

Easy Guide to Benefits for the 60+

Launched at the Scottish Parliament

ENGLISH

This Newsletter is also available in Cantonese, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu

Housing for Older People NEWSLETTER

Easy Guide to Benefits for the 60+

Older people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Scotland will receive vital help to negotiate the benefits maze with the launch of a new **Easy Guide to Benefits for the 60+**.

The guide was developed jointly by the Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield Housing Associations' Equal Opportunities programme and sponsored by **Communities Scotland**. It is the latest in a number of innovative projects jointly developed by the three Housing Associations and is part of a pioneering **Pension Benefit Outreach Project**.

Sarah Boyack, Labour MSP for Edinburgh Central (see photo), who launched the new guide at the Scottish Parliament, said: "A lot of older people don't take up the benefits they are entitled to. There are many barriers in their way from knowledge barriers to psychological and physical. If that means the elderly are missing out, that's a tragedy. I want to congratulate Trust, Hanover and Bield on this initiative. It's a landmark getting this document published."



MSP Sarah Boyack launches the new guide

The guide has been published in six languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Cantonese), English, Hindi and Urdu.

Sarah Boyack congratulated the Housing Associations: "I think this will be one of the most important and tangible things you have done. The outreach project has already raised £400,000 in benefits for elderly people from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities. It has helped over 200 people. That's a real tangible benefit."

To download a PDF of **Easy Guide to benefits for the 60+**, please visit our website, www.EqualityScotland.com.

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INSIDE...

Update on
Projects

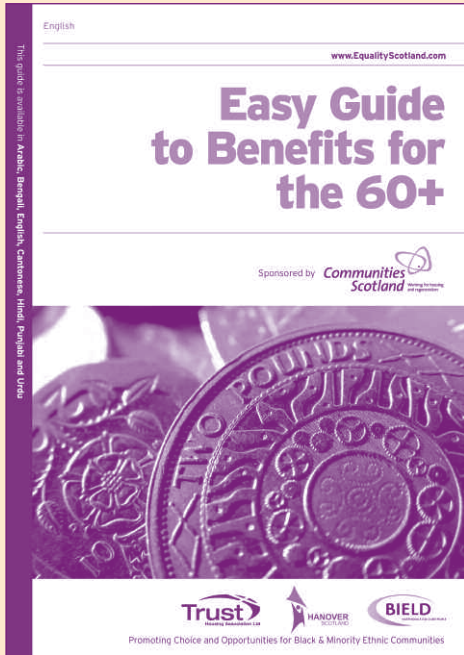
Elgin Event

Visiting
Developments

The House Key

Pension Benefit Outreach Project

The Pension Benefit Outreach Project has completed its 18-month funding period. In that time it has raised almost £400,000 in benefits for BME older people. Over 400 older people were assessed, over 200 people received extra benefits and many were put in touch with other services such as Care and Repair, Social Services and other service providers.



This project was not just about maximising income, but also bridging the information gap between BME older people and relevant service providers, as well as providing the knowledge and the basic tools to access other services available to them. Through the project many older people did not just benefit financially, but also grew in confidence (previously they were very reluctant, and even suspicious, about accessing any kind of services including benefits).

Sadly, the funding for this project has ended, but other sources are being pursued. Watch this space!



Easy Guide to Benefits for the 60+ Launch



'Happy to Translate' Logo

The 'Happy to Translate' Logo initiative continues to grow. In addition the original seven pilot organisations, five more have recently come on board:

Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service
Glasgow Housing Association
Govanhill Housing Association
Scottish Refugee Council
West Granton Housing Co-operative

These new organisations add to the diversity of the services and locations offered by the pilot organisations and means that more BME people will benefit from language assistance.

In spring 2007, the membership application process will open up for organisations that would make an application to participate in the initiative. For more information, please contact the Logo Development Officer, Tamiko Mackie, at tmackie@trustha.org.uk or 0131 444 4951.

Job Opportunities Support Project

The aim of the Job Opportunities Support Project is to help improve access to job opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and overcome barriers to employment. It is funded by **Communities Scotland** and **Capital City Partnership**.

The Job Opportunities Development Officer, continues to work with community organisations, housing and public sector employers in Edinburgh and Lothians, and individuals requiring support and guidance in accessing job opportunities.

The completion of a few placements has proved very successful. Partnership work has also been developed with organisations offering similar services to offer specific support to individuals.

If you or someone you know can benefit from the project, please contact Nasreen Amjad on 0131 444 4953 or namjad@trustha.org.uk, or visit our website, www.EqualityScotland.com.



