Progress on Equality & Diversity
Housing BME Communities in the North-West
Kevin Gulliver
Foreword by Jacqui De-Rose, Group Chief Executive, Progress Housing Group
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About the Supporting Organisation

Progress Housing Group
Progress Housing Group is committed to providing high quality housing and related services to communities throughout the UK. The Group and its subsidiaries have boards of management drawn from a range of professional backgrounds.

Progress Housing Group manages around 11,000 homes. But the following report covers 5,900 general and independent living homes in the North-West of England, operating mainly in eleven local authorities of Blackpool, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Preston, Ribble Valley, South Lakeland, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Wyre.

The Group and its member associations are ISO 9001:2008 certified and Investor in People accredited and it holds the Government’s Customer Service Excellence standard amongst other professional accreditations.

Progress Housing Group Limited is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, with the Financial Conduct Authority No. 28685R and with the Homes and Communities Agency LH4189. The following companies trade as Progress Housing Group:

The Progress Housing Group consists of:

**New Progress Housing Association Limited** - A charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered with the FCA 27792R and with the Homes and Communities Agency LH4032.

**New Fylde Housing Limited** - A charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered with the FCA 30658R and with the Homes and Communities Agency LH4284.

**Progress Care Housing Association Limited** - A charitable registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered with the FCA 28761R and with the Homes and Communities Agency LH4188.

**Progress Living, Progress Lifeline, and WORKSAFE**

**Key Unlocking Futures Limited** - Registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 8699413 and a Registered Charity No. 1154772.

Registered address for the Group and all subsidiaries: Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2LW
Progress Housing Group’s Vision

To have a positive impact on people and communities by providing high quality homes, supporting independence and creating opportunities.

The Strategic Aims of Progress Housing Group Are:

- Providing more and better homes
- Support individuals and communities to achieve independence
- Create opportunities
- Work as one team to ensure we all contribute to our business achievements
- Develop a stronger organisation to deliver maximum results
- Put customers at the heart of what we do to ensure our decisions are driven by customers’ needs and aspirations.

Its Values

**People-focused:** People are at the heart of our business. By treating everyone fairly and understanding their diverse needs and strengths, we can serve them better and provide services that positively impact their lives.

**Forward-thinking:** We search for solutions and ideas that overcome the challenges faced by our tenants, customers, communities and partners.

**Genuine:** We are open and honest, with a friendly, enthusiastic and energetic way of working that is true to what we stand for.

**Expert:** We lead the way through our knowledge and expertise, investing for a strong future and excelling in all we do to provide the highest possible standards of service.

**Collaborative:** We work in partnership with our tenants, customers, colleagues, local communities and other experts, to bring everyone together and achieve more.
About the Author

Kevin Gulliver is Director of the Human City Institute, Chair of the Centre for Community Research, and a partner in SWS Communications. He is an author of eight books on housing and related topics, and 180 reports about housing, community, mutualism, co-operation and marketization, urban and rural issues, exclusion and disadvantage, social justice and equality, diversity, BME and faith issues.

He writes for Guardian Housing, Inside Housing and 24Housing, and contributes blogs regularly for Bright Blue, the London School of Economics and the CLASS think tank. He is contributing editor of Left Foot Forward.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Board and Executive of Progress Housing Group for commissioning the research as part of its continuing commitment to Equality and Diversity in general and offering housing opportunities to people from all ethnic communities in particular.

Many thanks to Progress Chief Executive Jacqui De-Rose, Operations Director Tammy Bradley and Operations Support Team Personal Assistant Rebekah Reeve.

Kevin Gulliver
October 2015
Foreword

Jacqui De-Rose, Chief Executive
Progress Housing Group

The social purpose of housing associations is a key concern at the outset of 2015. The continuing role of housing associations in meeting housing need, tackling disadvantage and improving the lives and life chances of tenants is being contested against the backdrop of austerity, welfare reform, a push towards greater value for money and local services being downgraded. The ability of housing associations to offer housing opportunities to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities is a key area where housing associations enact their social purpose.

Despite the historic role of housing associations in meeting the needs of all ethnic communities, many today face growing challenges to continue to do so in a more diverse operating environment. These challenges aside, housing associations are still required by their regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency to incorporate and demonstrate principles of equality and diversity, and apply them in ways that are relevant to their organisations’ purpose and context. Housing associations are further required to understand tenants’ needs including those related to equality and diversity.

Within this context Progress Housing Group engaged the Human City Institute (HCI) to explore how well the Group provides housing opportunities to BME communities in our areas of operation, and in comparison with other social landlords in the North-West and nationally.

As the report points out, Progress Housing Group is performing well in the field of offering equal housing opportunities to communities where we manage stock. We have a robust Equality & Diversity Policy with comprehensive monitoring of achievements against targets. The local authorities in which the Progress Housing Group provides housing, especially Fylde and South Ribble, have low percentages of BME people. However, they have a growing number of new migrants and people from Eastern Europe who have settled in our region. Progress is housing an increasing number of people from East European communities.

HCI’s report illustrates this trend well, reviewing our lettings over the last four years in the context of the main two Choice Based Lettings we operate with our local authority and housing association partners. The report offers some recommendations about how Progress might provide even greater opportunities to all the communities in future.

We welcome the report as a significant contribution to the developing debate about E&D in the North-West.
SUMMARY

About the Report

- **Purpose**: The research described in the following report ‘Progress on Equality and Diversity: Housing BME Communities in the North-West’ was commissioned by the Board of Management and the Executive of Progress Housing Group, one of the main social housing providers in the North-West of England, to enable an in-depth study of provision of fair housing opportunities to BME communities.

- **Aims of the Research**: The key aims of the research were to describe the policy backdrop; explore the characteristics of BME Communities in the North-West and touching on new migrants; assess the state of play of Progress Housing Group in housing people from BME communities; investigate trends in lettings made to BME applicants by the Progress Housing Group; benchmark the performance of Progress Housing Group in offering equal housing opportunities; and draw conclusions and make recommendations.

- **Methodology**: The research has included a short review of key literature around offering equal opportunities in social housing; a review of Progress Housing Group documentation; an analysis of Continuous Recording lettings data for the last four years; and mapping data Census 2011 and lettings data.

