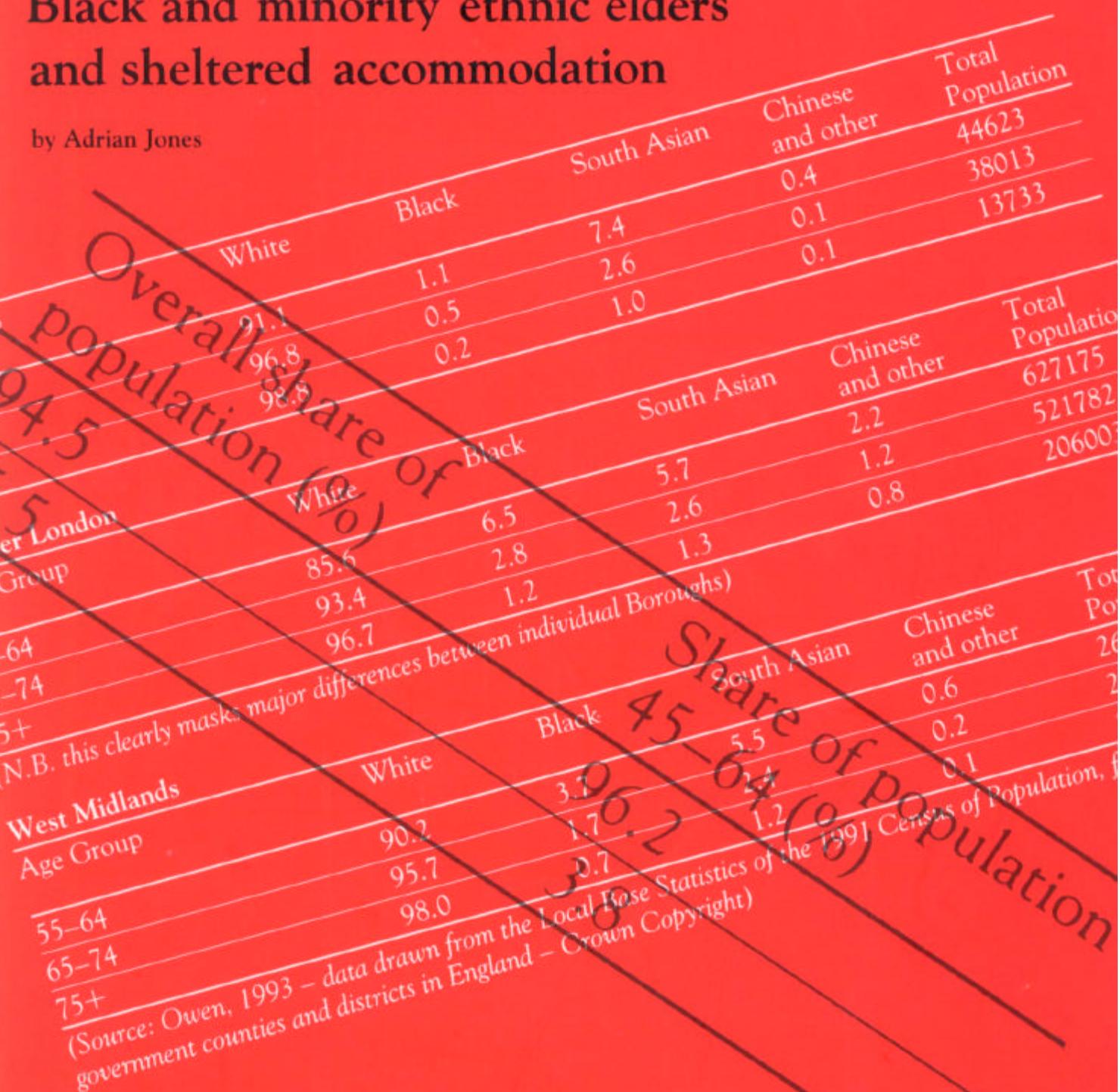


The Numbers Game

Black and minority ethnic elders and sheltered accommodation

by Adrian Jones

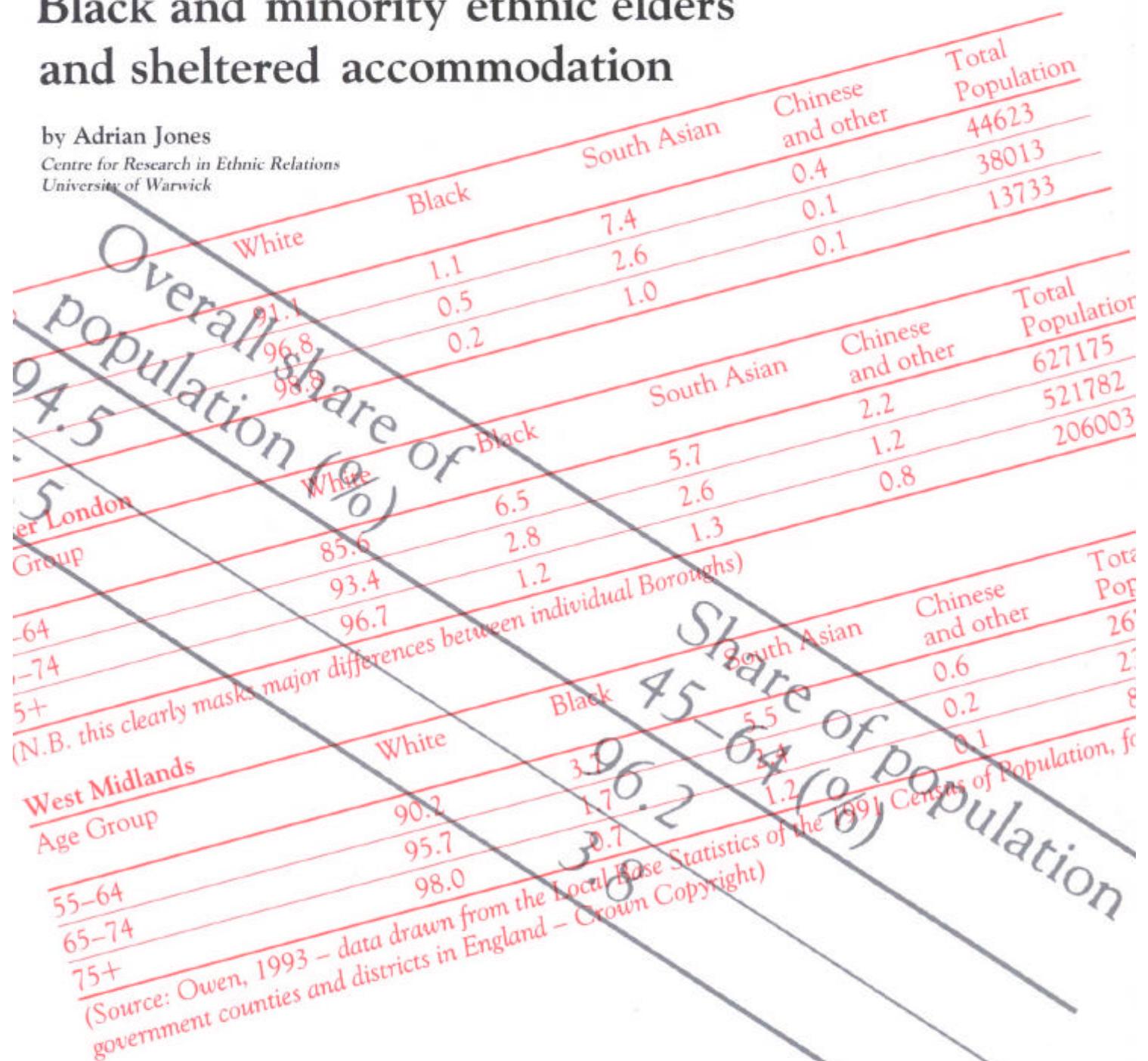


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Black and minority ethnic elders and sheltered accommodation

by Adrian Jones

Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations
University of Warwick



Anchor Housing Trust
November 1994

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Warwick 1994

Adrian Jones

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Black and Minority Ethnic Elders and Sheltered Accommodation: A Foreword

Research in the past ten years indicate that housing providers, whether local authorities or housing associations, have largely failed to address the housing needs and aspirations of black and minority ethnic elders. This report confirms the neglect. Part of the problem has been that these needs and aspirations have not been visible. Black elders have not been beating a path to the doors of local authority housing departments and even less to those of housing associations. Conversely housing providers in the main, and particularly those who are substantial sheltered accommodation providers, have not really bothered themselves to find out why so few black elders have been coming forward for accommodation. Many housing providers have worked on the assumption 'if they need it they'll come for it', and too few have gone out of their way to determine why black elders do not use their sheltered accommodation. This report falls into the second category. Commissioned by four housing associations who specialise in the provision of sheltered accommodation, the report is a welcome addition to the sparse but hopefully growing body of research on the housing needs and aspirations of black elders.

This report is particularly welcome because it seeks to find out why so few black and minority ethnic elders are using this type of accommodation. The report identifies various barriers which go some way to explaining this state of affairs, including hostility from residents and staff, lack of consultation and encouragement from providers, ignorance of black elders' language, customs, preferences and concerns, location of schemes and size of dwellings. As well as these exterior barriers, internal barriers were also identified, particularly negative images of sheltered accommodation from elders themselves and their families, reluctance to change status from owner-occupier to tenant, and falsely equating sheltered accommodation with institutional care.

The quotes in the report from black and white elders are particularly revealing and often contradictory, demonstrating that their housing needs should not be assumed by providers, and that just because there is a need for sheltered accommodation by one particular ethnic group in one particular area, does not mean that a similar need has to be fulfilled by a similar or different ethnic group in a different part of the country.

These points and others are raised in this report and they mount up to a valuable source of information about why elders from black and minority ethnic communities underuse sheltered accommodation. The report recommends a number of steps which housing providers should take in order to increase the number of black and minority ethnic tenants to their sheltered schemes. Some of these recommendations can be implemented immediately and effectively. Others require more radical and perhaps longer term changes in providers' attitudes.

If a great injustice is to be averted against present and future elders from black and minority ethnic communities who have the right to expect that their needs be addressed just as effectively as their white counterparts, then the time to change is fast running out.

Louis Julienne
Director, Federation of Black Housing Organisations
November 1994

The Author

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Summary

CHAPTER 1: THE PARTICIPATING HOUSING ASSOCIATION STUDY

- The research was funded by the four major providers of sheltered accommodation for older people: Anchor, Hanover, Housing 21 and Servite.
- All four of the participating associations had clear written commitments to Equal Opportunities although, at the time the research was carried out, only one had an implementation document.
