



# Black Minority Ethnic Strategy 2006 / 2010

Revised July 2007

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## Tigrinya

ናትና ፖሊሲ ንኩሉ ሓደ ዓይነት ሓበሬታ ዝረኽቡሉ መንገዲ ኢና መብጽዓ ኣቲና።  
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## Amharic

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## Farsi

ما متعهد هستیم به سیاست دسترسی برابر به اطلاعات  
اگر این اطلاعات را به زبانی دیگر و یا در فرمتی دیگر میخواهید لطفا از ما درخواست کنید

## French

Nous nous engageons à une politique d'accès égal aux informations.  
Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format,  
veuillez nous le demander.

## Kurdish

ئیمه به ئه‌رکی خو‌مانی ده‌زانی که سیاسه‌تی ده‌سراگه‌یشتنی یه‌کسان به زانیاری بو‌هه‌موان جیبه‌جی بکه‌ین  
ئه‌گه‌ر زانیاریت به زمانیکی که یا به فۆرمیکی که ده‌وی تکایه داوامان لی بکه

## Polish

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## Urdu

معلومات تک مساوی رسائی کی پالیسی پر ہم عمل پیرا ہیں۔  
اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔



CD

Braille



In large type

Abc

Any other format



Call 0845 8 507 507 or email [communication@wdh.co.uk](mailto:communication@wdh.co.uk)  
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# Black Minority Ethnic Strategy

## Contents

1.	Background.....	1
2.	Introduction .....	1
3.	WDH Corporate Vision and Values.....	2
4.	Policies to Ensure Race Equality in Services .....	3
4.1	General Issues.....	3
4.2	Housing Provision .....	4
4.3	Letting Policy .....	4
4.4	Homelessness .....	5
4.5	Care for Older BME People .....	5
4.6	People with Learning Disabilities .....	5
4.7	Repairs and Improvements.....	6
4.8	Young BME People .....	6
4.9	Asylum Seekers .....	6
4.10	Training on Equality and Diversity .....	6
5	Community Safety .....	7
6.	Expected Outcomes .....	8
7.	Monitoring and Review .....	9

# 1. Background

Figures from the Census 2001 show that the United Kingdom has, over the last 30 years, become a multi-racial and multicultural society. Minority ethnic communities represent 10% of United Kingdom's total population. This is expected to grow over the next ten years. In the Wakefield District, the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) community is relatively small (3.3%) compared to other areas in West Yorkshire. However, in parts of Wakefield City the BME community represents around 17% of the local community (see Statistical Information file).

Because of the growing BME populations, race relations and racial discrimination now have a higher profile and Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) has a key role in ensuring that we achieve cohesive and confident communities in which residents of all races live together in harmony. The racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 has acted as a symbol that racism remains a problem in Britain today. When Sir William Macpherson published the Stephen Lawrence Report in 1999, he made a number of recommendations that had implications for public service providers. In the light of this and the ensuing Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, WDH, has a responsibility to promote equality and tackle racism.

The Cantle Report was produced in December 2001, following a review of the causes of the summer disturbances in a number of northern towns and cities, and introduced the concept of community cohesion (see WDH's Community Cohesion Statement for further information, which can be found on the WDH website [www.wdh.co.uk](http://www.wdh.co.uk)).

The BME Strategy represents WDH's commitment to ensuring that we promote good relations between people of different racial groups and that race equality is central to our policymaking and service delivery. Our aims are to make a real and sustained difference to the lives of our local BME communities and to build local communities that are cohesive and free from inequality, namely to break down the fear of difference and continue to tackle unequal life chances, poverty and disaffection.

# 2. Introduction

BME people cannot be treated as a homogenous group. According to the Housing Corporation's good practice note 4 on achieving Race Equality, the term Black and Minority Ethnic includes Irish people in Britain and the traveller community. Consequently, BME communities have a very varied range of backgrounds and they all have different needs, priorities and attributes. This diversity often brings with it positive aspects, such as strong family and community networks and strong ethical, moral and religious values. Therefore, WDH's BME Strategy recognises that there is a great variation in the housing experiences and needs of differing BME communities.

