

BROADACRES HOUSING ASSOCIATION

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

DECEMBER 2007

Upon request this document is available in large print, audiotape, Braille, pictorial format and in languages other than English

Foreword

Broadacres Race Equality Scheme is designed to ensure that the Association, as a provider of Housing Services, meets the needs of the communities in which we provide services and accommodation and, as an employer, meets the needs of employees.

The Race Equality Scheme (RES) is about removing barriers so that we can promote services that are accessible to users and provide equality for all.

The scheme is underpinned by the following values and aims:

- provide services fairly and equally so as not to treat people any less favourably because of their race, colour, culture, ethnic origin or religious belief;
- we do not discriminate, either directly or indirectly on racial or any other grounds;
- wherever possible we will encourage our communities to articulate their needs and aspirations;
- that Diversity is maintained and achieved through responding to the specific needs of people of all racial groups;
- provide Diversity training for all our Board Members and staff;
- listen to the views of our users, involving them in decision making and regularly reviewing our services in the light of feedback.

These values will ensure all that we do as a service provider, policy maker, purchaser of goods and services, employer and decision maker, makes the Association a key player in promoting a society where all people can live their lives free from discrimination and fear of harassment or violence.

Rev. Brian Mayne
Chairman of the Board

Steve Towers
Managing Director

Race Equality Scheme

1. Introduction

The Association is committed to the fulfillment of the statutory obligations contained within the Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000.

This RES sets out how the Association intends to meet both the General and Specific duties of the above Act.

The aim of the RES is to provide the Association with a clear and focused action plan to turn statements into actions.

Broadacres as a provider of services is seeking to achieve the following outcomes as a result of implementing the Scheme:

- Organisational change within the Association, to ensure that equality is mainstreamed and is therefore embedded in the delivery of services and employment and diversity is valued by all.
- A workforce that is representative of the population of the local communities in which Broadacres operates.
- To encourage applicants from black and ethnic minority communities to apply for vacant posts.
- To develop processes to encourage improved access to services for black and ethnic minority communities.

2. Legal Obligations

The Association in developing its strategies on Diversity has taken into consideration the Anti Discrimination Legislative Requirements outlined in Appendix 1.

The Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 places the following General Duty upon the Association:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination.
- Promote equal opportunities.
- Promote good relations between people from different racial groups.

The General Duty is supported by a series of Specific Duties, which the Association must comply with. These are as follows:

- a. Monitoring its existing functions and policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of racial equality.
- b. Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies.
- c. Publishing the results of such assessments and consultation.
- d. Ensure public access to information about the Association's services.
- e. Train staff for the management and delivery of the RES.
- f. Employment.

As an employer the Association must:

- Monitor, by racial group, their existing staff, and applicants for jobs, promotion and training.
- Monitor, by racial group, the number of grievances received from employees.
- Monitor, by racial group, the number of cases of disciplinary action that are taken.
- Monitor, by racial group, performance appraisal outcomes, training and development, secondments etc.
- Monitor, by racial group, the number of staff who receive training, and the type of training.
- Monitor, by racial group, the number of dismissals and people who leave the Association's employment.

The Association publishes employment monitoring results through its existing internal management information system of performance indicators, followed by an annual Diversity Monitoring Report to our Board of Management.

To record and monitor under the RES we are using the following Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) categories to define racial groups:

- White: British
- White: Irish
- White: Other White background

Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
Mixed: White and Black African
Mixed: White and Asian
Mixed: Other Mixed background
Asian: Asian British Indian
Asian: Asian British Pakistani
Asian: Asian British Bangladeshi
Asian: Other Asian background

Black: Black British Caribbean
Black: Black British African
Black: Other Black background

Chinese: Chinese
Other: Other Ethnic Group

3. Regulatory Requirements

The Race and Housing Inquiry 'Challenge Report' provided guidance for Registered Social Landlords on addressing the issue of race as both service providers and as employers. Subsequently the Corporation developed and publicised its Regulatory Code which came into effect on the 1st April 2002. The Code is supported by a number of Good Practice Notes one of which addresses Race Equality and Diversity. The Association welcomed this good practice note (No.4) and has incorporated the guidance provided to develop our RES. There are three main sections of the code, which require Associations to ensure that they are:

1. Viable.
2. Properly Governed.
3. Properly Managed.

In relation to equality, sections 2 and 3 place a regulatory obligation upon the Association to achieve the following:

- 2.7 *'Housing associations must demonstrate, when carrying out all their functions, their commitment to equal opportunity. They must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups'.*
- 3.2 *'Housing associations must have management arrangements, resources, skills and systems which are appropriate to their circumstances, scale and scope of operation, and ensure that their activities: are adequately monitored; are undertaken*

efficiently and effectively; are backed by proper systems of assurance for internal control'.

- 3.5 *'Housing associations must provide good-quality housing services for residents and prospective residents: by seeking to offer a choice of home, while giving reasonable preference to those in priority housing need; by offering the most secure form of tenure compatible with the purpose of the housing and the sustainability of the community; with agreements that clearly set out residents' and landlords' rights and obligations; by being responsive to the individual characteristics and circumstances of residents; by using lettings policies that are fair and reflect the diversity of their client groups; by providing high standards of customer care'.*

The Association has setup a Diversity Development Team whose remit is to manage / review / monitor and report on the implementation of the above mentioned targets.