- In all cases there was a low number of lettings of sheltered accommodation to black and minority ethnic elders. This reflected a low number of black and minority ethnic applications, typically less than 2%.
- Only one of the associations (Anchor) had carried out an audit of the ethnic origin of its current tenants in order to establish base-line data. The other associations considered that the number of black and minority ethnic elders they housed was low.
- Principal access channels varied between the four associations but, with the exception of Servite (possibly due to the fact that it provides general needs housing as well), they found it hard to get local authorities to exercise their nomination rights. As a result access to Anchor, Hanover and Housing 21 was mainly through direct application, with word-of-mouth playing a key role.
- A number of potential barriers to access were identified. These included:
 1. Image/knowledge of the participating associations/housing associations in general/sheltered housing
 2. Location of existing schemes
 3. Fear of isolation
 4. Design/appropriateness of accommodation
 5. Affordability
 6. Language problems
- In response to the low numbers of black and minority ethnic applicants the four associations had taken between them a number of positive actions. These included:
 1. Policy review
 2. The introduction of allocation targets for black and minority ethnic elders
 3. Publicity campaigns
 4. Staff training
 5. Work with black housing organisations
 6. The employment of black and minority ethnic staff

- Ethnic record-keeping and monitoring: all four associations collected details of the ethnic origin of applicants but it is at best debatable if any actual monitoring (that is analysing and acting on the data, rather than simply keeping records) was taking place.

CHAPTER 2: OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

- A postal questionnaire was sent to 11 mainstream housing associations known to provide sheltered accommodation for older people. Responses were received from six of these associations.

Tenants: number/ethnic origin

- Ethnic record-keeping and monitoring in the responding associations appeared to be poor.
- While the responding associations were able to give figures for the stock provided they were not so able to provide figures for the number of tenants in sheltered accommodation. Apart from one association this information was either not given or was given as number of tenancies rather than as number of tenants.
- While information with regard to all tenants in sheltered accommodation seemed to be somewhat difficult to obtain this was even more the case with minority ethnic tenancies. Of the six responding associations only one was able to give a breakdown of its tenants in sheltered accommodation by ethnic origin.

Work with black housing associations

- The associations that responded to the questionnaire had all clearly recognised that the provision of housing for black and minority ethnic elders was, at the very least, an issue. All of those responding were either working with black housing associations or, at least, thinking of doing so.
- The working relationships took a number of different forms — from collaborative housing needs research to management agreements and stock transfer.

Demand

- Of the six responding associations five felt that there was a demand from black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation.
- All of the responding associations, who felt that there was a demand from black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation, identified a combination of black housing association and mainstream association provision as one way to meet demand. All of them felt that there was a role for both ethnic-specific and ethnically mixed schemes.
- On the wider issue of how the housing needs of ethnic minority elders (i.e. moving beyond the area of sheltered accommodation alone) could best be met in the future, one response was to ask the black and minority ethnic elders themselves (either directly or through their representative organisations) what they wanted and who they wanted to provide it. This would seem to be the most common-sense approach to the issue and would avoid the problem of providing accommodation first and then finding out if it is the sort of accommodation people want afterwards.

Actions taken

- A number of different measures had been taken to attract applications from black and minority ethnic elders. These included: the production of tapes in different languages; the translation of equal opportunities and lettings policies; open days; outreach work; work with black housing organisations; the employment of black and minority ethnic staff and staff training.

Outcomes

- Immediately identifiable outcomes from the "special steps" taken (in terms of numbers housed) had been few and far between. Given the paucity of ethnic origin data it is clearly difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such actions. Even given this it should be emphasised, however, that any measures taken are unlikely to be a "quick fix" - progress, if it occurs at all, is likely to be gradual.

CHAPTER 3: BLACK HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

- Interviews were held with staff from the following black housing organisations: ASRA, Birmingham Community Association, Manningham Housing Association, Millat Asian Housing Association, Nashayman, Nehemiah and RACE. In addition the Federation of Black Housing Organisations (FBHO) and the Housing Corporation were interviewed.

Is there a need for black housing associations?

- The Housing Corporation felt that black and minority ethnic elders would be attracted to black-run schemes by the sensitivity of such schemes to their needs. White housing associations, on the other hand, would not be able to attract such elders unless they took account of cultural needs in providing accommodation. On similar lines, the FBHO felt that black associations were more likely to be in touch with community groups and thus find it easier to allocate properties.
- White associations were identified as having the twin problems of their "white provider" image and the location of their existing stock.
- It was felt that it is important that black and minority ethnic people should be involved in running housing associations, and that black housing associations are the quickest way for black people to gain the necessary experience.
- The importance of a shared culture and or religion/language was highlighted by several interviewees. This links in with the black housing organisations' greater access to, and credibility with, the black and minority ethnic communities.
- It was felt that the ethnic make-up of both the staff and the Management Committees of the black housing associations helped members of the relevant communities relate to them, particularly as it was felt that people tend to get more "set in their ways" as they get older, with the result that they would prefer to have staff who share their cultural background. On the other hand (predominantly white) schemes run by mainstream associations were seen as being just for white people.
- Past experience of racism was identified as being of importance. Such experience, it is argued, makes black and minority ethnic elders unwilling to approach organisations that are perceived as being "white".

The role of mainstream associations

- The need for mainstream associations to work through black associations was highlighted. Owing to their lack of community links it was felt that they have built the wrong types of property in the wrong areas and/or cannot attract applicants. They need to bring in the services of an organisation that has the ability to meet these needs i.e. they need to bring in the services of someone who understands the particular community.
- One role that mainstream associations might play would be that of a "signpost", pointing black and minority ethnic elders towards black housing associations rather than housing them themselves.
- In addition to this referral function a further role of the mainstream associations would be that of stock provider, either through development agency work or through stock transfer in appropriate areas.
- It was felt that there can be an element of exploitation in the black housing organisation/mainstream association relationship and that this should ideally, be replaced by a situation in which, if the black associations are not able to carry out their own development, the mainstream associations should act in more of an agency or partnership role.
- If the mainstream associations are to attempt to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic elders through their own provision then they need to employ more black staff, with the relevant language skills (the language barrier was seen as a major barrier to attracting applicants). This is crucial, too, if the mainstream associations are to move away from the issue of mere numbers to that of quality of service provided. It was felt that the more successful mainstream schemes are those with a support group/ management group or with black staff delivering the service.

The role of the four participating associations

- All four of the participating mainstream associations had been working with black housing associations. All had, to some degree, taken the issue of meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders on board.
- ANCHOR**
- Anchor had achieved quite a high profile through its work with black housing associations. The development of the scheme in Reading with RACE was seen as entailing a relationship that had both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side Anchor had been supportive and RACE had benefited from the relationship. On the minus side there was a worry that Anchor would be unwilling to let the scheme go. It was, however, acknowledged that both parties had gained from the relationship. Anchor had gained knowledge of the black community and its needs, while RACE had gained support, experience and expertise.
 - One of Anchor's most notable, and publicised, achievements has been the transfer of a tenanted sheltered scheme in Bradford to Manningham Housing Association. This scheme had originally been built with an Asian clientele in mind (in terms of the design, provision of showers etc.), but had proved to be something of a failure in terms of actually attracting Asian applicants. Following a formal ballot of the tenants the scheme was transferred to Manningham. It is noticeable, however, that there are still problems in attracting Asian applicants to the scheme.

HANOVER

- Hanover had acted as development agent to Millat Asian Housing Association, and was planning to hand a scheme over to that association. Millat saw this relationship as being a mutually beneficial partnership.
- Hanover had also entered into a relationship with Nehemiah Housing Association. This relationship was seen as one in which Hanover did the development and Nehemiah did the managing.

HOUSING 21

- Partly due to its image and to the location of its schemes Housing 21 probably has the greatest problems in attracting black applicants. To its credit, though, the association has taken steps to redress this, particularly in the Bradford area. Particularly of note is the association's three-way transfer with Brunei and Manningham, which was seen by Manningham as a notable success.
- In addition to the three-way stock transfer, Housing 21's Bradford office had taken on a Nashayman staff trainee under a positive action scheme.

SERVITE

- Servite had developed a scheme in Small Heath with the Birmingham Community Association. Under the agreement, Servite are the landlords (providing the scheme's warden while BCA provide a housing officer). The plan is that eventually BCA will take over the running of the scheme but there is no official time-scale for this.

Is there a need for sheltered accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders?

- The 1991 Census shows that members of "non-white" groups make up only 1.1% of Great Britain's population aged 65 and over. In the 45-64 age range, however, they make up 3.8% of the population.
- With regard to the question 'do these population figures represent a need for sheltered accommodation'? different situations apply in different parts of the country for different ethnic groups.
- With regard to African-Caribbean elders, in Birmingham it was felt that there was a need, but that it was a hidden need. It was felt that the need was there but that people had not come forward. This was put down partly to their religious beliefs (which led to them being grateful for having any kind of home), partly to their reluctance to register with local authorities or with housing associations (who they saw as "white providers") and partly due to their lack of knowledge of sheltered accommodation.
- RACE in Reading felt that the needs of African-Caribbean elders failed to show up in the local authority's statistics as black elders would not approach them (due to their disillusionment with the system). As they did not approach the local authority there were no statistics to prove that there was a need for sheltered accommodation for African-Caribbean elders.
- In Bradford the lack of detailed research into the housing needs of the city's Asian communities was pointed out. There were very few Asian elders in the 65+ age group. Consequently the poor performance by mainstream associations in attracting Asian applicants in Bradford may be due not to discrimination but to the fact that the people simply are not there.

Summary

- In Halifax it was felt that if there was a need for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders then it was very small and the greater needs were for the provision of general family accommodation and "Staying Put" schemes, with Asian elders being seen as reluctant to move into independent elderly accommodation.
- In South London Millat Asian Housing Association felt that there was a clear need for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders, but that their needs were different from those of white elders in relation to location desired and type of accommodation required.
- For ASRA in London there was a need for sheltered accommodation specifically geared towards Asian elders. It was, however, recognised that there are differences between different parts of the country with regard to this. In Bradford, for example, there is a predominantly Muslim community whereas in London the situation is very different. Gujaratis were seen as being far more willing to go into sheltered accommodation.

What type of provision is needed?

- Birmingham Community Association's Housing Officer had visited a number of African-Caribbean people who did not like the idea that the scheme would be predominantly for African-Caribbeans. Indeed a number of people stated that they would prefer to live in an ethnically-mixed scheme. This may have had something to do with the fact that they had been living in a multicultural area for 30 years or more. Possibly partly as a result of this a scheme that had been envisaged as being for African-Caribbeans is now mixed.
- Similarly whilst Nehemiah's schemes are targeted at African-Caribbeans some 20% of their tenants are non- African-Caribbean. Indeed all of the association's schemes are mixed.
- It cannot be assumed that black and minority ethnic elders live in tightly defined communities in which they only socialise with others of their ethnic group. This may be true for some people (or for some groups) but it is not necessarily the case. RACE, for example, found that white tenants may have heard about their scheme through word of mouth, such as through black friends.
- Manningham felt that black associations should open up their schemes to the wider black community. It was felt that mixed white/black and minority ethnic schemes would lead to anxiety for wardens and tenants. Thus, even though they currently run a mixed scheme, Manningham would support mixed schemes more in terms of "mixed black and minority ethnic" than in terms of "mixed white/black and minority ethnic".
- Millat felt that separate schemes (by ethnicity) might be better for elderly people. While *schemes* could be mixed, *blocks* should not be i.e. schemes could be mixed but with different and distinct white and Asian sections. In addition it was felt that it would be better if schemes consisted of a mix of family and elderly units, so that care could be provided by relatives. A similar view was expressed by the FBHO.

Getting the tenants

- Birmingham Community Association employed a Housing Officer to promote the scheme they were developing with Servite. It was felt that actually having someone who could go out and speak to potential tenants about the scheme was vital in attracting applicants.
- Nehemiah have recruited a PR company to publicise who they are and what they do. Every scheme is marketed. Strategies used include public meetings, the use of a video of existing schemes and the distribution of leaflets to local authorities and voluntary groups. At the

end of the day, however, the association has found that word-of-mouth is the best strategy. Consequently their actions have been geared at raising awareness. For example potential tenants are taken to view existing schemes and question and answer sessions with regard to sheltered housing are held at meetings.

Local authority nominations

- As with mainstream associations black housing associations have often found it a problem to get local authorities to fully exercise their nomination rights.
- Where local authorities are unable to meet their nomination targets then they should consider waiving their nomination rights, rather than adopting a knee-jerk "give us 50%" reaction to all developments.

The future

- FBHO see the ideal for the future as black housing associations doing their own development and meeting community needs themselves - whether through direct provision or through stock transfers. Having said that FBHO do not want to see a situation in which black housing associations house only blacks and white housing associations house only whites.
- As opposed to the ideal the reality (given financial circumstances) is likely to be one in which black housing associations are unable to develop their own stock as they will be unable to borrow the necessary money. Thus development will tend to occur overwhelmingly through mainstream housing associations.

ASRA

- While it is difficult for mainstream associations to meet the needs of the current cohort of Asian elders the future may be different. Like all communities the Asian communities are not stagnant and, therefore, it is possible that the situation with regard to demand for sheltered accommodation and who people want to supply it, may change.

MANNINGHAM

- The need for specialist black and mainstream housing associations to work together was identified. It was further felt that while black associations should target the black and minority ethnic communities they should meet needs (rather than race) first i.e. they should not be seen as "black only" in much the same way that mainstream associations are criticised for being "white only".
- The view of a "tightening up" and a "drawing together" of families was not one that was universally held. An alternative view was that in 10-15 years time there would be an extensive need among Asian elders for sheltered accommodation due to changes in the nature of the family.

MILLAT

- Millat envisaged a future with black housing associations eventually providing accommodation to whites also.

NASHAYMAN

- While the view was expressed that Asian families are staying in the extended family system it was also felt that applications were coming through for smaller (i.e. nuclear family) units. Accordingly in 5-10 years the situation may arise in which the aspirations of elders (who want to keep the family together) clash with those of younger family members (who want a

place of their own). As a result of this there may be a demand in the future for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders. If this was the case it was felt that such a scheme should be run by a black or minority ethnic housing association.

- While special schemes for Asian elders should primarily be the responsibility of a black housing association (who would know about relevant cultural needs), mainstream associations should not just stand back and let black housing associations get on with the job of providing accommodation for Asian elders. They cannot adopt a "sit back and let them come to us" approach. Mainstream associations need to start developing schemes in black areas. They need to look at ways of communicating with non-English speakers, at dietary needs, at the make-up of their Management Committee and at their source of referrals.
- There is a need for associations to look beyond the traditional "sheltered housing solution", to improvement grants (i.e. the "Staying Put" option) and/or to sheltered accommodation with less of a "Block and Warden" image and more of a "village feel to it".

NEHEMIAH

- Ideally Nehemiah would see its role in the future as a direct provider i.e. developing and managing schemes independent of mainstream associations. The future is seen as one in which black housing associations work in an independent role "in harmony" with white multi-cultural organisations competing on equal footing.

RACE

- It was felt that in future mainstream housing associations would start to cater for black and minority ethnic elders, but that they needed to develop skills in order to do this as they lacked understanding of black people's needs. Accordingly they should research needs before they develop projects.
- In the long term it was felt that the situation may develop in which mainstream associations are providing for black and minority ethnic elders, so that the need for specific black housing associations no longer exists.

CHAPTER 4: LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Interviews were held with staff in three local authorities: Bradford City Council and the London Boroughs of Haringey and Merton.
- Analysis of housing association allocation figures revealed that local authorities had not been taking up their full nomination rights to housing association sheltered accommodation.
- Housing association staff felt that local authorities were failing to nominate black and minority ethnic elders to housing association schemes because they were keeping such elders for themselves in order to meet their own performance targets. There was, however, little evidence to support this.

The housing association experience

- An examination of the allocations data held by the four participating associations revealed that the principal access channels varied between them. Direct applications were the main access channel for Anchor, Hanover and Housing 21. For Servite the largest single access channel was local authority nominations, possibly due to the fact that the association also provides general needs housing.