The Operating Environment

- **‘Race and Housing’**: This has been a key issue for social landlords since the Race Relations Act 1976 was enacted and a series of major research studies during the 1980s and 1990s revealed that BME communities were both more likely to be in disproportionate housing need and face discrimination in the UK’s housing system. Despite forty years of legislation, codes of practice and neighbourhood initiatives, BME communities remain more likely to be experiencing higher levels of housing, health and care needs, and to live in more disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

- **Access to Social Housing by New Migrants**: Immigration is a top issue in national surveys and polls. There is a strong belief amongst the UK population that new migrants obtain preferential access to social housing. Recent research illustrates that this perception is unfounded and that that new migrants (from the European Economic Area and non-EEA immigrants who have indefinite leave to remain) have a lower access rate, once demographic, regional and economic circumstances are controlled for. Since there is less discrimination against migrants and ethnic minorities now than in the past, this removal of discrimination, coupled with a dwindling social housing stock, has reduced the availability for UK native households.

- **Regulatory Requirements**: Landlords with a social purpose continue to stand for operating fair housing policies, re-enforced by elements of the regulatory regime overseen by the Homes and Communities Agency. Social landlords are required to demonstrate Equality and Diversity principles in their governance, management, service delivery and lettings and mobility policies.
• **Choice-Based Lettings:** Choice-based lettings (CBL), which have been rolled out over England in the last ten years, have the goals of offering choice, tackling social exclusion, aiding the creation of sustainable and coherent communities, and encouraging effective use of the housing stock.

**BME Communities in the North-West**

• **A Note on Ethnicity:** Census definitions of ethnicity include ‘non-White’ households including Mixed Ethnicity, Asian, Black African or Caribbean, and Other (covering such groups as those from the Middle East). Yet people of Irish origin and Gypsy and Traveller communities are often included as BME. Analysis of nationality and country of birth allows those households from other European Union countries living in the UK to be identified.

• **Key Local Authorities:** South Ribble and Fylde are the two main local authority areas in the following analysis. South Ribble has a much lower BME population than the region and nationally: 2.9 per cent for BME1 and 3.5 per cent for BME2. Similarly for Fylde, where 2.5 per cent of the population are from a BME1 background and 3.1 per cent are from a BME2 background. Most of the other local authorities where Progress Housing Group works have low BME populations on both counts. The exceptions are Hyndburn (with BME1 = 12.3 per cent and BME2 = 13 per cent) and Preston (with BME1 = 19.2 per cent and BME2 = 19.9 per cent).

• **BME Communities in South Ribble and Fylde:** In South Ribble, the chief BME communities are Asian (1.5 per cent), Mixed Ethnicity (1.1 per cent), Other (0.3 per cent) and Black African or Caribbean (0.2 per cent). In addition, 0.6 per cent are White Other (1.2 per cent) and Irish (0.6 per cent). In Fylde, the main BME communities are Asian (1.1 per cent), Mixed Ethnicity (1 per cent), Other (0.2 per cent) and Black African or Caribbean (0.2 per cent). In addition, 0.6 per cent are White Other (1.7 per cent) and Irish (0.6 per cent).

• **Location of BME Communities:** The majority of Progress Housing Groups operational areas have BME populations of 2 per cent or below. The main exceptions are a few neighbourhoods in South Ribble, adjacent to Preston, in Chorley and a few in Blackpool. Preston has the largest concentration of BME households; especially in the South of the district where there is a cluster of neighbourhoods with 20 per cent plus BME populations. It appears that some of these neighbourhoods with large BME populations in Preston have moved, to some extent over the border to the Northern neighbourhoods of South Ribble.

**Progress Housing Group in 2015: State of Play**

• **Equality and Diversity Policy:** Progress Housing Group has a comprehensive E&D policy covering issues related to ethnicity. Of these, support at the highest level to undertaking equality impact assessments, work around community involvement, promotion of cohesion, tackling harassment, ASB and racism, appropriate communication including translation, monitoring and training are all important commitments.

• **Balanced Scorecard/KPIs:** According to the most recent report available for this study (September 2014), tenants from a BME background number 5.2 per cent compared with a target of 5.1 per cent.
Customer Profile: However, the customer profile figures suggest that 7.8 per cent of tenants of Progress Housing Group are from a BME background (8.6 per cent of tenants if Irish ethnicity are included). In addition, it is likely that some of the White Other background are from Eastern Europe so could be also included in the count.

Trends in Lettings to BME Applicants

- **Trends - New Progress:** Over the last four years, 4.3 per cent of New Progress’s lettings have been made to BME applicants. Of these, 3.2 per cent went to White Other (mainly East Europeans and Irish), 0.2 per cent to Mixed Ethnicity, 0.4 per cent to Black African-Caribbeans and 0.5 per cent to Other ethnic minorities. Overall, the trend in lettings to BME applicants has been upwards (from 2 per cent in 2010/11 to 11.8 per cent in 2013/14).

- **Trends - New Fylde:** Over the same period, 6.8 per cent of New Fylde’s lettings were made to BME applicants. Of these, 3.5 per cent went to White Other (mainly East Europeans and Irish), 1.8 per cent to Mixed Ethnicity, 0.7 per cent to Asian applicants, 0.4 per cent to Black African-Caribbeans and 0.4 per cent to Other ethnic minorities. Overall, the trend in lettings to BME applicants has been upwards (from 4.6 per cent in 2010/11 to 8.9 per cent in 2013/14).

- **Trends – Overall:** These are very positive trends, and illustrate how Progress Housing Group is responding positively to the needs of the BME communities in the areas where it manages housing.

Choice-Based Lettings

- **CBL and BME Communities:** Studies of lettings to BME applicants point to both CBL and the old allocation mechanism sort BME applicants into BME-concentration neighbourhoods. However, BME applicants obtaining social housing through CBL are by far the most likely to end up in BME-concentration neighbourhoods. This indicates that giving people choice contributes to segregation, which contradicts government claims that CBL create more socially and ethnically mixed communities. CBL seems to be used by social landlords in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the most difficult to let.

- **CBL as a Barrier to BME Applicants:** At a national level, there is some difference between lettings patterns to BME applicants for the CBL and non-CBL routes. Non-CBL is more successful in providing housing outcomes for BME; but only marginally so. There is very little difference between CBL and non-CBL routes into social housing in the North-West. For New Fylde, 1.9 per cent of applicants from a BME background obtain housing via the non-CBL route compared with 2.1 per cent for CBL. For New Progress, 7.9 per cent of CBL lettings are made to BME applicants whereas for non-CBL the figure is 7.4 per cent. CBL does not appear to be a significant barrier to BME communities obtaining housing.