4. Implementing the Scheme

4.1 Training

The provision of training, development and learning opportunities will underpin the effective implementation of the Scheme. The Association is committed to the development of an action plan designed so that appropriate information and training is provided to take account of the organisational and individual responsibilities of all Board Members and employees.

The action plan for training and development will aim to achieve:

- Increased awareness of current legislation to promote race equality throughout the organisation and in all service delivery areas. It will include an explanation of the duties and their implications for all employees, and equality training will form part of mandatory induction arrangements for all new employees within their first year of employment.
- The provision of learning and development opportunities for Board Members and staff who have responsibilities for managing and introducing the Association's Race Equality Scheme. All staff and Board Members to attend a Diversity Course at least once every three years.
- Increased knowledge and skill amongst all the Association's managers to enable them to fulfil all aspects of their core management responsibilities and ensure that their staff are aware

of their responsibilities in relation to the legislation and the duty to promote race equality.

- Clarity of role and responsibility for the Association's Board Members in relation to their duty under the legislation to promote race equality through attendance of Diversity courses and annual progress / monitoring reports to Board of Management.

4.2 Employment

The annual survey of the Association's workforce indicates that the Association currently employs 200 people across its four directorates. Currently (December 2007) 2% of the workforce are from black and ethnic minority communities. These statistics are updated on a monthly basis and available from the Human Resources Manager each month.

Broadacres Housing Association believes that its employees are its most valuable resource, and that the quality of the Association's services depends on the performance of its diverse workforce and the way in which they are treated. Involvement, consultation and communication are recognised as essential aspects of employees' motivation.

The Association's Human Resources function is centralised and forms part of the Corporate Services Directorate. It has a strategic role in the Association's organisational development programme and training provision.

The training and development plan sets the context in which training and development functions are undertaken.

The Association has a range of actions to meet its specific duty on employment. These include:

- The review and development, where necessary, of existing ethnic monitoring processes and procedures in relation to the Association's workforce.
- The review and development of existing consultation mechanisms for staff, particularly those from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The analysis of monitoring information and feedback from employee consultation using mechanisms such as employee surveys and focus groups, to identify any patterns and trends in inequality within the Association's workforce.
- The setting of race equality targets and the annual reporting of this information to the Association's Board Members. This will form part of the reviews undertaken using Equality Impact Assessments

(EIA), which will identify appropriate targets for departmental action plans.

4.3 Services

Broadacres is renowned, both locally and nationally for providing high quality accommodation and services, responsive to the needs of its tenants and customers. In order to ensure that this standard is maintained we need to ensure that not only are the services provided responsive to the needs of the individual but also review how we currently provide our services.

Whilst the Census results of 2001 highlighted that we operate within low ethnic and minority populated areas we will nonetheless endeavor to ensure that;

- We review and develop, where necessary, existing ethnic monitoring processes and procedures in relation to the Association's services.
- We consult and review with tenants and customers any specific language requirements and preferences for communication.
- We provide open and fair access to information, support and staff.
- Our resources are effectively and efficiently applied when providing services.
- The high quality training and awareness received by our staff is to the benefit of our tenants and customers.

4.4 Complaints

The Association's complaints procedure identifies how complaints can be made. In accepting complaints from individuals in whatever form is most suitable for them we are accepting diversity. Whilst we will strive to undertake ethnic monitoring of all complaints that we receive we will ensure and have declared that this information will have no bearing upon the speed or outcome of the matter. We also will take steps to assist any individual who wishes to make a complaint to us using whatever methods we can.

4.5 Monitoring

The Association has established the Diversity Development Team who will be responsible, over the life of the RES, to establish or improve systems to monitor the impact of functions/policies on black and ethnic minority communities, and actively use the information to recommend improvements to service delivery.

Wherever possible examples of successful existing systems will be replicated. The Association will work with its Tenants Liaison/Community groups to raise awareness of the importance of the collection of this information.

4.6 Publication of the Scheme

A copy of the RES approved by the Association's Board of Management is made available to all Association staff and to relevant community and voluntary groups, organisations and businesses via our website. A copy of the Scheme will also be available in appropriate black and ethnic minority languages and other formats upon request.

4.7 Review of the Scheme

The Association's RES will be reviewed by the Diversity Development Team, by undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). The EIA requires that the Association conduct reviews on all areas of its operation. This will allow us to focus on driving continuous improvement in the areas of Diversity and Racial Equality.

Legal Obligations – The Statutory Framework

The Association will operate this policy and all other policies and practices relating to it in line with statutory requirements. The present statutory framework within which we apply this policy is shown below:

- The Race Relations Act 1976 and associated Codes of Practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (Particularly Employment and Code of Practice for rented housing).
- The Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000 and associated Codes of Practice issued by the CRE.
- The Housing Act 1988 (in particular Section 56 which makes specific reference to Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976).
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and 1986 (as amended) and associated Codes of Practice issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and associated Codes of Practice.
- The Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended) and the EOC Code of Practice on Equal Pay.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- The Employment Relations Act 1999.
- The Employment Act 2002.

In addition, we will apply this policy in line with:

- The government Code of Practice 'Age Diversity in Employment'.
- Performance Standards for registered social landlords: Equal Opportunities.
- Black and Ethnic Minority housing policy (1998).
- Older people's policy (1995).
- Overcoming disability discrimination: a guide for registered social landlords (2000).
- The Race and Housing Enquiry's Challenge Report 2002.
- The recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry.