

Deeds Not Words

A pledge to end racial inequality in housing



**Deeds Not
Words**



promoting equality in housing
hybu cydraddoldeb ym maes tai

The race equality challenge for social housing in Wales

Recent events have shone a new light on the racial inequalities and racism experienced by BAME communities across the globe, in the UK and in Wales.

The impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minority groups have been profound, with BAME communities up to two times more likely to die from the disease than others. Many of the reasons for this impact are linked to long standing socio-economic disadvantage, structural racism and lack of BAME representation within decision making to influence better outcomes. The Covid-19 pandemic has magnified these inequalities.

The murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter movement and the subsequent protests across



the globe, have also highlighted the systemic inequalities and injustice, with BAME communities in the UK and Wales demanding lasting changes to how we tackle systemic racial inequality.

Since its inception in 2005 Tai Pawb has been working with the housing sector to tackle race inequality but it is clear that we need a clear leadership commitment to make tangible changes to how we work and what we do.

To make this happen we are calling on our members in Wales, to sign up to the pledges below and deliver on them in the next 5 years. We see these as the necessary first step to begin the process of addressing the concerns of communities threatened due to racial inequalities.

The Learning

We are acutely aware that in undertaking the below work we need to challenge and ask ourselves and the sector why some of the past initiatives haven't worked, what has been successful and this learning should be at the core of addressing the below challenges. We know for example that in some organisations gender pay gap reporting and subsequent action lead to tangible outcomes. Our QED staff surveys also show the impact of the work undertaken by organisations as part of their QED journey. We know that Wales has much more female CEO's than England. We know that we saw a marked increase in female representation on boards following regulatory and leadership focus on this area. And we know that the Rooney Rule has made a real difference in the NFL.

Nevertheless, there are more lessons to be learned and at the core of this learning should be an honest reflection on the role of leadership in the failed initiatives of the past and in driving this change. We are keen to work with and support the sector in seizing this opportunity as we might not get another one.

How will we know what's changed?

The pledges below have been developed based on the data and evidence on inequalities and experiences we have been obtaining through our QED Award work as well as wider consultancy, support and engagement work we carry out with our members. The multiple events and conversations we've had with people of colour in housing and beyond paint a concerning picture of significant and persistent impact of systemic racism and discrimination and the need for systemic change.

We are also aware that we need a full and concrete picture of where we are on race and housing in Wales so that we can measure progress. We know for example that only 3% of RSL board members are BAME compared to 6% of population, but we need more concrete data about our starting position, therefore our first step will be to carry out a survey to obtain a clear baseline of where the sector is on race equality. This will inform how we measure progress and whether we can develop initiatives to support



the change going forward. We will carry out regular surveys and engagement to assess what has changed and publish the results. We are also keen to explore whether there is a role that the regulator can play in helping to lead this change.

We would also like our work to be further driven by BAME people linked to housing and we plan to do this through the Deeds Not Words panel.

**** Some of the below pledges will pertain to housing associations whilst others can be taken forward by local authorities and RSL's alike.**

What we are asking you to do (and what we will do):

- Commit to taking the below actions in the next 5 years by signing up (we will publicise which organisations have signed up)
- We will contact each organisation every 12 months to collate and publicise a progress report and highlight achievements or gaps on our website, social media, housing press, Tai Pawb and sector events etc.
- We will provide opportunities for participating organisations to get together, discuss their progress, share lessons and challenges.
- We will support participating organisations through our current membership services like helpline, training or consultancy
- We will aim to develop new initiatives and partnerships with key sector bodies to support those who signed up in achieving change.
- We will conduct surveys and research, including surveying participating organisations, and use the results to highlight achievements and challenge ourselves and the sector

Tai Pawb Pledge

- We will adopt the Rooney Rule in our board and staff recruitment
- We will improve the racial diversity of our board and staff
- We will set up a Deeds not Words panel consisting of BAME people linked to housing to help us feed into policy, challenge the sector and deliver change
- We will work with partners to develop initiatives to support the sector in delivering on their commitment to race equality and diversity
- We will conduct research into racial inequalities in housing, challenge and work with the sector and stakeholders to address recommendations
- We will continue working on our aim of developing temporary housing and support provision for homeless refugees leaving Home Office accommodation
- We will further develop our links and partnership working with communities affected by racism to be better linked to the experiences of those that the sector serves.

1. Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff and communities

What we're asking you to do

- Adopt the All Wales Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool which recognises the increased risk of COVID-19 to BAME staff and act on findings (ensure concerns of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff are treated seriously and addressed in a compassionate way, without the fear of being disadvantaged if work is realigned)
- Commit to wellbeing/psychological and other support to Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff who might feel affected or vulnerable right now
- Investigate reasons for overcrowding and worse housing conditions amongst some BAME groups. Start acting on findings.

2. Improve the ethnic diversity of board and staff at all levels

What we're asking you to do

- Adopt the [Rooney Rule](#) in at job levels where you identify under representation
- Report annually and act on findings:
 - ethnicities pay gap (where pay gap reporting is not possible due to small sample sizes – report BAME employee ratios at different levels)
 - recruitment, promotion, and retention ethnicity data
- Invest in recruitment channels to bring in more Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority applicants
- Train all staff and board in Unconscious Bias and raise awareness of white privilege
- Ensure ethnically diverse recruitment panels
- 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

3. Communicate and engage

What we're asking you to do

- Publicise your support for racial equality including: voiced support for Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff and tenants/communities, commitment to anti-racist practice and awareness of specific challenges facing your organisation or community

- Together with above - publish your commitment to take specific actions to tackle the challenges you identified. Report on progress annually.
- Disaggregate ethnicity data in your tenant satisfaction surveys and other tenant surveys. Use other channels to learn about the experiences of BAME tenants. Act on findings.
- 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
- In asylum dispersal areas, commit to donating or leasing housing to refugee housing initiatives (where these exist)

4. Develop an inclusive culture

What we're asking you to do

- Chief Executives, senior leaders and boards to take a proactive role in championing and monitoring progress on these pledges.
- Chief Executives, senior leaders 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
- Actively support and promote a culture where Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority staff and tenants are comfortable to voice concerns related to race and are believed when this happens
- Invest in reverse mentoring schemes to share experiences and improve opportunities

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