WDH recognises that the population in the Wakefield District is becoming more diverse and that we have an important part to play in ensuring that our services are equally accessible to all. WDH has a duty to support the BME communities, who are often isolated, prone to social exclusion and more vulnerable to hate crime. WDH has a commitment to challenging the 'everyday racism' that BME households and communities are often faced with.

WDH understand that the housing needs of BME households must be viewed in conjunction with other needs relating to education, health, social services and employment. WDH's approach to housing investment will adopt a holistic approach that recognises both housing and wider needs. Involvement and consultation with the local community, and partnership working with the local authority and other stakeholders is the best way to achieve this. The strategic aims set out within this document seek to provide such an approach.

It is important to recognise that this BME Strategy is a central part of WDH's commitment to the wider issue of equality and diversity. An overarching Equality and Diversity Strategic Framework sets out how WDH will realise its vision to deliver equality and diversity and draws together the BME issues raised in this document with other areas such as physical and sensory disability, sexuality and gender. Its aim is to ensure that each area is not viewed in isolation and as such specific BME targets be found in the action plan.

The Equality and Diversity Strategic Framework and its component parts will be subject to monitoring and review in response to changing information, legislation, and as a result of feedback and experiences with regard to need and the progress. However, it is intended that it will cover the period until 2010.

### 3. WDH Corporate Vision and Values

Our **Vision** is to create **confident communities** throughout the district and beyond. People in confident communities feel safe where they live, trust the services they receive and are confident about their future prosperity and opportunities.

We have a challenging **mission** statement to achieve our Vision to **inspire, transform and promote excellence**. We will **inspire** our tenants and residents, employee, partners and the housing sector to deliver a transformation of the communities we serve. To do this we are committed to delivering a three star service, ensuring excellence runs through all aspects of our work, and judging ourselves through the eyes of others.

Our values are to be **creative, inclusive and work with integrity**. Working to these **values** will help us deliver excellence and become an employer of choice.

Our **Strategic Objectives** are to:

- Be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first.
- Adopt best practice in good governance to be a well managed business.
- Be a positive force through leadership and influence to develop the potential of our people.
- Be a partner of choice to create better places to live.

Our Vision to 2020 recognises that we will need to **explore new ways of working** and that this will be driven by a process of **opening up ourselves to both external and internal challenge** in the way that local services are provided to ensure that local **communities receive appropriate high value services**. Our Vision sets down these expectations will be carried out **honestly with total transparency** and that our decisions will be made **professionally and with integrity**.

**Our efforts as a Social Enterprise and our ability to raise the bar and make significant social impacts by 2020** will depend to some extent on how successful we are at delivering services for the optimum cost whilst maintaining quality and customer satisfaction.

We will look to maximise the impact of the strategy overall by working with others where appropriate, investing our resource in local innovation to develop skilled workforces for the future.

Strategic Objective	BME Strategy Aims
Be a landlord of choice by putting the customer first.	All customers receive the same levels of service, tailored to their individual needs. Customer satisfaction levels are the same, regardless of ethnicity.
Adopt best practice in good governance to be a well-managed business.	All employees, partners and stakeholders understand, support and are committed to implementing the BME Strategy, and that decisions are open and transparent to all communities.
Be a positive force through leadership and influence to develop the potential of our people.	BME employees are represented across the organisation at all levels and at least numerically mirror that of the Wakefield district.
Be a partner of choice to create better places to live.	Create places where all people want to live, irrespective of ethnic origin, and which take into account the needs of our diverse communities.

## 4. Policies to Ensure Race Equality in Services

### 4.1 General Issues

WDH is committed to reaching out to local BME communities. A great deal of outreach work needs to be done to actively engage with them. Links with the BME community organisations and faith communities need to be established not just for the BME Strategy but also for future consultation.

WDH holds a database of BME and faith communities, which is used for consultation with BME communities.