ANCHOR

- For Anchor local authority nominations were seen to be a particular problem. Local authorities were seen as not very good at nominating full stop; as not promoting Anchor; and, where they made nominations, as nominating mainly white applicants.

HANOVER

- While no details were available with regard to what ethnic groups apply to Hanover through what access channel, it was felt that local authorities do not nominate minority ethnic applicants as they have their own "quotas" to keep up. Getting minority ethnic applications from local authorities was thus seen as a real problem, with no minority ethnic elders being nominated.

HOUSING 21

- In looking at nominations by local authorities to the participating associations it is clear that, while local authorities have 50% nomination rights, they fail to exercise them. While local authorities fail to exercise their nomination rights in general, their failure to nominate any black applicants was commented on by several of the Housing 21 interviewees.

SERVITE

- Servite had performed far better than the other participating associations in attracting local authority nominations. It is important to note, however, that the association also provides general (i.e. non-sheltered) housing and that details of allocations by access channel by household type and ethnic origin were not available.

The local authority sample

Nomination Arrangements

- Nomination arrangements for sheltered schemes were approximately 50% for all schemes in all three Boroughs.

The Nomination Process

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

- In Merton the nomination process is housing association-initiated. Housing associations fax through vacancy details while, with regard to new schemes, regular meetings are held with the housing associations developing the schemes.
- While the Borough would normally nominate from the transfer list (thus freeing larger properties for general needs allocations), for accommodation with shared facilities they have had to move to the Waiting List (as it is thought that those on the Waiting List will have lower expectations than those who are already tenants).
- Both those on the Transfer List and those on the Waiting List are visited prior to an offer being made. This enables staff to explain what housing associations are (the difference between secure and assured tenancies etc.) and pick up any problems.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

- Haringey find it no problem to make nominations to better quality schemes. The Borough advertises sheltered accommodation (both its own and that provided by housing associations) through a "glossy brochure" that it distributes to libraries, doctor's surgeries etc. "Less popular" housing associations (such as Anchor and Servite) are invited to Open Days in order to publicise themselves and their stock. These are held in sheltered schemes and attract good attendances. In addition the Borough have advertised through local papers and a mail-shot to users of the community alarm scheme.

- While potential nominees normally know about housing associations the Borough has to work hard to convince people that sheltered housing is not the same as an Old People's Home. People may have only a very hazy idea what sheltered housing is and the term itself may be counter-productive.

BRADFORD CITY COUNCIL

- Bradford was to introduce a common application form in April 1994, to be followed by work on creating a common Waiting List. Traditionally nominations had been generated outwards from the local authority towards the housing associations. It was felt that such an approach was "antiquated" and that housing associations should nominate to each other and to local authorities.
- Under the nomination process in operation at the time of the research any of the city's 34 neighbourhood offices could make a nomination to a housing association on the prescribed form. The process was one in which Housing Department Officers approached the housing associations, not vice versa, although the housing associations did inform the local authority about any new developments. Officers could nominate anybody on the Waiting or Transfer Lists as long as they had demonstrable need and met the criteria of the particular association.
- Dialogue with the housing associations appeared to be good with a number of multi-organisational groups meeting. The relationship between local authority and housing association was seen as one of "partnership" with the local authority moving towards an enabling role.

Nomination Performance

- The responding local authorities had made varied progress in implementing ethnic record-keeping and monitoring (ERKM).
- Of the three responding local authorities Merton appeared to be the most advanced in terms of implementing ERKM. Although they collected ethnic origin data, neither Bradford nor Haringey produced regular ethnic monitoring reports.

Ethnic classification

- While all three of the Boroughs at least collected details with regard to the ethnic origin of applicants, the classification systems they used differed - not only from each other but also from those used by the participating associations.
- The existence of such different, and not immediately comparable, classifications leads to difficulties when comparing, for example, nominees housed (using the housing association's categories) to potential nominees on the local authority's Waiting List (using the local authority's classifications). The introduction of Common Waiting Lists with common application forms will have an obvious impact here.

CHAPTER 5: THE TENANT STUDY

- Interviews were held with 155 tenants (92 white, 63 black or minority ethnic) in 32 schemes, primarily in Bradford, the London area and the West Midlands.

Reasons for moving into sheltered accommodation:

- For both white and black and minority ethnic tenants, the most important reasons for coming into sheltered accommodation were to do with health/inability to cope with previous accommodation (mainly due to its size or stairs).

- Black and minority ethnic tenants were far more likely than white tenants to cite family disputes as a factor leading them to go into sheltered accommodation and were slightly more likely to cite the desire to be nearer to friends or family. They were also more likely than white tenants to have found out through family or friends seeking out the information for them.
- None of the black and minority ethnic tenants referred to having seen an advertisement for sheltered accommodation in a newspaper, but nearly one in ten of the white tenants said they had done so.
- Black and minority ethnic tenants were proportionately more likely than white tenants to have heard of sheltered accommodation through the local authority. The black and minority ethnic sample were also more likely to have found out about sheltered accommodation through a club or community group/centre.
- The single most common explanation cited by white tenants as to how they had come to find out about sheltered accommodation was that they had either seen the scheme sign or had seen the scheme being built (this was mentioned by just under a quarter of the white interviewees). This was also a major reason mentioned by the black and minority ethnic tenants.
- White tenants were much more likely than black and minority ethnic tenants to have found out through family or friends who already lived in sheltered accommodation.
- While, with the exception of the newspaper articles and advertisements mentioned above, no white tenants referred to having heard of sheltered accommodation through direct promotional work (as opposed to more 'passive' promotional work such as scheme signs) on the part of the housing associations a small number of the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed had found out via this route.

Knowledge of sheltered accommodation and housing associations

- Slightly more tenants (both white and black and minority ethnic) had not previously heard of housing associations than had heard of them. White tenants were, however, more likely than black and minority ethnic tenants to have previously heard of housing associations.
- Just under half of the white tenants interviewed had previously heard of sheltered accommodation, compared to only a quarter of the black and minority ethnic tenants.

Access channel

- Of the white tenant interviewees who stated how they had got into sheltered accommodation, the vast majority had made a direct application to the housing association concerned. Indeed the ratio of direct applications to local authority nominations was three to one.
- Of the black and minority ethnic tenants identifying an access channel the main channel was once again direct applications, although the direct application/local authority nomination ratio was substantially lower (being two to one). It would thus appear that black and minority ethnic tenants may be proportionately more likely than white tenants to get into sheltered accommodation through the local authority nomination route, even though the actual number of black and minority ethnic nominations is low.

