

# Deeds Not Words – Pledge and Action Plan



## Introduction

Merthyr Housing has an Equality & Diversity Policy which aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations between different people, tackle prejudice and promote understanding of Equality & Diversity issues. The purpose of this policy is to create a cohesive approach to embed equality into the day-to-day work of the Association and to value diversity.

The Black Lives Matter movement, coupled with the profound impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, is a watershed moment in deciding what type of society we want to live in.

In 2020, MTHA signed-up to Tai Pawb's Deeds Not Words Pledge  
<https://www.taipawb.org/resources/deeds-not-words-pledge-to-action/>

The key elements of the Pledge are:

1. Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff and communities
2. Improve the ethnic diversity of board and staff at all levels
3. Communicate and engage
4. Develop an inclusive culture

We will publish our commitment to take specific actions to tackle the challenges that we have identified in working toward meeting the elements of the Pledge. Our Board will review progress against these actions on an annual basis.

## Deeds Not Words – Pledge and Action Plan

1. Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on our Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues and communities			
Action Pledged	What we have done so far	Timeframe	Progress
Adopt the All Wales Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool which recognises the increased risk of COVID-19 to BAME staff	We adopted the All Wales Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool and used this to support staff and vulnerable tenants.	March 2022	Complete
Commit to wellbeing /psychological and other support to Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff who might feel affected or vulnerable right now	We supported staff and offered home working together with counselling through our staff healthcare cashback scheme. 4% of our staff are BAME.	March 2022	Complete
Investigate reasons for overcrowding and worse housing conditions amongst some Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic groups	We analysed our data, and we currently have no ethnic minority tenants who are statutorily overcrowded, or to our knowledge experiencing worse housing conditions or disrepair.	March 2022	Complete and monitor

## Deeds Not Words – Pledge and Action Plan

2. Improve ethnic diversity of Board and staff at all levels			
Action Pledged	What we have done so far	Timeframe	Progress
Adopt the Rooney Rule in at job levels where you identify under representation	We adopted the Rooney Rule, and this now forms part of our recruitment practices. This means that we ensure that applicants of minority ethnicity are shortlisted and interviewed for each position advertised where all essential criteria are met.	September 2022	Complete / Ongoing
Report annually and act on the findings for ethnicity pay gap recruitment, promotion and retention ethnicity data	4% of our staff are BAME. We will report on ethnicity pay gap and BAME recruitment, promotion and retention data annually to our People & Remuneration Committee. The next report will go to the P&R Committee in January 2024.	January 2024	In progress
Invest in recruitment channels to bring in more Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority applicants	We have used Tai Pawb and Chwarae Teg careers pages to advertise previously We will look to expand this to agencies such as BAWSO, bmejobs.co.uk, Sports Disability etc	September 2022	In progress
Train all staff and Board members about unconscious bias and raise awareness of white privilege	Staff and Board have undertaken Equality & Diversity training both in person and on-line e-learning We will source additional training on unconscious bias and white privilege in by 31 March 2024 for all staff Anti Racism training has been completed for Board members and will be completed for all staff by 31/12/2023	September 2022	Complete
		March 2024	In progress
		December 2023	In progress
Ensure ethnically diverse recruitment panels	We recently promoted a BAME member of staff into an Officer role and this person may sit on interview panels in the future We will aim to ensure that there is gender balance on recruitment panels	September 2022	Complete / Ongoing
Invest resources in positive action initiatives aimed at improving BAME representation at levels showing gaps. This can include leadership development programmes, mentoring/shadowing opportunities and internal talent pipeline initiatives	This will be considered for roles going forward	September 2024	In progress

## Deeds Not Words – Pledge and Action Plan

3. Communicate and engage			
Action Pledged	What we have done so far	Timeframe	Progress
Publicise your support for racial equality including: voiced support for Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff and tenants/people you serve, commitment to anti-racist practice and awareness of specific challenges facing your organisation or community	We have signed up to the DNW Pledge and we are listed on the Tai Pawb website We aim to attend the DNW Leaders Group meetings to follow progress and be part of a community of practice We are specific in our Policies and Procedures that we will not tolerate anti-racism or bullying in any form We are committed to the Pledge and this forms part of our Corporate Plan	March 2023	In progress
Together with above – publish your commitment to take specific actions to tackle the challenges you identified. Report on progress annually	The QED Action plan for improvement is linked to our Equality & Diversity Policy The Equality & Diversity Policy is available on our website and is subject to review by Board We will publish this action plan for progress against the DNW Pledge on the website - report to Board 25/09/23	Septembre 2022	Complete
		September 2023	Complete
Disaggregate ethnicity data in your tenant/service user satisfaction surveys and other tenant/service user surveys. Use other channels to learn about the experiences of BAME tenants/service users. Act on findings	We analyse our tenant satisfaction returns by protected characteristic and look to ensure that no BAME customers are disadvantaged We will look for trends to improve our services and aim to expand membership of our Tenant's Voice with a more diverse representation	March 2024	In progress
Build links with and support BAME community groups in the area and beyond, invest in building their capacity to support local communities and bring in community knowledge and challenge to the organisation	We will look to build links with BAME community groups, mainly Polish and Portuguese We will provide leaflets in languages as required	March 2024	In progress
In asylum dispersal areas, commit to donating or leasing housing to refugee housing initiatives (where these exist)	We will work with our local authority partner to rehouse refugees in line with need/priorities and stock availability	March 2024	Ongoing

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4. Develop an inclusive culture			
Action Pledged	What we have done so far	Timeframe	Progress
Chief Executives, senior leaders/Heads of Housing and boards to take a proactive role in championing and monitoring progress on these pledges.	Progress on actions against the plan will be published on our website and monitored bi-annually by Board.	September 2023	Complete / ongoing
Chief Executives, senior leaders/Heads of Housing and boards to actively support and promote an inclusive culture where people are comfortable talking about race and can bring their whole self to work	Open discussions are held and encouraged in team meetings, Staff Employer Partnership Group (SEPG), 1 to 1 meetings, Line Manager and SMT meetings and Board meetings. From our QED Year 2 Review Report in 2022, 88% of staff feel very or completely able to be open about their personal circumstances at work. This is the same as the result in 2021 and since 2019 this represents a 19% increase.	March 2023	Complete / ongoing
Actively support and promote a culture where Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff and tenants/service users are comfortable to voice concerns related to race and are believed when this happens	We have redesigned our ASB procedure to include additional guidance and actions for hate crime response. 92% of all staff feel moderately aware of how to apply our policy on hate crime, and 41% of all staff feel very aware of how to apply the policy. From the DNW All Staff survey 2023, 97% of staff felt that race equality and racial diversity was important to managers and senior leaders, with 72% agreeing that this was a top or the most important priority.	March 2023	Complete / ongoing
Invest in reverse mentoring schemes to share experiences and improve opportunities	We will look into this to take forward suggestions for reverse mentoring schemes - 2024/25 as considered appropriate for our organisation	2024/25	Not started