Language is a major issue when communicating with BME communities. To address this, use will be made of translation and interpretation facilities as necessary / appropriate.

WDH is also aware that many people in BME communities cannot read and write in their own language. In such cases, WDH is committed, where possible, to using reliable and competent interpreters that speak the appropriate dialects.

WDH, where possible, will use media such as BME radio and newspapers. Regular communication with local BME groups and faith communities will be maintained. WDH will consider the possibility of holding open days at faith communities or community centres, about the housing related services that are available to the BME community. In addition, WDH is committed to working closely with Wakefield Council and other organisations to ensure that BME tenants receive the appropriate help and advice in relation to housing services.

WDH is aware that more in-depth research needs to be carried out into the housing needs of the different BME and faith communities. National research has shown clearly that each BME and faith community has different needs and cultural sensitivities. If WDH is to assist these communities it needs to have a better researched understanding of the different BME and faith communities living in the Local Management Areas. WDH will continue to research the needs of the local BME community.

## 4.2 Housing Provision

When developing new homes for BME households, WDH will adopt a partnership approach, working closely with other local social landlords, BME communities and support agencies. WDH will consider:

- Accommodation requirements related to culture and / or religion - through consultation with local BME communities and by avoiding stereotypes.
- Suitability of housing with regard to location, design, type, size and tenure.

WDH will aim to provide excellent services that are fair, accessible and offer choice to the local BME communities. These include the following areas:

- Involving and communicating with BME tenants and residents – WDH will use a variety of suitable methods to ensure that BME people in housing need are aware of the accommodation and housing services that we provide.
- Supported accommodation - for example, WDH will ensure that BME housing needs are considered when providing supported accommodation.

## 4.3 Letting Policy

The Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) 'Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing' states that 'It is unlawful for Housing organisations to discriminate on racial grounds on the relative **quality** of housing that is given to individual applicants'. Historically, BME tenants across England and Wales have tended to be over represented in poor quality dwellings. In order to counteract this, the CRE Code recommends that landlords should:

- Review their letting systems in detail to ensure that they do not discriminate against minority ethnic groups in respect of the relative priorities given to different housing categories. A key point of this review should include setting up ethnicity monitoring systems. Additionally, copies of the lettings policy should be available for public inspection.
- Ensure that the use of discretion is contained within the framework of an overall lettings policy that is non-discriminatory. The options available at various stages of the rehousing process should be clearly identified and communicated to all housing applicants.
- Ensure that information on the operation of the housing system and what people are entitled to is readily available to the local communities and translated into the relevant languages. Assistance should be given to those applicants unable to read.
- Ensure that assessments by housing employees are not based on the racial origin of the individual applicant or tenant. The main role of housing employees at the time of application should be one of giving advice and obtaining factual information to identify housing need, rather than subjective assessment.

In order to make sure that WDH is meeting its obligations it will:

- Ensure that WDH's Homesearch service (Choice Based Lettings) operates on a non-discriminatory basis and make strenuous efforts to ensure all communities are accessing and using the service.
- Set and periodically review appropriate 'local targets' for new Homesearch lettings to BME households, for example, in Wakefield City where the majority of the BME communities reside.
- Look towards developing a Housing Quality Indicator (HQI) in order to be able to monitor the quality of dwellings allocated to the BME community.

## **4.4 Homelessness**

WDH will work with Wakefield Council to ensure that we are particularly sensitive to the needs of the BME and faith communities in this area. Research shows the over representation of people from BME groups amongst the homeless population and those living in hostel accommodation. In London, for example, a recent study found that BME individuals were more than three times as likely than white people to be homeless and staying in a direct access hostel or winter shelter. However, BME individuals are less prevalent amongst the street homeless and therefore less visible.

The picture in the Wakefield Local Management Areas is less clear, but recent rises in homelessness give cause for concern. The situation will be monitored and we will look toward monitoring the incidence of intentional homelessness amongst BME groups to ensure that equal treatment is being given and any particular BME homelessness problem is addressed. WDH has produced a draft strategy which details how we will help Wakefield Council fulfil its statutory duties towards the homeless under their Homelessness Strategy.

