

Age and Experience

The Scottish Executive is working on a strategy for an ageing population in Scotland. The age structure of the population is changing and in future there will be more older people in Scotland. Faced with the challenges of an ageing population, the Scottish Executive has embarked on highlighting the positive contributions made by older people rather than the increased burden on services.

The aim of the strategy is to provide a long term framework for access to opportunities for older people with a view to them making a continued contribution by removing barriers to opportunities.

To ensure that views of all communities are taken on board, a consultation process involving the Associations' Equal Opportunities Programme was commissioned to consult Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) individuals and organisations on the strategy. Many thanks to all those who participated in the consultation process.

The strategy will be launched by end of this year and we will keep you updated on its development. For further information on the strategy please contact Jess Barrow on 0131 244 0718.

Introducing the Equal Opportunities Team

From left to right -

Nasreen Amjad (Job Opportunities Development Officer), **Zakra Ali** (Admin Assistant), **Rohini Sharma Joshi** (Housing Equal Opportunities Manager), **Aisha Nadeem** (Pension Benefit Outreach Worker), and **Tamiko Mackie** ("Happy to Translate" Logo Development Officer).



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INSIDE...

Ageing
Population Survey

"Happy to Translate" pilot

Job Opportunities
Project

Dundee Job Fair

Easy Guide to
Pension & Benefits

We're Here to Make You "Happy"!



Do you know someone who has difficulty communicating in English? Does this prevent them from getting the information or services they need? Perhaps they are uncomfortable relying on family or friends to help them communicate? If so, the 'Happy to Translate' Logo aims to help!

When someone who speaks little or no English visits a member organisation, they can point to the Logo to let staff know they require language assistance. Staff will follow a few simple steps to find out what language is needed, and then arrange for the confidential translation of documents or an appointment with a professional interpreter present.

The Logo is currently being piloted by seven public organisations (watch this space for additional pilot organisations):



A booklet with further information about the Logo has been updated and now includes 20 languages. To receive a complimentary copy, contact Tamiko Mackie at tmackie@trusha.org.uk or 0131 444 4951. Alternatively, download the booklet at www.happytotranslate.com.

New Face in Equal Opportunities Team

Zakra Ali joined the associations' Equal Opportunities team in April as an Administrative Assistant. She is a valuable addition and has already made her mark in the team.

Pension Benefit Outreach Project

This project has now been running for 12 months and has already reached its target of 300 older people aged 60+ being assessed. Over 100 have benefited from an increase in their benefit entitlement and over £280,000 in additional benefits have been secured. Because of the project many older people have gained knowledge about what they are entitled to and have more confidence when accessing other services.

If you or someone you know can benefit from the project, please contact the Pension Benefit Outreach Worker, Aisha Nadeem, on 0131 444 4952 or anadeem@trusha.org.uk. Advice is free and will be made available in your own language.



An Easy Guide to Benefits for 60+

Many older people are still not sure what they are entitled to and miss out on a great deal. They have voiced concerns about the lack of information available on this subject and that information is not made readily available in their community language. Therefore, **“An Easy Guide to Benefits for the 60+”** is being developed in English and six community languages to provide the information needed to make an informed choice.

The production of this guide has been made possible by funding from **Communities Scotland**.

Shop Housing - Application



The three housing associations are in the final stages of establishing a National Common Housing Register. This Register will be known as **SHOP** (**S**cottish **H**ousing **O**ptions) and will be operational from summer 2006.

The SHOP register will mean there will be one common list of applicants that each of the three Associations can access, rather than holding their own separate lists. For applicants, it will mean only one application form has to be completed, even if they are applying for housing with all three Associations.

When ready, this application form will also be available in some community languages on our www.EqualityScotland.com website.

Mortgage to Rent Scheme



The Mortgage to Rent Scheme may be able to help you if you are an owner occupier in mortgage difficulties AND you are in danger of having your home repossessed.

Communities Scotland, who administer the scheme, may be able to arrange for a social landlord (such as a housing association or local authority) to buy your home and for you to continue to live there as a tenant, where you will pay a social rent to the landlord.

You can apply to the Scheme for assistance if you can answer YES to the following questions:

- Have you obtained advice about your overall financial situation?
- Is your home in danger of being repossessed? (That is, have you been notified that legal action has commenced against you, or has your lender agreed to delay or withdraw legal action to allow your application to scheme to proceed?)
- Do all the owners of the property agree to being considered for Mortgage to Rent?
- Is there a reason that your household must remain in the local area?
- Are you unable to sell your home and buy somewhere cheaper locally?

You will NOT normally be eligible for help under the Scheme if:

- You are under 60 years old and the capital held by you and your partner is greater than £8,000. (£12,000 if over 60 years old).
- You have lived in the property for less than 12 months.
- The value of your property is greater than the average property value in your local authority area.
- Your property needs more than £6,000 worth of repairs.

For further information on the eligibility conditions and a note of the agencies able to provide advice on whether Mortgage to Rent is right for your situation, contact the helpline on 0845 279 9999 or email mortgagetorent@communitiesScotland.gsi.gov.uk.

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Looking forward to...

...the Launch of the **"Easy guide to Benefits for 60 +"**. We hope to hold an event to celebrate the success of the Pension Benefit Outreach Project and to launch the guide later this year. We will keep you informed.

Strategic Review of Sheltered Housing - The City of Edinburgh Council

Final reports of the review to be published later this year. For the purposes of the review the views of existing and potential tenants have been sought with a view of plan strategies for the future of sheltered housing. This report also highlights the needs and aspirations of older people from BME communities.

Surgeries / Information

Are you 60+ and would like advice on housing for older people or wish to have your benefits assessed? The advice given will be confidential, in your language and at the place most convenient for you.

Please contact Rohini Sharma Joshi or Aisha Nadeem on 0131 444 1200 to make an appointment or email: rsharma@trustha.org.uk or anadeem@trustha.org.uk



This newsletter is a joint publication by **Trust, Hanover (Scotland)** and **Bield Housing Associations**. Previous issues can be viewed at www.EqualityScotland.com. If you would like to make comments or suggestions, or if you want your event or project to be considered for publication, please contact:

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