Benchmarking and Targets

- **Benchmarking:** Lettings made to BME applicants by New Fylde and New Progress run behind those made nationally and in the North-West region overall. However, comparing lettings via post code, enables more apposite comparisons to be made. For New Fylde, 4.4 per cent of lettings over the last four years made in primary post codes went to BME applicants. For all
social landlords in these same postcodes, 3.6 per cent were made to BME applicants. Some 6.9 per cent of New Progress lettings were made to BME applicants in its chief post codes compared with 15.3 per cent for all social landlords (although excluding PR1 where the Group only has a small number of homes, brings the target down to just below 10 per cent). New Fylde exceeds the potential BME lettings benchmark of the average of all social landlords in its primary post codes, whereas New Progress needs to set a slightly higher benchmark.

- **Suggested Lettings Targets:** For New Fylde, a challenging target would be 6 per cent of lettings being made to BME applicants over the next three years. More lettings might be made to Asian and African Caribbean households of 1 per cent in each case. This will require some targeting of these communities. For New Progress, an appropriate target would be a total annual lettings proportion of 10 per cent to BME applicants. Provision of more large homes (probably impractical), liaison with BME voluntary and community agencies, and sending appropriate signals to the wider community (through translations, targeted leaflets, cultural awareness training) may help. There is also potential to work with the few BME housing organisations in the region.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

- **Key Conclusions:**

  1. Progress Housing Group retains a firm social purpose and commitment to celebrating E&D at a challenging time for social housing. It more than meets its regulatory requirements in the E&D arena, and has a well-developed E&D policy. Targets exist for a range of activities, including Board memberships, and these are being met or exceeded in most cases.

  2. For both New Fylde and New Progress, there is a discernible upwards trend in lettings to BME applicants over the last four years, which is a noteworthy achievement given the main areas where Progress Housing Group operates. New Progress in particular may need to increase the number of lettings made to BME applicants and benchmark performance.

  3. CBL allocations schemes are operated by both New Fylde and New Progress but are not appreciable barriers to BME lettings, unlike at the national level where barriers appear to exist. Nationally, CBL embeds neighbourhood segregation and reinforces disparities in the quality of neighbourhood where BME households end up. This is not the case for the two Progress Housing Group CBLs reviewed in this study.

- **Key Recommendations:**

  1. That Progress Housing Group reviews its E&D lettings targets related to ethnicity.

  2. That the Group sets new and challenging BME lettings targets for New Fylde and New Progress of 6 and 10 per cent respectively per annum.

  3. That Progress Housing Group seeks to offer greater rehousing opportunities to Asian and African Caribbean communities through targeting and promoting geographical mobility from South Preston.

  4. That the Group keeps a weather eye on its CBL commitments to ensure that barriers don’t emerge or that BME applicants aren’t concentrated in the poorest neighbourhoods.
1. About the Report

Introduction
The research described in the following report was commissioned by the Board of Management and the Executive of Progress Housing Group, one of the main social housing providers in the North-West of England but especially in Fylde and South Ribble and adjacent local authorities. Progress Housing Group commissioned the Human City Institute (HCI) to undertake an in-depth study of provision of fair housing opportunities to BME communities in its areas of operation with the aims of:

- Describing the policy backdrop against which social housing providers like the Progress Housing Group operate in the provision of fair housing opportunities with respect to ethnicity;
- Exploring the characteristics of BME Communities in the North-West by their ethnicity, nationality and location, and touching on issues related to new migrants.
- Assessing the state of play of Progress Housing Group in housing people from BME communities in terms of baselines.
- Investigating trends in lettings made to BME applicants by Progress Housing Group over the last four years.
- Benchmarking the performance of Progress Housing Group in offering equal housing opportunities to BME communities in the North-West against other social housing providers and discussing appropriate targets for the future.
- Drawing conclusions and putting forward recommendations.

The report resulting from Progress Housing Group is entitled ‘Progress on Equality and Diversity: Housing BME Communities in the North-West’ to reflect the Group’s ambition to enhance its commitment to offering greater equality of access to all the communities in which it operates, and potentially new geographical areas of activity.

Research Methodology
The research for the ‘Progress on Equality and Diversity’ report encompassed a range of approaches including:

Review of Literature
The research has included a short review of key literature around offering equal opportunities in social housing, choice-based lettings and legal and regulatory requirements place upon social housing providers. Background data from the Census 2011 has also been utilised.
Progress Housing Group Documentation
A review of Progress Housing Group documentation, including the Group’s equality and diversity (E&D) strategy, key performance indicators (KPIs), the balanced scorecard and the Group’s customer profile and tenants’ survey.

CORE Lettings Data
Continuous Recording (CORE) lettings data for the last four years has been analysed to produce trend analyses for Progress Housing Group and for all social housing providers in the local authorities where the Group operates to enable comparisons to be made and benchmarking to be carried out.

Mapping Data
Census 2011 data relating to ethnicity has been mapped alongside the property locations of lettings made by Progress Housing Group.

Structure of the Report
The report begins by describing briefly the operating environment for Progress Housing Group generally and in terms of regulation and its sign-up to choice-based lettings. It then moves on to provide the backdrop in terms of number of BME households in the North-West region where the Group mainly provides homes.

The report next underlines the current state of play for Progress Housing Group in housing BME communities. Trends in lettings to a range of communities are then explored followed by some discussion of Choice-Based Lettings schemes in relation to BME communities. Benchmarking and targets are explored. Finally, the report draws conclusions and makes recommendations. A short bibliography is shown at the back of the report.
2. Operating Environment

Introduction
This section looks at the operating environment in which the Progress Housing Group operates. In particular, it provides an overview of why social purpose landlords like Progress Housing Group should seek to provide equal opportunities to BME communities beyond regulatory requirements, although these are touched on too. The section also reviews the extent to which social housing should provide rehousing opportunities to new migrants.

Why House BME Communities? – Disproportionate Needs
A range of research from the 1970s onwards illustrates that BME communities experience disproportionate housing need, discrimination in various housing markets and higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage. The mid-1970s to mid-2000s were the years when ‘race and housing’ were key issues for social landlords, within the confines of the Race Relations Act 1976 and underpinned by codes of practice from government and regulators. This gave way when ‘race’ issues were brought under aegis of Equality and Diversity and Human Rights legislation and regulation.

Proportionately greater housing need, especially overcrowding and poor housing, impacts severely on the lives and life chances of BME communities, generates health inequalities and feeds into the lower socio-economic status of many BME people. While it is clear from Census and other official data that the needs gap between BME and White communities has eased, and that forty years of race relations and equality and human rights legislation has had positive effects, disadvantage and discrimination persist.

Individuals from a BME background are more likely to be homeless than those from a White background. While accounting for 1 in 7 of the total population in 2011, BME households represented 1 in 3 of those accepted as statutorily homeless by local authorities. BME people are also more likely to be among the non-statutory and/or hidden homeless. Homelessness is growing proportionately among BME communities. In 2001, 28 per cent of total statutorily homeless households were from a BME background. By 2011, this had grown to 33 per cent and has since increased further to stand at 37 per cent in 2013.