## **4.5 Care for Older BME People**

The needs of BME elders are the same as those for other older people, but sometimes these needs should be met in specific and different ways. A great danger is stereotyping community preferences. For example, the feeling amongst many people is that the BME population 'look after their own' and provision is not necessary.

However, it is essential to treat older BME people as individuals with individual needs rather than a stereotyped member of a particular group. WDH will work with its stakeholders to stimulate the development of services both in house and within the independent sector to provide a range of appropriate residential, domiciliary and day care services for BME elders.

## **4.6 People with Learning Disabilities**

National figures show that there is a higher incidence of learning disabilities amongst people from BME communities. The prevalence of learning disabilities in South Asians aged between 5 and 32 is up to three times higher than the population as a whole. Of the South Asian families caring for family members with learning difficulties, 19% had more than one member with a learning difficulty.

Prevalence amongst other BME groups is not as well researched, but practitioners believe there is also a relatively high incidence amongst the Black African and Black Caribbean communities also.

Minority ethnic communities face substantial inequalities and discrimination in employment education, health and social services. The higher prevalence of learning disabilities in South Asian communities has been linked to high levels of material and social deprivation. For example, these may combine with other factors such as poor access to maternal health care and higher rates of environmental or genetic risk factors.

People with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities experience simultaneous disadvantage in relation to race, impairment and, for women, gender.

Over the next thirty years, according to government figures, the number of BME people with learning disabilities will increase by 70%. Locally the Wakefield Housing Needs Survey 2002 shows the BME population totalling around 4,200. The estimated figure for people with learning disabilities from the BME community, based on national prevalence figures, is about 30 people. This growing problem is addressed in the Independent Living Strategy which covers all vulnerable individuals and would aim to enable people with learning disabilities and their families to have a greater choice and control over where and how they live.

## **4.7 Repairs and Improvements**

It is unlawful for a public body to respond more quickly and efficiently to requests for repairs from one racial group than another, when responsiveness to such requests should be determined by the condition of the properties only. WDH will work toward developing monitoring systems that are able to identify repairs requests by ethnicity to ensure that this is the case.

## **4.8 Young BME People**

The Home Office guidance on community cohesion states that:

‘Young people are a core group that must be centrally involved in helping to build and sustain strong local cohesive communities. Young people need to be involved at a strategic as well as delivery level in public services, particularly those that directly involve them’.

WDH is committed to working with young people of all races to provide routes for them into mainstream decision-making processes and structures. In working with young people, WDH will promote values of tolerance and respect between all communities.

## **4.9 Asylum Seekers**

The introduction of the Asylum and Immigration Act (2004) has seen a wide-ranging reform of the asylum and immigration system. Amongst other things, the Act requires Asylum Seekers who are provided housing by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to establish a local connection with the area to which they are dispersed. This measure was introduced to relieve pressure on the South-East of the country and WDH is committed to working with Wakefield Council to achieve the goals in their Asylum Seekers Strategy wherever possible.

WDH currently has a Service Level Agreement with Open Door to provide properties to Wakefield Council in order that they can fulfil their legal obligations towards the homeless.

## **4.10 Training on Equality and Diversity**

WDH's Learning and Development Plan includes equality and diversity as a key issue and BME issues are covered within that area. There is a wide range of equality training for employees, for example, cultural awareness, legislation, recruitment and selection, and the induction programme for all employees joining WDH.

## 5 Community Safety

One of the primary objectives of the Council's Community Safety Strategy is:

- To support vulnerable people through the development of strategies for dealing with hard to report incidents or crimes and improved communications with individuals, groups and communities who are hard to reach.

The development and launch of a Racial Harassment Charter was a key success for the Community Safety Task Group. Since the inception of the Charter, many vulnerable people have been helped through the development of strategies for dealing with hate crimes. WDH has taken a key role in using Service Access Points to act as reporting centres.

