



promoting equality in housing
hybu cydraddoldeb ym maes tai



Deeds Not Words

Action Plan progress October 2021



Introduction

United Welsh is proud to be a part of diverse communities across South Wales and tackling inequality has always been of the utmost importance to us. Events in 2020 made us realise however, that we need to do more.

The murder of George Floyd, the subsequent global protests and the Covid-19 pandemic brought systemic and structural racial inequalities and injustice into the spotlight.

The challenges faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities cannot go unchallenged and we must find solutions to end discrimination.

We want our tenants to feel safe in their homes and supported in their communities. We want our staff and partners to have confidence that we are committed to their wellbeing and prosperity.

In summer 2020, we started looking within and educating ourselves. We have asked ourselves as individuals, and as an organisation, what can we do to make things better? To be better?

We still have a lot to do. United Welsh signed up to the “Deeds not Words” pledge from housing equalities charity Tai Pawb last year, which outlines our firm commitment to take action to:

- Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and communities
- Improve the ethnic diversity of board and staff at all levels
- Communicate and engage
- Develop an inclusive culture

This is our progress so far.

We pledged to:

Mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on our Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues and communities

Our commitment	What we have been doing
Immediately adopt the All Wales Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We adopted the Tool for use alongside United Welsh's bespoke risk assessment process● The outcomes are followed up during one-to-one staff conversations and used to action adjustment and support for individual colleagues.
Protect the wellbeing of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff who might be feeling affected or vulnerable due to the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● In addition to offering support such as counselling, coaching, resilience skills development and occupational health, we appointed an Employee Wellbeing Officer to research the wellbeing needs of staff● A new wellbeing programme launched in September 2021 which will include further discussion and actions to meet the needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.
Investigate reasons for overcrowding and worse housing conditions among people of Black, Asian and other minority ethnicities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We used software to better identify where overcrowding may be occurring. We are continuing conversations with partners in the housing sector, including Local Authorities and housing associations, to continue to examine overcrowding and discuss joint solutions.

We pledged to:

Improve ethnic diversity of board and staff at all levels

Our commitment	What we have been doing
<p>Adopt the Rooney Rule to improve recruitment of people from different ethnic backgrounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We adopted the Rooney Rule as part of a comprehensive review of our recruitment practices to update our recruitment strategy ● Using the Rooney Rule, we scrutinise our shortlisting to ensure that applicants of minority ethnicity are interviewed for each advertised position where all essential criteria are met.
<p>Report annually and act on the findings for pay gap, recruitment, promotion and retention data for minority ethnic groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have calculated and presented our first ethnic pay gap data report to colleagues, based on data as at 31st March 2021 ● We are reviewing and building the data already reported within our governance framework to enhance future reporting.
<p>Invest in our recruitment channels to attract candidates of different ethnic minorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We have completed the first phase of updating our online recruitment hub and created new recruitment advertising to become more representative of the communities we work with ● We joined the Community Jobs Compact in Cardiff. We are continuing to meet its requirements to tackle under-representation and advertising our roles through the initiative ● 16% of the tenants our Employment team supported into jobs and training positions were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background ● We are continuing to develop our recruitment strategy, which includes the opportunity for more work experience initiatives for Black people, Asian people and people of other minority ethnicities.

Our commitment	What we have been doing
Train all staff and board members about unconscious bias and raise awareness of white privilege	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A mandatory training programme about unconscious bias and anti-racism has been rolled out to all staff ● Our board completed training in February 2021.
Ensure our recruitment panels are ethnically diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As part of our recruitment strategy update, we are consulting about broadening our recruitment panels to include trained recruiting lead staff members and external volunteers. This is to ensure we have diverse panels, with minority ethnic representation being a key consideration.

We pledged to:

Communicate and engage

Our commitment	What we have been doing
Publicise support for racial equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We continue to use our voice, influence and relationships to support our colleagues and communities from different ethnic backgrounds● We signed the Zero Racism Wales pledge in September 2021.
Publish our commitment to take specific actions to tackle the challenges we identify, and report on progress annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We are using our Deeds Not Words action plan as a framework for our outcomes. We will continue to report on progress.
Disaggregate ethnicity data from customer satisfaction data to learn and improve the experiences of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We have reviewed the data we collect when new tenants join us to better include equality, diversity and inclusion data● As part of our Greater Data project, we are also reviewing the data we hold and the data we collect through third party providers for customer satisfaction surveys to improve in this area.
Build more links and support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups to build their capacity to support local people and bring in community knowledge and challenge to the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We have initially focused our efforts on Cardiff, with our Neighbourhood team meeting with Minority Ethnic community groups to discuss partnership opportunities and use of our assets for community benefit.
In asylum dispersal areas, commit to donating or leasing housing to refugee communities (where they exist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● We intend to focus initial discussion with Cardiff Council to review what is needed and what we can offer.

We pledged to:

Develop an inclusive culture

Our commitment	What we have been doing
<p>Our leadership team proactively champion and monitor our progress for tackling racial inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race equality has become a core priority for United Welsh, with progress against our action plan reported and monitored quarterly within Executive Team meetings ● Our Board has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion to improve our governance and scrutinise progress ● We have improved our quarterly EDI Forum which has an open agenda and open-door attendance for all colleagues to contribute. Our Deeds Not Words action plan is a standing agenda item.
<p>Promote an inclusive culture where people are comfortable talking about race and can bring their whole self to work, and people we work with are comfortable to voice concerns related to race and are believed when this happens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Following our first 'Big Conversation' about the Black Lives Matter movement on Microsoft Teams with staff, we have launched 'This Is Me', a safe space for colleagues to talk about personal issues that are important to them in an open, empathetic forum to learn about each other's lived experiences ● We launched a Media Club where colleagues agree a resource to read and watch before an open discussion. This was to help colleagues who are not part of a minority to understand more about other people's lived experiences ● We continue to use our anonymous employee engagement software TINYpulse to gain feedback and improve our culture and practice.
<p>Invest in reverse mentoring schemes to share experiences and improve opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is under consideration and will be a focus in the coming months.

Summary

This is our first report regarding the progress of our commitments within our Deeds Not Words pledge.

We know there is a lot more to do and we remain committed to racial equality and diversity across United Welsh, finding solutions and challenging inequity in a spirit of openness, curiosity and empathy.

To progress further, in the next year we will focus on customer satisfaction, data and partnerships so that we can be a better ally and continue to improve our services.

Things won't change unless we continue to turn towards the uncomfortable. There is no place for racism in Wales and as long as racial inequality exists, we will do all we can to create a fairer society for the people we work with and the communities in which they live and work.