

2nd August 2006

Three leading Scottish Housing Associations Get up & Go

Three leading Scottish housing associations, Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield, won Edinburgh's Get up & Go Award for 2006 for their joint Equal Opportunities Programme in the category of "Ensuring Inclusion of Older people in Edinburgh". The award was presented by the television and radio personality, Bill Torrance at the City Chambers.

The 'Get up & Go' Awards were launched by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2004 to recognise the work of groups and individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to ensuring the inclusion of older people in Edinburgh by challenging stereotypes, raising awareness, creating opportunities and encouraging participation.

The award recognised the housing associations' contribution with their key grass roots activities from their equal opportunities programme such as open surgeries and social events, all designed to communicate directly to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities and encourage the take up of services. Also highlighted in the submission was the associations' production of a DVD/video "Housing for Older People" (presented by film and television personality Sayeed Jaffrey), which outlines what sheltered housing has to offer to older people. Another integral part of the programme is the bi-annual "Housing for Older People" newsletter, produced in Cantonese, English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu as well as a multilingual website, www.EqualityScotland.com.

In addition to these ongoing core activities, the associations' housing equal opportunities programme has also developed and managed a range of other projects, such as: the "Happy to Translate" Logo initiative designed to improve access to information and services to BME communities by overcoming language barriers, a Pension Benefit Outreach Project, designed to improve take up of pension benefits by older people from BME communities and a Job Opportunities Support Project to encourage greater access to jobs in housing and the public sector by BME jobseekers.

Says Rohini Sharma Joshi, Housing Equal Opportunities Manager for the three associations: "We are delighted to have won this award. The success of the Equal Opportunities Programme is as a result of the hard work by a dedicated team and the associations' commitment to promote services for older people from all communities. We will continue to think creatively to develop projects and put solutions in place which change lives."

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