Views with regard to mixed schemes

Black and minority ethnic tenants

- Both African-Caribbean and Asian tenants expressed general satisfaction with living in ethnically mixed schemes. This did not appear to differ according to the number of black and minority ethnic tenants within a given scheme.
- Some of those interviewed expressed a clear preference for living in a mixed scheme rather than in an ethnic-specific scheme.
- For Asian tenants language was identified as a major problem. This problem was amplified where there were no staff with relevant language skills.
- In only one scheme was an inter-racial problem identified, but this was seen as directed against an Asian tenant. There were no problems identified regarding the behaviour of white tenants towards African-Caribbean tenants. Some animosity was expressed by a small number of African-Caribbean tenants to the idea of living with "Indians".

White tenants

- Whereas the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed were generally in favour of living in mixed schemes the response from white tenants was nowhere near as uniform, with some tenants being "pro" the idea and others being very negative.
- In some schemes there seemed to be little mixing (both among the white tenants as well as between white and black and minority ethnic tenants). The relationship between black and minority ethnic and white tenants seemed to be one of tolerance at arm's length rather than close co-operative coexistence. There was little interaction between the Asian and the white tenants due to the language problem.
- Where schemes were mixed there was sometimes opposition expressed by white tenants to many more black and minority ethnic tenants coming in.
- In schemes with no black and minority ethnic tenants mixed views were expressed by the existing tenants to the idea of black and minority ethnic elders living in their schemes.

Other comments

- It would appear from the interviews carried out that, in general, the black and minority ethnic tenants currently living both in mixed and in predominantly white schemes run by the four participating associations, were happy to carry on doing so. It should not, however, be assumed from this that there is no place for ethnic-specific schemes or that there is no room (or need for) improvement.

Preferred place of residence

- The vast majority of those interviewed (both white and of black and minority ethnic origin) expressed satisfaction with their accommodation and wanted to stay living in their existing scheme. A small number did, however, express a preference for living elsewhere.
- Where a desire to move was expressed this was often accompanied with a sense of resignation that they would stay living where they were.
- Among black and minority ethnic tenants wanting to move the largest single category was those wanting to go "home" i.e. to their country of origin. This was generally accompanied, however, by the realisation that (for health, financial or family reasons) this

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was not likely to be possible. The majority of the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed did not, however, express a desire to return "home".

- One reason given for staying in the UK was to be near children/grandchildren. Alongside this was a feeling that there was no one there for them in their countries of origin any more.

Why are there so few black and minority ethnic tenants?

Warden perceptions

White wardens:

- There was a feeling among some white wardens that there are few applications from Asian elders because the Asian community "looks after its own". This situation was, however, felt to be changing.
- Image was felt to be crucial. This was felt to be reinforced by publicity leaflets, which were seen as presenting an overwhelmingly white image, and the kind of office staff the associations employed.

Black and minority ethnic wardens:

- The view was expressed that there were few African-Caribbean elders in sheltered accommodation because their relatives and friends looked after them.
- It was felt, with regard to African-Caribbean elders, that a lot of them have returned to their countries of origin.
- Black and minority ethnic elders may have experienced difficulties in obtaining accommodation from white housing providers when they first came to the UK. It was suggested that they may look at mainstream associations and think "it's the same".

Tenants perceptions

- One factor highlighted by African-Caribbean tenants was the fact that black people like to hold on to their possessions (although from the interviews with white tenants this would seem to be true of them too) and thus would not move into sheltered flats that they see as too small. It was also felt that black people like to have "big things" (i.e. furniture), which again posed a problem when the accommodation offered was perceived as being small.
- The lack of outreach work, in the past at least, by the mainstream associations was also highlighted as having a negative effect on people's knowledge of housing associations and their access to them.
- Given the lack of knowledge of who to go to in order to get into housing association accommodation, it was felt that they were "not very easy" to get into unless you went through the local authority.
- An unwillingness to move from owner-occupied accommodation was identified by African-Caribbean tenants.
- Housing association rents were perceived as being too high to afford.
- It was felt that Asian elders would prefer to live within the extended family.

- The fear of experience of racial prejudice was identified as a factor that may dissuade Asian elders from entering mainstream association sheltered provision.

How could more black and minority ethnic tenants be attracted — tenants' suggestions

- Associations should advertise what they are and what they have to offer but leaflets alone were not seen as sufficient. There was also a need for personal contact. Mainstream associations should take a more proactive approach, going out into the communities and selling their message. There was a clear need for outreach work and possibly for a specialist outreach worker. It was suggested that there was a need to go around hospitals, clubs, Day Centres, Law Centres, Community Centres and voluntary organisations as well as the areas in which black and minority ethnic people live.
- Advertising should be placed in the local paper, shops and libraries. The need to advertise the fact that sheltered housing is not the same as an Old People's Home, that it was not an "institution", was also identified.
- Given language problems there was a need to target advertising specifically at Asian people. As there was, in some cases, a potential illiteracy problem use could be made of radio, T.V., tapes and videos, which may be more effective than translated documents at getting messages across.
- Associations need to recruit staff who can speak the relevant languages.
- The key role that existing tenants could play through talking to their friends was identified.

CHAPTER 6: POTENTIAL TENANTS

- Interviews (on a group basis) were held with "potential tenants" (i.e. people in the right age-bracket) in the following locations: Birmingham, Bradford and the London Borough of Merton. White, African-Caribbean and Asian groups were included.

Knowledge and perception of sheltered accommodation

White groups

- Knowledge varied considerably with regard to what exactly sheltered accommodation was.
- The importance of knowing someone who was already in sheltered accommodation and, perhaps more importantly, had a positive image of it, was evident.
- The local authority and housing associations were both identified as providers of sheltered accommodation (with the local authority being mentioned first). In terms of getting access to such accommodation it was felt that you could apply through the local authority. If applying to a housing association you could do so directly, finding the associations through Yellow Pages. It was felt that one could also get into sheltered accommodation through being referred by a Doctor/hospital.

Asian groups

- Those attending the Muslim Day Centre in Bradford did not know about sheltered accommodation (apart from that provided by Hanover, owing to the work of Hanover's outreach worker). Similarly they did not know anyone living in such accommodation nor

would they consider such accommodation themselves, unless there was a serious family breakdown and they could no longer get on with their children - this was not, however, seen as very likely.

- The Bradford Sikh group knew about sheltered accommodation, due to having friends in a local authority scheme. There was, however, some confusion with regard to the differences between sheltered accommodation and residential care. Members of the group had visited Manningham's sheltered scheme and had been impressed with it but, as they had their own (owner-occupied) accommodation, they did not feel that it was of relevance to them. Sheltered accommodation was seen as being for older people who could no longer look after themselves. Those attending the group had little idea about how one would go about becoming a tenant of sheltered accommodation. In addition, sheltered accommodation was seen as expensive for those not on "income support".