BME households in England are more likely to be living in overcrowded and/or poor housing than their White neighbours. Although overcrowding, based on number of rooms per household

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member, decreased overall between 2001 and 2011, ethnic inequalities persist. While only 6 per cent of the White population is classified as overcrowded, between 15 and 35 per cent of BME households are overcrowded depending on ethnic group (Black Africans and Bangladeshis are most overcrowded and Indian and Chinese households least overcrowded within the BME population).

Around one quarter (24 per cent) of BME households live in the oldest pre-1919 built homes which are more prone to poor housing conditions. Some 15 per cent of BME households live in a home with a category 1 hazard (designated as ‘poor housing’) under the HHSRS (Housing, Health and Safety Rating System). This rises to 18 per cent for BME households living in the private rented sector.

Using the Hills definition of fuel poverty – taking into account housing costs and the ‘fuel poverty gap’ – reveals that 16 per cent of BME households live in fuel poor households compared with 10 per cent of White households.

Rates of home ownership have fallen for all ethnic groups over the 2001 to 2011 period. However, BME households have experienced the greatest drop in home ownership, especially Chinese, Pakistani and Indian households. Rates of home ownership among some BME groups are unlikely to recover in the foreseeable future.

Interest in social and private rented housing is increasing among BME groups who had minimal interest before. Rates of private renting among BME communities has sky-rocketed with Chinese, Asian and African households seeing the largest proportional increases. At the same time, the presence of most BME groups within social housing has declined, especially for African-Caribbean and Bangladeshis.

Health inequalities have an ethnic dimension. BME communities tend to have lower life expectancy and higher morbidity rates beyond lifestyle explanations. Some Asian communities have much lower life expectancies (especially Pakistani and Bangladeshi men). This is more pronounced in deprived neighbourhoods.

BME populations, particularly Asian communities, are over-concentrated in inner city locations compared with the White population. Deprived neighbourhoods have concentrations of poorer, older housing associated with fuel poverty and overcrowding, higher than average unemployment, low incomes and high benefit eligibility, lower grade built environments, and poorer air quality.

Social Housing and New Migrants
Recent research (Battison et. al. 2014) by the London School of Economics (LSE) reveals the extent of letting to new migrants in the UK and challenges popular opinions that new migrants

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get preferential treat. The research concludes that, since the late 1990s, people in the UK have consistently rated immigration as one of the most important issues facing the country, with preferential access to social housing often cited as a reason for their concern. With lower average rents than the private rented sector and greater stability of tenure, social tenancies are viewed as valuable in the UK.

For migrants to be offered a social tenancy, they must first be eligible to access local housing registers operated by local authorities. There has never been an automatic eligibility for social housing for anyone in the UK, and in the past ‘residential qualification’ were operated, although they were considered to be indirectly discriminatory. The Localism Act 2012 has given local authorities more power to refuse applicants and, indeed, ‘residential qualification’ is making a comeback. The LSE points out that diverse eligibility criteria are now so complex that it is difficult to work out how many new migrants are eligible for social housing. However, as a general rule, UK citizens (whether acquired by birth or naturalisation) will generally have eligibility, as will immigrants from the European Economic Area (EEA) who have the right to reside in the UK, and non-EEA immigrants who have indefinite leave to remain. But as the LSE research concludes:

“Just because most migrants have eligibility to apply for social housing does not mean that they will get access to it. Once on a list, most councils operate a points or banding system, which gives priority to certain types of households. Councils have considerable discretion in the nature of this system, but all use some assessment of needs, for example, household size and economic circumstances.”

So although most migrants are eligible to apply for social housing, as the LSE research concludes, there is no evidence (once demographic, regional and economic circumstances are controlled for) that they have preferential access to social housing. The LSE researchers conclude that the reverse is the case. But it does seem that there is less discrimination against immigrants and ethnic minorities now than in the past and this removal of discrimination, coupled with a failure to increase the social housing stock, has reduced the availability for UK native households.

The Operating Environment in 2015
The latest in a long line of social housing regulators, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), places rather less emphasis on monitoring social landlords on their ‘race and housing’ credentials and performance; certainly than the Housing Corporation and the Tenant Services Authority in the 1985 to 2010 period. That having been said, there are a number of elements in the current regulatory framework that touch upon E&D performance.

As a public body, the HCA is required to meet the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED) set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This legislation requires no unlawful discrimination based on the characteristics of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. The Equality Act 2010 also places a General Duty on the HCA to contribute to a wider government commitment to tackle persistent and longstanding issues of disadvantage and discrimination in society.3 In addition to these General

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Duties, the HCA publishes specific equality objectives and annual information that sets out its equality performance information, overseen by the HCA’s Equality and Diversity Board Advisory Group (EDBAG).

The HCA sets specific requirements on social landlords from a general E&D stance and in terms of letting homes fairly in terms of local housing need. Social landlords are required to:

- Ensure that their governance arrangements and approaches to management and service delivery incorporate and demonstrate principles of E&D, and apply them in a way that is relevant to their organisation’s purpose and context.
- Demonstrate that they understand and respond to the particular and diverse needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands of the regulatory framework and additional support needs, those who do not speak English as a first language and others who have difficulties with written English, and treat all tenants with fairness and respect.
- Let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants.
- Demonstrate how their lettings make the best use of available housing, are compatible with the purpose of the housing contribute to local authorities’ strategic housing function and sustainable communities.
- Publish policies showing how they have made use of common housing registers, common allocations policies and local letting policies, setting out, and be able to give reasons for, the criteria they use for excluding actual and potential tenants from consideration for lettings, mobility or mutual exchange schemes.

**Choice-Based Lettings**

Choice-based lettings (CBL) originated in Holland in the mid-1990s and were imported into the UK five years later. The government aimed to have CBL implemented across England and Wales by 2010, although the approach is far from universal. CBL schemes differ but are intended to have the goals of offering choice, tackling social exclusion, aiding the creation of sustainable and coherent communities, and encouraging the effective use of the housing stock. There are downsides to CBL, which are discussed in section 6.

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5 DCLG (2009) targets were set for all local authorities to introduce CBL by 2010
3.

BME Communities in the North-West

Introduction
This section of the report seeks to establish the extent and nature of the BME population in the key areas where Progress Housing Group operates in the north-west of England. The following analysis is based on table (1) over the page and two maps on subsequent pages.

