chose the name 'High Quality for All' for two reasons:

Firstly – we aim to provide high quality housing services to everybody – whatever their colour, race or ethnic background. The same is true for all ages, religions and sexual orientations; women and men, and regarding physical and mental abilities.

Secondly – improvements that meet the needs of one part of the community often benefit other people. For example: when we prepare something for translation into another language we often find that we can improve the standard, English copy for everybody.

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