WDH will continue to work with the other members of the Community Safety Partnership to ensure the safety of asylum seekers / refugees and to help them to settle seamlessly into local communities.

### 5.1 Tackling Racial Harassment

Members of the BME population are four times more likely to see racial harassment as a problem than their white counterparts. Research has shown that harassment associated with housing remains a widespread problem. This is a major influence on BME household choice of residential area. WDH will adhere to all relevant Codes of Practice in tackling racial harassment, for example the Code of Practice for Social Landlords and the Home Office code on reporting and recording racist incidents.

The Government's National Strategy framework document and its Policy Action Team (PAT) have put forward various recommendations aimed specifically at reducing racist crime. For example, the Anti Social Behaviour PAT recommends that a 'zero tolerance' policy for racist actions should be established through:

- Home Office special guidance on tackling racism for local Crime and Disorder Partnerships; and
- The inclusion of clear statements in Crime and Disorder Partnership strategies and pilot neighbourhood agreements of intent to tackle racism and a plan setting out what each agency will do.

These should adopt the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report's universal definition of a racist incident as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'.

The PAT on Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) also suggests that reporting and monitoring of racist incidents should be improved through:

- Crime and Disorder Partnership strategies that include protocols for reporting and recording racist incidents across all agencies and protocols for sharing information about racist incidents and perpetrators; and
- Setting national and local targets for reducing racist incidents.

To ensure tough action is taken when racial harassment and crimes are committed, the Anti Social Behaviour PAT recommends that:

- All agencies should, whenever possible, report racist incidents to the police and legal proceedings seeking injunctions or orders for possession should be pursued where appropriate.
- All tenancy agreements should include 'no harassment' clauses and make clear that action will be taken if they are breached.
- Local strategies should include arrangements to support victims and witnesses that take account of their wishes.
- Training in tackling racist incidents should be provided to all employees involved in combating anti-social behaviour and, where possible, this should extend to local residents.

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) provides for nine new offences to strengthen powers against racial violence and harassment, including racially aggravated assaults, racially aggravated criminal damage, racially aggravated public order offences and racially aggravated harassment offences.

WDH is committed to combating all hate crime including racial harassment. Indeed, all service access points act as hate crime reporting centres. We will strive to eliminate racism from all our housing Local Management Areas and build more cohesive communities.

## **6. Expected Outcomes**

- A high standard of service is delivered to people from BME communities within a framework of empowerment and Best Value.
- 'Equality of access' to WDH is ensured for all our customers regardless of race.
- Positive action is taken to address 'existing' housing disadvantage and encourage a more inclusive society.
- The provision of housing services that are sensitive to differences in needs, language and culture.
- The promotion of employment opportunities within the BME communities to ensure an employee diversity base that mirrors that of the Wakefield district.
- The elimination of unlawful racial discrimination.
- The promotion of Equal Opportunities for all ethnic groups.
- The promotion of good relations between people of different racial backgrounds.
- WDH service access points continue to act as Hate Incident Reporting Centres for the Wakefield district.

## **7. Monitoring and Review**

### **7.1 Good Practice**

We will endorse Good Practice initiatives through the business and benchmark current practices against other organisations, seeking new ideas and innovation in support of continuous improvement.

WDH will regularly evaluate the validity of the Equality and Diversity Strategic Framework and individual strategies through external and internal processes and benchmarking.

The Board, through its Organisational Development (OD) Committee will review equality and diversity activity via the quarterly OD Committee progress report. This will include progress against the Good Practice Note 4 on Race Equality, which details specific areas of performance measurement such as racial harassment, BME employee and Board targets, BME resident involvement, lettings and tenant satisfaction.

The Equality and Diversity Strategic Framework and individual strategies will be formally reviewed on an annual basis by the internal and external Equality and Diversity groups to ensure actions proposed are still appropriate, targets are being achieved or are revised in light of new information and new legislation, and that WDH is continuing to provide excellent services to all sections of the community.



## **Vision**

to create confident communities

## **Mission**

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

## **Values**

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

**delivering promises, improving lives**