A Note on Ethnicity
Census definitions of ethnicity, which can be seen in the first column of table 1 over the page, are primarily used in this section. The BME population in both the following maps is taken as ‘non-White’ covering Mixed Ethnicity, Asian, Black African or Caribbean, and Other (covering such groups as those from the Middle East).

It should be noted, however, that people of Irish origin are often included as BME. Similarly with Gypsy and Traveller communities. So there are two measures of BME population in table 1 over the page: ‘non-White’ and denoted as BME1 and BME including Irish etc., denoted as BME2, both of which are totalled in the last two rows of the table.

In addition, the Census also includes other questions on nationality/country of birth and whether the household is a refugee or asylum seeker. This enables different analyses and allows those households from other European Union countries living in the UK to be identified.

National and Regional Overview
All in all, 14.6 per cent of the population of England are from a BME1 origin. BME2 communities form 15.7 per cent of the total population. BME populations have grown since the Census 2001 by about one third.

The BME1 and BME2 populations in the North-West region (at 9.8 and 10.8 per cent respectively) are smaller, although still considerable, when contrasted with England.

Progress Neighbourhoods
Progress Housing Group operates in twelve local authorities in the region, including (alphabetically and number of homes managed) Blackpool (32), Chorley (174), Fylde (1,945), Hyndburn (43), Lancaster (1), Preston (8), Ribble Valley (12), South Lakeland (12), South Ribble (3,524), West Lancashire (47) and Wyre (34).

South Ribble and Fylde are the two major local authorities accounting for 60 per cent and 33 per cent of the total general needs stock respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>42,826</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107,741</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorley</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10,883</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10,462</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,899</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10,464</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,899</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>7,210,104</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyndburn</td>
<td>947</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,883</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10,462</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,899</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>10,464</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>10,899</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>7,210,104</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Lakeland</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107,740</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Ribble</td>
<td>1,108</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107,741</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyre</td>
<td>2,148</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107,741</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>105,057</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110,685</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,749</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>107,917</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50,012,456</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 - Ethnicity of Population in Key Progress Housing Group Areas

Progress on Equality & Diversity: Housing BME Communities in the North-West
Nine of these local authorities are shown in the table over the page, with the other two discounted since the Group has less than ten homes in each.

For analysis purposes, South Ribble and Fylde are the two main local authority areas in the following analysis:

- South Ribble has a much lower BME population than the region and nationally: 2.9 per cent for BME1 and 3.5 per cent for BME2.
- Similarly for Fylde, where 2.5 per cent of the population are from a BME1 background and 3.1 per cent are from a BME2 background.
- Most of the other local authorities where Progress Housing Group works have low BME populations on both counts. The exceptions are Hyndburn (with BME1 = 12.3 per cent and BME2 = 13 per cent) and Preston (with BME1 = 19.2 per cent and BME2 = 19.9 per cent).
- In South Ribble, the chief BME communities are Asian (1.5 per cent), Mixed Ethnicity (1.1 per cent), Other (0.3 per cent) and Black African or Caribbean (0.2 per cent). In addition, 0.6 per cent are White Other (1.2 per cent) and Irish (0.6 per cent).
- In Fylde, the main BME communities are Asian (1.1 per cent), Mixed Ethnicity (1 per cent), Other (0.2 per cent) and Black African or Caribbean (0.2 per cent). In addition, 0.6 per cent are White Other (1.7 per cent) and Irish (0.6 per cent).

**Location of BME Communities**

The following two maps illustrate where BME communities are located at the neighbourhood level within the sub-region where Progress Housing Group provides homes and services. These neighbourhoods are identified in the Census and other geographically-based systems as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The first map shows neighbourhoods within local authority boundaries in Progress’ sub-regions. The second map adds a further geography of electoral wards within local authority boundaries.

What is evident from the two maps is that the majority of neighbourhoods have BME populations of 2 per cent or below. Very few have larger communities. The main exceptions are a few neighbourhoods in South Ribble, adjacent to Preston, in Chorley and a few in Blackpool. Preston has the largest concentration of BME households; especially in the South of the district where there is a cluster of neighbourhoods with 20 per cent plus BME populations.

It appears that some of these neighbourhoods with large BME populations in Preston have moved, to some extent over the border to the Northern neighbourhoods of South Ribble.

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6 There are around 33,000 LSOAs in England comprising neighbourhoods averaging 400 households.
4.

Progress Housing Group in 2015: State of Play

Introduction
Section 4 explores the ‘state of play’ in Progress Housing Group in relation to Equality and Diversity with specific reference to ethnicity. The section first reviews the Group’s E&D policy then moves on to look at Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Group’s ‘balanced scorecard’ reporting approach. Finally, it provides a baseline on the number and fraction of BME tenants it houses.

Equal and Diversity Strategy
The E&D strategy of Progress Housing Group was approved by the Group’s Board of Management on 28th October 2013. It is due for a major review in September 2016.

Key features of the strategy relating to ethnicity are summarised below:

- The Board and Chief Executive of Progress Housing Group take the lead on E&D issues, underlining the importance of the issue to the Group.
- Progress Housing Group is committed to retaining its social purpose and continuing to tackle disadvantage while celebrating diversity and aiding cultural distinctiveness as an employer, a social landlord and via its governance structures.
- The Group’s E&D policy underscores the Group’s pledge to promote community involvement and cohesion and tackle harassment, anti-social behaviour and racism.
- Before new homes are built, or existing homes improved, Progress Housing Group considers the housing needs of all segments of the population where it provides homes and services, liaising with community groups and local agencies as well as undertaking needs assessments.
- The Group works in partnership with local authorities, service commissioners, care and support providers, community groups and local agencies to ensure E&D is supported across the Group’s activities.
- Progress Housing Group trains its staff in a range of issues that impact on E&D.
- Corporate materials are provided in a variety of formats and translated into appropriate ethnic languages.
- Equality impact assessments are undertaken regularly and monitoring of the E&D policy are reported to the Board, residents and other stakeholders. Summary KPIs are reported in the Group’s ‘balanced scorecard’ overview report system, to which this section turns now over the page.
Key Performance Indicators

The ‘balance scorecard’ of Progress Housing Group covers a number of E&D issues. Those related to ethnicity cover the proportion of tenants, employees and Board members who are from a BME background. The KPI for tenants only is shown below against target for the report at the end 2014/15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenants from a BME background</th>
<th>Actual (2014/15)</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The BME target for tenants being housed is close to being met.

