

## Housing associations receive £132,000 grant funding from Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland for national equality project

*Hanover, Bield and Kirk Care launch “Happy to Translate” logo in partnership with Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland*

Three Scottish housing associations – Hanover (Scotland) , Bield and Kirk Care are launching a major race equality project to improve access to information and services across Scotland’s black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

The project is designed to encourage participating organisations to display a Happy to Translate logo device on their literature to signal that they will make information easily accessible and thereby overcome any language barriers.

Supported by grant funding of £132,000 from the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland, the project will be an integral part of the Scottish Executive’s strategic commitment to developing better communication between service providers and minority ethnic communities and honouring their “right to understand”. The Happy to Translate logo will also be a key tool in helping minority ethnic communities understand the obligations placed on organisations by The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, to ensure they have access to information and services.

The launch of the Happy to Translate logo project comes after significant research and grass roots consultation by the three housing associations, which highlighted the level to which BME communities feel excluded by lack of communication and

information. The research also clearly identified interest in the logo device not just across the social housing sector but also from the wider public sector and private sector too.

Says Rohini Sharma, Housing Equal Opportunities Officer for the three housing associations: “We are delighted by the support of the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland and hope to have a Development Officer in post in the next few weeks to drive the project forward. The Development Officer will initially develop, pilot and promote the use of the logo throughout the public and private sectors in Scotland. The remit will then extend to providing assistance in the implementation of the logo by user organisations and the development and management of quality assurance and accountability initiatives

“We firmly believe that within three years we will see a measurable improvement of access to information by members of BME communities assisted by the logo scheme, leading to improved rates of take up of services and enhanced social inclusion. Equally, for all those organisations who sign up to the logo scheme we are confident that they would see a demonstrable improvement in their ability to access BME people with their messages and services and overall, an increasing national awareness that Scotland is a multi-cultural nation.”

Minister for Communities, Margaret Curran said “The Scottish Executive is committed to promoting the provision of high quality translating, interpreting and communication support services in order to ensure equality of access to public services for all those that might otherwise be disadvantaged or discriminated against. This is central to our promotion of race equality, our tackling of racism and our commitment to equality for disabled people. This project will have a valuable role in this process and we are therefore delighted to be supporting it.”

-ends-

**For further information:**

**Rohini Sharma**

**Housing Equal Opportunities Officer**

**For Hanover, Bield and Kirk Care housing associations**

**0131 225 7246**