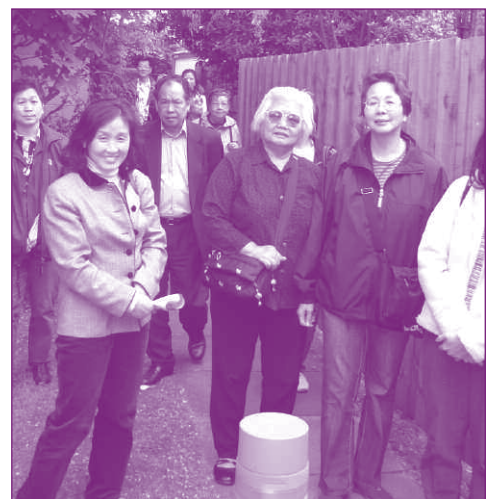
Information Event in Elgin

The Equal Opportunities programme held an information and networking event in Elgin, Morayshire on 11th October 2006. The aim was to provide communities with information on the services provided by the Associations, and the initiatives developed to promote equality in accessing services. The evening was full of entertainment and a variety of ethnic food (including Chinese, Indian and Polish). A great time was had by all. A big thanks to all those who helped in organising and attended the event!



Visits to Housing Developments

Some Chinese service users from the Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project (MECOPP) visited the Associations' Sheltered, Very Sheltered and Care Housing developments in Edinburgh. The purpose of the visits was to inform Chinese older people of the variety of housing available from the three Housing Associations.



House Key Directory

The House Key directory is a new website and telephone helpline to help vulnerable people in Scotland live independently in their own homes. It was launched in January 2006 by the Scottish Executive and lists 7,000 housing supporting services that can benefit a variety of people, including:

- people with mental health problems
- refugees
- woman at risk of domestic abuse
- sensory impairment
- people with physical or people with learning difficulties

It also provides details of Housing Support available in Scotland, such as:

- the name of the service, where it is and who to contact
- what type of person the service is for
- current availability
- if accommodation based, a description of the facilities, whether it is suitable for those with mobility difficulties, and even if pets are allowed

The directory aims to provide enough detailed information to help service users make informed decisions, contact providers and apply for services. Additionally, it offers information to professionals, and to friends and relatives of people who require support. The telephone helpline has access to Language Line, and printed extracts from the website can be translated to another language on request.

The website library includes over 200 downloadable fact-sheets, guides and reports. A glossary provides straightforward explanations of terms that service users might come across.

All services have to be registered through the Care Commission and information on the website is updated on a regular basis. Some local authorities fund services through the Supporting People programme. People who require a service will need to have a financial assessment from their local authority to make sure they are eligible, organisations such as Sheltered Housing Associations will also assess an individual to make sure that the service is able to meet their needs.

The House Key directory is maintained by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel for the Scottish Executive. If you have any questions, telephone helpline on **0845 271 2323** or logon to **www.thehousekey.org**



Scottish Directory
of Housing Support
Services

EDINBURGH

Trust HA

12 New Mart Road
Edinburgh EH14 1RL
Tel 0131 444 1200
www.trustha.org.uk

Hanover (Scotland) HA

95 McDonald Road
Edinburgh EH7 4NS
Tel 0131 557 0598
www.hsha.org.uk

Bield HA

79 Hopetoun Street
Edinburgh EH7 4QF
Tel 0131 273 4000
www.bield.co.uk

GLASGOW

Trust HA

25 Park Circus
Glasgow G3 6AP
Tel 0141 341 3200
www.trustha.org.uk

Hanover (Scotland) HA

5 Newton Place
Glasgow G3 7PR
Tel 0141 353 1353
www.hsha.org.uk

Bield HA

12 Somerset Place
Glasgow G3 7JT
Tel 0141 270 7200
www.bield.co.uk

Looking Forward to:

Pension Benefit Findings Report

A report will be produced on findings from the Pension Benefit Outreach Project that highlights the barriers faced by BME older people when trying to access benefits.

Strategic Review of Sheltered Housing - The City of Edinburgh Council

Reports on findings of the needs of the BME older people living in sheltered housing and BME older people seeking sheltered housing are now available on www.edinburgh.gov.uk

Strategy for Scotland's Ageing Population

After extensive consultation in Scotland, a Strategy will be produced by the Scottish Executive which will provide guidance for planning and delivering policies and practices for service providers.

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 own language and at the place most convenient for you.



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:

Equal Opportunities Team

Rohini Sharma Joshi, Housing Equal Opportunities Manager
Tamiko Mackie, 'Happy to Translate' Logo Development Officer
Nasreen Amjad, Job Opportunities Development Officer
Aisha Nadeem, Pension Benefit Outreach Worker
Zakra Ali, Administrative Assistant - zali@trustha.org.uk

We would be delighted to hear from you.

Equal Opportunities Programme, Trust Housing Association,
12 New Mart Road, Edinburgh EH14 1RL
Tel: 0131 444 1200 Fax: 0131 444 4949

www.EqualityScotland.com