Progress Housing Group’s BME Tenants

There may be definitional problems, but statistics produced from Progress Housing Group’s customer profile in 2014, show a larger proportion of BME tenants as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>- 92.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>- 0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Other</td>
<td>- 1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ethnicity</td>
<td>- 2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>- 1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/Caribbean</td>
<td>- 0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The customer profile figures suggest that 7.8 per cent of tenants of Progress Housing Group are from a BME background (8.6 per cent of tenants of Irish ethnicity are included). In addition, it is likely that some of the White Other background are from Eastern Europe so could be included in the count.
5.

Trends in Lettings to BME Applicants

Introduction
Section 5 looks at lettings made by Progress Housing Group for general needs and independent living tenancies by New Fylde and New Progress. Trends graphs, utilising Continuous Recording (CORE) data relating to lettings to BME households over the last four years, are shown over the page. Subsequent pages show maps that illustrate geographically where the Group made lettings during the last eighteen months. Taken together, these charts and graphs provide a comprehensive picture of the Group’s performance in housing local BME communities.

Trends in Lettings
Charts 1, 2 3 and 4 on subsequent pages describe, respectively, lettings to BME and White British applicants by New Fylde and New Progress over the 2010 to 2014 period (the first four bars). The final bar is the four years aggregated. BME includes Irish or White Other (so it’s BME1).

Charts 1 and 3 show that, over the four year period, 4.3 per cent of New Progress’s lettings were made to BME applicants. Of these, 3.2 per cent went to White Other (mainly East Europeans and Irish), 0.2 per cent to Mixed Ethnicity, 0.4 per cent to Black African-Caribbeans and 0.5 per cent to Other ethnic minorities. Overall, the trend in lettings to BME applicants has been upwards (from 2 per cent in 2010/11 to 11.8 per cent in 2013/14.

Charts 2 and 4 reveal that, over the four year period, 6.8 per cent of New Fylde’s lettings were made to BME applicants. Of these, 3.5 per cent went to White Other (mainly East Europeans and Irish), 1.8 per cent to Mixed Ethnicity, 0.7 per cent to Asian applicants, 0.4 per cent to Black African-Caribbeans and 0.4 per cent to Other ethnic minorities. Overall, the trend in lettings to BME applicants has been upwards (from 4.6 per cent in 2010/11 to 8.9 per cent in 2013/14.

These are very positive trends, and illustrate how Progress Housing Group is responding positively to the needs of the BME communities in the areas where it manages housing.

Location of Lettings
The positive trends shown in the graphs are even more underlined when considering the location of Progress Housing Group’s lettings. Maps 3, 4 and 5 reveal that the majority of lettings over the last eighteen months have not been made in areas of high BME population concentration (compare the maps with those on pages 14 and 15) because of only small numbers of Progress homes in these areas.
Progress on Equality & Diversity: Housing BME Communities in the North-West

Chart (1) - Lettings by Ethnicity by New Fylde HA (2010-2014)
[Source: Continuous Recording (CORE) Data (2014)]

Chart (2) - Lettings by Ethnicity by New Progress HA (2010-2014)
[Source: Continuous Recording (CORE) Data (2014)]
6.

Choice-Based Lettings

Introduction
This section seeks to review evidence of whether CBL acts as a sorting system to channel applicants from BME backgrounds into the least desirable neighbourhoods and/or if such allocations schemes are less or more successful at accommodating BME applicants overall.

First though, some description of the two CBL schemes in which Progress Housing Group takes part is presented.

Choice-Based Lettings and Progress Housing Group
Before assessing whether CBL schemes create barriers to fair housing approaches, the two main schemes in which Progress Housing Group is a participant are described briefly below.

Select Move: is a CBL allocation scheme, where applicants proactively express interest on homes they wish to be considered for rather than wait passively on a traditional waiting list or common housing register. Select Move advertises social landlord homes, and some shared ownership homes, with all major social landlords in Preston, South Ribble and Chorley using the scheme to allocate their homes.

There is no council housing in these areas since local authorities have transferred their housing stock to housing associations. Select Move acts as the Housing Register in these areas. All available homes are advertised each week and if applicants are eligible and qualify to join Select Move they can express an interest in a set number of homes per week via this website, telephone, or speak to one of the social landlords participating in the scheme.

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast: is a CBL allocations scheme run by a partnership of six housing associations and three local authorities - Blackpool Coastal Housing, Blackpool Council, Fylde Borough Council, Great Places Housing Group, Muir Group, Progress Housing Group, Regenda, Places for People and Wyre Borough Council.

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast is a sub-regional CBL scheme where applicants need to meet eligibility criteria. If applicants fail to meet the eligibility criteria the system will not allow applications to proceed. Applicants must be over 16 years of age (although more usually over 18 years). In addition, proof of right of residency for all household members, proof of pregnancy where applicable, and proof of right to residency or work in the UK need to be provided to register. Some households may not be eligible who are subject to restrictions because of immigration control under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.
These CBL allocations schemes are important determinants on Progress Housing Group’s ability to provide equal housing opportunities for all communities in the areas where it operates. This is primarily because CBL allocations schemes may be barriers to access because of varying degrees of knowledge between communities. Language difficulties may also play a part. A second reason may be the ‘residential qualification’ needed to access such schemes.

**Choice-Based Lettings: Segregating Communities?**

A range of studies have been published in recent years which provide some insight into how well CBL allocations schemes operate in providing equal housing opportunities and whether they foster integration or segregation along ethnic lines. These studies have used Continuous Recording (CORE) data to assess whether the CBL letting process pushes BME households to different types of destination neighbourhood compared to the previous needs-based allocations systems.

The research found that:

- Among those who do not use choice-based letting, BMEs are far more likely than non-BMEs to end up in deprived and especially BME-concentration neighbourhoods. This indicates that the old social housing allocation system where housing officers made allocation decisions, still plays an important role in creating or sustaining segregated neighbourhoods. The underlying mechanisms are diverse: self-selection as a result of the limited possibility to reject a housing offer under the old allocation system; allocation practices of social landlords; and the availability of local housing.

- Social landlords who let their homes through CBL (both non-BME and BME) are more likely to end up in a deprived neighbourhood, and to a lesser extent in a BME-concentration neighbourhood, than those who get their homes using the old allocation system. This is most likely an indication that choice-based letting is mainly used by social landlords with a lot of stock in deprived neighbourhoods. If in a local housing market the majority of homes on offer using CBL is located in deprived neighbourhoods, then the majority of tenants using CBL will end up in deprived neighbourhoods.

- BME applicants using CBL are much more likely to end up in BME-concentration neighbourhoods than any other ethnic group. This might be as a positive result of choice but it is interesting that BME using CBL are the most likely to end up in deprived and deprived BME-concentration neighbourhoods. As it is unlikely that people ‘choose’ to live in deprived neighbourhoods, this finding gives some support to the alternative explanation that ethnic minorities using CBL end up in less desirable neighbourhoods not because of choice, but because of a lack of real choice.