African-Caribbean groups

- The extent of knowledge of sheltered accommodation in the African-Caribbean groups varied greatly.
- Those attending the BCA's Lunch Club had heard about sheltered accommodation (not surprisingly as the club meets at a sheltered scheme) but many of them did not know exactly what sheltered accommodation was. This may be because (as for the two Asian groups in Bradford) most of those present lived in their own owner-occupied properties.

Knowledge and perceptions of housing associations

White groups

- Housing associations were seen as alternatives to the local authority. It was felt that a key difference between the housing associations and the council was that housing associations have a higher rent.
- As to how to gain access to housing association accommodation the following routes were identified: through the council, through social services or through direct application. It was seen as quicker to go directly to a housing association, rather than through the local authority.
- Housing associations were associated (perhaps not surprisingly for this age group) with the provision of warden-controlled accommodation.

Asian groups

- In contrast with the white groups, members of the two Asian groups in Bradford did not have the same extent of knowledge of housing associations. None of the Sikh group knew what a housing association was, although they knew about local authority housing for the elderly.
- While some members of the Muslim group had heard of housing associations the sort of accommodation on offer from the associations was (with the exception of that provided by Manningham) not seen as relevant to their needs. While members of the group were willing to consider housing association properties, they were only interested in large family housing. Even then most did not know how to go about applying for such accommodation. No one actually knew a housing association tenant.

African-Caribbean groups

- Knowledge of housing associations was quite widespread.

Summary

- Housing association accommodation was seen by some of those interviewed as being primarily for Asians. There was a feeling among some members that "Indians" were better represented and more persistent in going for what they wanted.
- No one knew how to go about obtaining housing association accommodation although some members were not adverse to the idea of living in such property.
- Housing association properties were seen as being too small, the need for extra bedrooms for children and grandchildren was highlighted.

Future housing options

White groups

- Mixed views were expressed regarding the desirability of sheltered accommodation. On the plus side it was seen as offering assistance when needed. On the minus side entering such accommodation meant leaving your own place and having to move all of your belongings into a small flat.
- People were generally reluctant to move from the area in which they already lived. It was clear that, ideally, people wanted to stay living in their own homes - for as long as they were able to look after themselves. Sheltered accommodation was seen as being very much a last resort. Knowledge of Care and Repair/Staying Put schemes was, however, very limited.
- The factors considered to be most important in choosing accommodation for the future were proximity to the shops, friends, medical services, facilities and transport.
- Lack of an immediate family may be an important factor in determining whether or not to enter sheltered accommodation. If you have no one to look after you, where else could you go?

Asian groups

- The Bradford Muslim group saw their future as, very much, continuing to live in extended families. They felt that the majority of their children wanted this too. Accordingly they did not see sheltered accommodation as a viable option for them.
- Members of the group had lived in the area for a long time. A move away from their immediate area was not seen as either feasible nor desirable due to:
 - (a) financial reasons;
 - (b) community support reasons: They did not want to live in more racially mixed areas as they thought they would encounter racial problems, preferring to live with other Pakistani Muslims.
- As with the Muslim group the Bradford Sikh group did not see sheltered accommodation as an appropriate option for them. This was partly due to the traditional idea that children should look after their parents. It was also partly due to a desire to live in their own (owner-occupied) property. Accordingly they had not really thought about sheltered accommodation except as a last resort. Additionally knowledge of people who were living in such accommodation had given them the impression that they would not be able to afford it.
- While the Sikh group were anti-renting per se, wanting owner-occupation only, the Muslim group were not anti-renting, they just wanted larger houses.

- While they would prefer to carry on living in the same area, if they were to move into more of a sheltered environment the most important factor for the Sikh group would be staff who could speak Punjabi.
- Those attending the Sikh group wanted to live in a quiet, safe area, but the most important factor for them was community.

African-Caribbean groups

- Members of the African-Caribbean groups seemed, in general, to be more willing to consider sheltered housing as an option. Factors likely to lead to such a move included:
 1. their own physical condition - lack of mobility
 2. financial reasons i.e. if they could not afford to run their own home
 3. a "clean and tidy place"
 4. somewhere that was "comfortable . . . and you have a garden"
 5. a place where you could get a meal if you did not want to cook
 6. no longer having a family to support/look after them
- The main attraction of sheltered accommodation was seen as the security it offers. Members of the groups would, however, have preferred to stay in their own (largely owner-occupied) accommodation and to have somebody look after them. None of them had, however, heard of Staying Put or Care and Repair, although they expressed great interest in finding out more about this.
- There were mixed views about moving from their immediate area although most people were keen to stay living at least fairly close to it.
- With regard to a possible return to the West Indies the view was expressed that most black people would like to make such a move, but that they now had their families in the UK. Linked to this was the point that if they did go "home" they would have no one to look after them.
- Key factors in choosing accommodation for the future were identified as the area, proximity to bus stops, the building itself, shopping areas, space and proximity to church. These are very similar to the factors identified by those attending the white groups but with more of an emphasis on having somewhere for the family to visit/stay. This was backed up by the desire of most of those attending (but not all) to have a two-bed property.

Ethnically mixed or ethnic-specific schemes?

Asian groups

- The Muslim group rejected sheltered housing out of hand. The Sikh group, while not thinking that sheltered housing would be of any relevance to them, except in 'emergency' situations, stated that they would not mind living in a mixed scheme as long as they were not the only Sikhs in it and as long as there were staff who could speak Punjabi. Some inter-ethnic tensions were, however, apparent.

African-Caribbean groups

- Members of the African-Caribbean groups visited tended in general to be strongly in favour of mixed schemes.

- Despite some negative comments with regard to Indians, interviewees expressed, on the whole, a willingness to live in a mixed scheme with Asians. No preference was declared as to who should provide this accommodation: a mainstream association or a black association.
- Those attending the African-Caribbean groups were asked if they would mind being the only black tenant in an otherwise all white scheme. Reactions to this varied. In addition the view was expressed that there would not be a problem if there was a white tenant in a predominantly black scheme, whereas they felt that there might be problems for a black tenant in a predominantly white scheme.

CHAPTER 7: OTHER ISSUES

Design requirements

- The following design requirements were identified:
 1. cooking facilities (which would need to be segregated between religions - n.b. this would obviously not be a problem if facilities were located in individual flats)
 2. space - both in terms of space standards within individual flats and in terms of having space so that friends and relatives can visit (more guest rooms may be needed)
 3. storage facilities for food (which may be bought in bulk)
 4. washing facilities - a flexible approach is needed with both baths and showers
- Type of bathroom; the arrangement of the kitchen; type of w.c. and the direction that the w.c. faces were also raised. Manningham Housing Association felt that there was no need to provide squat toilets, feeling that the supposed need for such toilets was a "myth".
- African-Caribbean elders raised space as an issue. It was felt that a lot of African-Caribbean elders would not let go of the personal possessions they had accumulated and were thus reluctant to move into" accommodation that they thought would be too small. It was also felt that people wanted an additional bedroom so that grandchildren and relatives could come to stay.

