

10 June 2004

MINISTER MARGARET CURRAN TO OPEN JOB FAIR FOR BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

**THIS SATURDAY, 12 JUNE, 11:00AM TO 5:00 PM AT CORN EXCHANGE IN
EDINBURGH PROMOTING ACCESS AND CHOICE IN EMPLOYMENT
FOR BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES**

Public sector employers are joining together with some of Scotland's key housing organisations to offer recruitment and training opportunities to people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities living in and around Edinburgh.

The Job Opportunities Fair, to be held at Edinburgh's Corn Exchange on Saturday 12 June, is a unique opportunity for Scotland's BME communities to get access to potential employers and discuss job opportunities and vacancies in a setting designed to ensure easy, one-to-one communication. Free workshops covering CV writing and interview techniques will also be offered.

The event, sponsored by many organisations including Jobcentre Plus, Scottish Enterprise and the LintelTrust, also offers employers access to a wide variety of people whose skills and experience are often un-tapped.

Margaret Curran, Minister for Communities at the Scottish Parliament, will formally open the event at 12 noon.

Rohini Sharma, one of the organisers of the event, says, "Black and Minority Ethnic communities are under-represented in the housing and public sector workforces. This event provides a platform for employers to engage with job seekers from BME communities and overcome employment barriers. Many of the exhibiting organisations have internal targets for recruiting more ethnic minority employees, but are finding it difficult to do so through existing recruitment methods. This event is making an effort to remedy these issues.

"For anyone from a BME background who is looking for work or considering a career change, or even just wants information about how to go about applying for a job, the aim of the day is to present them with that information in a clear and practical way."

The Job Opportunities Fair is an admission free event which takes place in the Corn Exchange on 12 June, between 11am and 5pm. Please find further information attached.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- _ A photo opportunity will be available at 12 noon when Margaret Curran, Minister for Communities opens the even at the main stage.

EVENT ORGANISERS

Bield Housing Association	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland	Trust Housing Association
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association	

SPONSORS

Bield Housing Association	Scottish Enterprise/Careers Scotland
Communities Scotland	Scottish Executive Health Service/Careers for Health
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)
“Job Opportunities” recruitment publication	Trust Housing Association
Jobcentre Plus	
LintelTrust	
Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade	

EXHIBITORS

Bield Housing Association	Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade
Castle Rock Housing Association	Lothian and Borders Police
Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland	Manor Estates Housing Association
City of Edinburgh Council	Port of Leith Housing Association
Communities Scotland	Scottish Court Service
Crown Office/Procurator Fiscal	Scottish Enterprise/Careers Scotland
Edinvar Housing Association	Scottish Executive
Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)	Scottish Executive Health Service/Careers for Health
Goodmoves	
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
“Job Opportunities” recruitment publication	Scottish Parliament
Jobcentre Plus	Trust Housing Association
Link Group	Viewpoint Housing Association.

- _ The Scottish Executive reports that only 48% of non-whites are in employment compared to 71% of whites. For non-white women the figures are even worse with less than half the number of non-white women employed than white women.

- _ Current legislation obliges public sector and social housing organisation to promote race equality and equal opportunities

- _ Research published in 2001 showed that having more BME staff was likely to encourage BME customers to make greater use of services.

- _ A recent survey of Registered Social Landlords and local authorities by the Race Equality in Housing Forum (South East Scotland) revealed that BME employees represented only 0.8% of RSL employees and 0.4% of local authority employees. These figures are well below the percentage of BME population living in the area and demonstrates that housing employers have a lot of work to do to ensure that workforces is representative.

- _ A separate piece of research by the Chartered Institute of Housing > '> The Experience of Black and Minority Ethnic Staff identified that, when employed in housing organisations, many BME staff were in low paid positions, this despite the majority interviewed having some sort of qualification.