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The overall conclusion from these studies is that both CBL and the old allocation mechanism sort BME applicants into BME-concentration neighbourhoods. However, BME applicants obtaining social housing through CBL are by far the most likely to end up in BME-concentration neighbourhoods. This indicates that giving people choice contributes to segregation, which contradicts government claims that CBL create more socially and ethnically mixed communities. CBL seems to be used by social landlords in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the most difficult to let.

Report author David Manley summarised the research conclusions:

“Our study suggests that this process is not necessarily a result of free choice. Many ethnic minorities have very limited choice of neighbourhoods and often end up in deprived and ethnically concentrated neighbourhoods. This is because no other options are available to them. Traditionally, CBL has been focused on dwellings in the harder to let areas and so the degree of choice available is actually much more restricted than the policy suggests.”

“Creating neighbourhoods with an ethnic and socio-economic mix of residents is a common strategy to tackle segregation. It is difficult, however, to influence where people choose to live. Especially because those most vulnerable in society often have no real alternatives to choose from. They simply have to accept the first dwelling available.”

Choice-Based Lettings: Barriers to BME Communities?
The analysis of CORE data has enabled national, regional and sub-regional assessment of the comparative proportions of BME applicants accessing social housing via both CBL and non-CBL routes for the last four years.

National: At a national level, considering lettings made by all social landlords of all types, there is some difference between lettings patterns to BME applicants for the CBL and non-CBL routes. Non-CBL is more successful in providing housing outcomes for BME; but only marginally so. Some 27.1 per cent of lettings made via non-CBL over the last four years went to BME applicants in contrast to 23.8 per cent for CBL. African Caribbean applicants in particular were more likely to obtain social housing via non-CBL.

North-West Region: Regionally, there is very little difference between CBL and non-CBL routes into social housing for BME groups. Some 87.1 per cent of applicants in the North-West moved into social housing over the last four years through CBL compared with 87.9 per cent for non-CBL.

Progress Housing Group: A picture emerges for Progress Housing Group. For New Fylde, 1.9 per cent of applicants from a BME background obtain housing via the non-CBL route compared with 2.1 per cent for CBL. So CBL does not appear to be a barrier here. For New Progress, 7.9 per cent of CBL lettings are made to BME applicants whereas for non-CBL the figure is 7.4 per cent. Again, CBL does not pose a barrier to BME communities obtaining housing.

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7.

Benchmarking and Target Setting

Introduction
Section 7 seeks to provide some data to inform benchmarking by Progress Housing Group with other social landlords in the areas where it manages housing and to suggest some appropriate targets for letting to BME communities in future.

In this section, comparisons with lettings to BME applicants by post code is attempted, using the CORE, system, to provide ‘tighter’ benchmarks for Progress Housing Group as it seeks to improve its fair housing policy and E&D strategy.

Benchmarking Lettings
The following lettings data below\(^9\) are from the last four years for all social landlords in England and the North-West compared with lettings to BME applicants by New Fylde and New Progress.

For New Fylde and New Progress, lettings data are for main post codes\(^{10}\) only to ensure that marginal areas for lettings activities are stripped out. These post codes can be seen in the map over the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>North-West</th>
<th>New Fylde</th>
<th>New Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Other</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Ethnicity</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/Caribbean</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, lettings made to BME applicants by New Fylde and New Progress run behind those made nationally and in the North-West region overall. However, comparing lettings via post code enables more apposite comparisons to be made.

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\(^9\) Percentages don’t add up to 100 per cent because of rounding and/or a small number of unknown responses and applicants refusing the CORE interview.

\(^{10}\) For New Fylde the primary post codes are FY3, FY7, FY8 AND PR4. For New Progress they are BB5, FY1, L39, PR1, PR25, PR5, PR6, and PR7.
Comparing the main post codes for the Progress Group on the previous map with maps 3, 4 and 5 on pages 22 through 24, enables an overview of lettings by post code.

For New Fylde, 4.4 per cent of lettings over the last four years, made in primary post codes, went to BME applicants. For all social landlords in these same post codes, 3.6 per cent of lettings were made to BME applicants.

Some 6.9 per cent of lettings were made by New Progress to BME applicants in its chief post codes compared with 15.3 per cent for all social landlords, although the large BME population in PR1, where few New Progress lettings are made, distorts this figure. Stripping out PR1, results in overall lettings made by all social landlords in the New Progress primary post codes of 9.9 per cent.

So, in summary, it is fair to conclude that New Fylde exceeds the potential BME lettings benchmark of the average of all social landlords in its primary post codes, whereas New Progress probably needs to set a slightly higher benchmark.

**Suggested Lettings Targets**

These are shown below:

**New Fylde:** A challenging target would be 6 per cent of lettings being made to BME applicants over the next three years. More lettings might be made to Asian and African Caribbean households of 1 per cent in each case, since these groups are under-represented in New Fylde’s lettings figures. In line with good practice, as advocated by a range of organisations, such as CIH, the Racial Equality Foundation and BMENational, this will require some targeting of these communities.

BME applicants are more likely to apply to social landlords via the voluntary and community sector, with advice agencies that cater for BME needs as a good source of BME applicants. Liaison with these agencies might be a fruitful avenue for New Fylde (and indeed New Progress – see below) especially now that it has negotiated greater flexibility within its main CBL schemes.

In the longer-term, development of larger homes with more bedrooms is desirable to cater for BME families with more children and/or extended families. However, the practicality of this under present capital funding arrangements, and taking into account the effects of under-occupancy reductions and Benefits Cap, is debatable.

**New Progress:** Perhaps an appropriate target for New Progress would be a total annual lettings proportion of 10 per cent to BME applicants. To achieve this, New Progress may have to offer rehousing opportunities to communities living in the South of Preston in post codes such as PR1, which is ‘just over the border’ from its main areas of activity. Liaison with BME community agencies in South Preston by New Progress might provide some scope for housing mobility.

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11 Progress Housing Group only has eight homes in the PR1 post code.
This might be achieved by housing development or some stock swaps in South Preston, although this is perhaps a more long-term goal and may not be practical given the voluntary Right to Buy.

Or maybe by offering mobility to BME households wishing to move into South Ribble, but not too far away from their friends, family and cultural amenities. This would also support greater levels of lettings activity with Asian and African Caribbean communities. Other methods of attracting BME applicants has been outlined above.

