

**TRUST, HANOVER AND BIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**  
**AWARDED £108,000 FUNDING TO HELP BME PEOPLE ACCESS**  
**JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

*Communities Scotland and Capital City Partnership award funding for Job Opportunities Support Project*

Three of Scotland's biggest housing associations, Trust, Hanover (Scotland) and Bield have jointly secured funding of £108,000 from Communities Scotland and Capital City Partnership - an Edinburgh-based partnership of statutory and community agencies committed to overcoming social exclusion. The new post will be the latest addition to the Associations Equal Opportunities programme

The funding has been awarded to finance a Job Opportunities Support Project for Edinburgh and the Lothians. The project, which will be headed up by a full time Job Opportunities Development Officer, aims to help improve access to employment and training opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities within housing and the public sector.

Says Rohini Sharma, Housing Equal Opportunities Manager: "This is an exciting opportunity for us to help reduce the communication and cultural gap that exists between employers and the BME communities. The Job Opportunities Development Officer's remit is an outreach one - providing a liaison between BME communities and public sector employers and helping overcome barriers to employment and career advancement. The post holder will work with existing community initiatives to promote access to jobs and training opportunities for BME people, as well as working in partnership with other agencies."

Pauline Innes, Communities Scotland area director for Lothians, Borders and Fife, said: "Communities Scotland is pleased to support this project with £72,000 from our Wider Role fund. This encourages housing associations to develop projects to help make life better for people in their communities, over and above their housing role. This project will take outreach work directly into communities, and fits well with our aim to improve the opportunities for people in excluded communities and groups. We are delighted to support this project which will promote employment opportunities amongst the Black and Minority Ethnic population."

Jim Rafferty, Chief Executive of Capital City Partnership is confident that the project will play a valuable role in the city's commitment to improving BME peoples' access to jobs which reflect their qualifications and potential. Says Jim Rafferty "The project is designed to work alongside other initiatives and to explore a range of routes to

employment such as work placements, youth and older person training, retraining and volunteering. “

The three Associations hope to have a Development Officer in post by January 2006 and project that over a three year period, the Job Opportunities Support Project will guide and support up to 300 individual people from BME communities.

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**For further information, please contact Rohini Sharma, Housing Equal Opportunities Manager, Trust Housing Association on 0131 444 4950.**