Liaison, and possible transfer or home swapping arrangements might be negotiated with BME housing organisations in the North-West, such as Aksa, Arawak Walton, Pine Court and Steve Biko.

It does no harm, either, to revisit potential signals that Progress Housing Group is for all sections of the community. Translation services, targeted leaflets, BME staff in lettings positions, training staff in cultural sensitivities all send the right signals to local BME communities.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions
Below are key conclusions:

1. Progress Housing Group retains a firm social purpose and commitment to celebrating E&D at a challenging time for social housing. It more than meets its regulatory requirements in the E&D arena, and has a well-developed E&D policy. Targets exist for a range of activities.

2. For both New Fylde and New Progress, there is a discernible upwards trend in lettings to BME applicants over the last four years, which is a noteworthy achievement given the main areas where Progress Housing Group operates.

3. New Progress in particular may need to increase the number of lettings made to BME applicants and benchmark performance accordingly.

4. CBL allocations schemes are operated by both New Fylde and New Progress. These do not seem to be appreciable barriers to lettings to BME applicants, unlike at the national level where there is evidence that a barrier may exist.

5. CBL nationally, although there is no evidence in the areas in which the Progress Group operates, also appears to embed neighbourhood segregation and reinforce disparities in the quality of neighbourhood where BME households end up. Some monitoring of lettings to BME households by neighbourhood and/or housing quality could ensure that national trends don’t come to the North-West.

Recommendations
Key recommendations are:

1. Progress Housing Group reviews its E&D targets related to lettings to BME households.

2. That Progress Housing Group sets new and challenging BME lettings targets for New Fylde and New Progress of 6 and 10 per cent respectively per annum.

3. That Progress Housing Group seeks to offer greater rehousing opportunities to Asian and African Caribbean communities through targeting and promoting geographical mobility from South Preston.
4. This might be achieved through the provision of larger homes, although this is probably impractical given the current funding regime, the impact of the Right to Buy and welfare reforms such as under-occupancy reductions and the Benefit Cap.

5. Liaising with BME voluntary and community agencies, BME housing organisations in the North-West, and polishing the E&D credentials of Progress Housing through translations, targeted leafleting and HR strategies, will send the right signals.

6. That Progress Housing Group keeps a weather eye on its CBL commitments to ensure that barriers don’t emerge or that BME applicants aren’t concentrated in the poorest neighbourhoods. The Group is already negotiating down from 100 per cent commitment of lettings via CBL to encourage non-CBL users from the wider community,
Select Bibliography


About the Human City Institute

MISSION
The Human City Institute is a charitable research institute and ‘think-tank’ dedicated to investigating social exclusion, social justice and inequality, sustainable communities, issues around faith and ethnicity, health, housing and urban policies, quality of life and happiness, so promoting more human cities that meet the future needs and aspirations of their residents.

VALUES
People-Focused
Human cities begin with putting people and their needs first.

Community Well-being
Wellbeing, happiness and quality of life are intrinsic to human communities.

Social Justice, Equality & Diversity
Enhanced social justice and greater equality foster fairer and more human societies.

No Community Left Behind
Community, ethnic and faith-based disadvantage is a core concern.

Sustainability
Sustainable environments are vital for the development of more human cities.

Evidence-Focused
Development of solutions and futures is based on research evidence.

Innovative & Informative
Solutions and their communication need to be innovative and informative.

Partnership
Working with others is fundamental to a human city approach.

Involvement
Involvement of communities and other stakeholders is central the research ethos.

RESEARCH THEMES
HCI has developed a vision for its work built upon a thematic research programme that incorporates seven key themes. These seven themes not only relate to current and likely future policy concerns, but also have their roots in the historic work of HCI:

- **REALISING THE HUMAN CITY** ~ Overview of ‘human cities’ including measurement via indices and Incorporating longitudinal and case studies of human neighbourhood projects and approaches and their dissemination.
• **NO COMMUNITY LEFT BEHIND** ~ Including the geography of faith, BME and lifestyle groups and their relative socio-economic exclusion and inequalities between communities, and ways of aiding their progress within ‘human cities’.

• **SOCIAL EXCLUSION, INVESTMENT & INNOVATION** ~ Covering the role of social investment approaches and development of innovative, social enterprises within communities to alleviate poverty and disadvantage via innovation.

• **SOCIAL JUSTICE & INEQUALITY IN HEALTH, WEALTH & LIFE CHANCES** ~ Exploring inequality impact on health, wealth and life chances and how to further social justice.

• **PUBLIC & SOCIAL VALUE, MUTUALISM & THE BIG SOCIETY** ~ Involving comparative studies of public and social value, mutual and co-operative, community and neighbourhood-based approaches to realise the ‘human city’.

• **NEW VISIONS FOR HOUSING** ~ Involving development of new perspectives on how housing in the UK might be made fairer, greener and more affordable with a flourishing social housing sector.

• **COHORT STUDIES** ~ Exploring the needs and aspirations of age and lifestyle cohorts such as young and old people, various LGBT communities.

**TRUSTEES**
- Dr Jill Jesson (interim Chair)
- Professor Guy Daly
- Judith Jenner
- Reverend Peter Middleton
- Abigail Robson
- Malik Ullah

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**The HUMAN CITY institute**

T 07743 310567
E human.city@btinternet.com
Tw @humancityinst
WwW.humancity.org.uk
The social purpose of housing associations is a key concern at the outset of 2015. The continuing role of housing associations in meeting housing need, tackling disadvantage and improving the lives and life chances of tenants and is now contested against the backdrop of austerity, welfare reform, a push towards greater value for money and local services being downgraded. Despite the historic role of housing associations in these key arenas, housing associations today face growing challenges to meet traditional needs in a more diverse operating environment. Even so, they are still required by their regulator, the Homes and Communities to incorporate and demonstrate principles of equality and diversity, and apply them in ways that are relevant to their organisations’ purpose and context. Housing associations are further required to understand tenants’ needs including those related to equality and diversity. It is within this context that the Progress Housing Group engaged the Human City Institute (HCI) to explore how well the Group provides housing opportunities to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

The ‘Progress on Equality & Diversity’ report is based on a range of research between the Progress Housing Group and HCI which seeks to quantify the extent of housing opportunities offered to BME communities in the North-West within historical context and in relation to the nature of BME communities in the region and their demonstrable housing needs. The report further compares the performance of the Progress Housing Group with that of other social housing providers in the North-West, and specifically with those operating in a cluster of local authorities, such as Fylde and South Ribble, to the immediate South and East of Preston. Finally, the report seeks to advise the Progress Housing Group on ways in which it might enhance future opportunities for housing BME communities in the region.