Staffing

- The need to recruit staff with an appropriate ethnic or cultural background (or, at the very least, with knowledge of/sensitivity to the relevant culture) has been identified as a key element of this research.
- Having a white warden in an African-Caribbean scheme was not seen as a problem, so long as that warden understood the relevant culture. In meeting the needs of African-Caribbean elders, knowledge of what those needs were was seen as the most important thing. While such knowledge may be more likely to be found in someone of the same ethnic origin this may not necessarily be the case.
- With Asian tenants there are clear linguistic (as well as religious and cultural) needs.
- Wardens are as likely as any one else to be racially prejudiced. While the vast majority did display a generally positive (or at least not overtly negative) attitude one clearly displayed anti-Pakistani feelings. Thankfully this was very much a minority viewpoint, but such

attitudes need to be challenged by the employing associations both through warden training and through letting wardens know what behaviour is expected of them.

- Of 31 schemes visited four had black or minority ethnic wardens. All of these wardens were in mixed schemes with significant (six or more) black or minority ethnic populations.

Schemes with black wardens

- The ethnic origin of the warden did not in general seem to be much of an issue among the tenants interviewed.
- In one scheme while some of the Asian interviewees were happy to have an African-Caribbean warden some of the female Asian tenants wanted to have a Punjabi-speaking warden. This shows that just having a "black" warden will not in itself meet particular client needs. In the same way just having an "Asian" warden will not necessarily result in the linguistic needs of tenants being met e.g. if the warden speaks a different Asian language to the tenants.
- With regard to the reaction of white tenants to a black or minority ethnic warden, reaction tended to be positive (or, at worst, neutral). Even white tenants who made quite racist remarks about black and minority ethnic people in general were positive about their black wardens.

Schemes with white wardens

- With regard to black and minority ethnic tenants living in schemes with a white warden, no particular preference was expressed re. the ideal ethnicity of the warden. Where an opinion was expressed views with regard to the existing white wardens tended to be positive.
- In one scheme which included several Asian tenants and had no warden at the time the research was carried out, some desire was expressed for staff with relevant language skills.
- It should be noted that the tenants interviewed may be atypical given that they are already living in what has traditionally been seen as a white form of accommodation. It may be that the fact that the existing warden was white might have dissuaded some black and minority ethnic elders (particularly Asians) from applying in the first place.

Recommendations

This research project was concerned specifically with black and minority ethnic elders and sheltered accommodation. It does, however, clearly have much wider applicability in that many of the recommendations will be of relevance to white elders too. Assumptions are often made about the housing needs of older people and the type of accommodation they require, right across the board i.e. regardless of their ethnic origin. The examples of good practice identified throughout the report are applicable to all. Good practice in terms of equal opportunities is good practice per se.

If the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders are to be met the issue is not one of channelling them into sheltered accommodation but rather one of increasing the range of housing options available to them. This will involve both opening up existing sheltered schemes to them and helping to provide accommodation in the future that meets their needs (which may, or may not, be for sheltered accommodation) either through direct provision or through the medium of other agencies, such as black housing associations. The aim should be to extend the range of choices available to black and minority ethnic elders, not to push them in a direction in which they may not want to go.

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Identifying need

Provision of accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders by the participating associations has, to date, occurred in something of a vacuum. That is, the attitude taken has, on the whole, been one of 'this is what we provide - come and get it', rather than one of 'what type of accommodation do you actually want/need?'. It should not be simply assumed that the needs of all older people can be met in the same way, nor that the needs of elders from particular ethnic groups will be uniform across the country. Local experiences may play a key role in determining the type of housing wanted.

In seeking to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders the first step must be to identify what those specific needs are. While the 1991 Census does provide some indication the level of detail is not likely to be sufficient. Accordingly more "active" research methods are likely to be needed. This would entail actually going out and asking black and minority ethnic elders in local geographic areas about their housing needs/aspirations.

Research into needs could either be initiated by black housing organisations themselves (as was done by Nehemiah) or through a more collaborative approach, involving black and mainstream associations and other agencies. A good example of this is the research project currently being undertaken in Calderdale involving Nashayman (a local black housing association), 11 local housing associations, the local authority and the private sector. Such collaborative research projects are more cost-effective than individually-funded research.

PRESS RELEASE

A research project takes off this week (National Housing Week) with the launch of an initiative in Halifax to investigate the housing needs of Black and Asian people.

Ansar Ali, Director of Nashayman Housing Association said,

"Many of the Black and Asian community live in very poor housing conditions in the St. John's area of Halifax and unemployment is extensively high. So their options are very limited."

The research, lasting 15 months, will look at housing conditions and the options which people will have in the future. It has been jointly funded by a wide range of organisations including the local authority, Nashayman Housing Association, 11 local housing associations, 2 national charities and the Halifax Building Society.

Jane Pannell, Assistant Director of Housing, Calderdale MBC said,

"This research will allow us to accurately target our support within the housing strategy to enable Nashayman Housing Association to meet the housing needs of the Black and Asian community."

Summary

Actions regarding existing stock

There is a need to move beyond the approach of just attracting black and minority ethnic elders into sheltered accommodation, in order to keep the Housing Corporation happy, to look at the service that is actually provided to them once they are in a scheme. Key questions to be addressed are: will it meet their needs (cultural, religious, linguistic, dietary etc.)?, if not, what could be done about existing provision and what more relevant services could be provided? Areas of service provision that need to be examined include: recruitment (particularly with regard to wardens), training, the attitude of existing tenants, the role of black housing associations, improving access to sheltered housing and, with regard to future developments, scheme design/facilities available and scheme location.

Recruitment

If mainstream associations are to open themselves up to black and minority ethnic elders and meet their needs they will need to:

- (a) employ staff with relevant language skills and cultural knowledge; or
- (b) draw on organisations which have such skills.

With regard to employment, the setting of employment targets linked to the local population make-up (as used by Anchor) or to national figures (as used by Housing 21) is to be recommended. In order to increase the number of applications from members of black and minority ethnic groups, associations should review both the content of their advertisements (to ensure that they encourage applications from the targeted groups) and where they are placed. For example, use could be made of specialist publications for the black and minority ethnic communities.

In order to facilitate the conversion of applications into appointments, all staff involved in recruitment should receive equal opportunities interviewing training. Staff who have not received such training should not be allowed to interview job applicants.

With regard to drawing on the cultural and/or linguistic skills of other organisations, where staff are lacking in such skills, links should be made with such organisations as part of the outreach process (see below). Outreach work may also help to encourage applications from targeted groups by increasing awareness of housing associations and their role.

Staff training

All staff need to receive training on equal opportunities, including the issue of race equality. Such training should be offered regularly (perhaps as part of standard induction training and/or as refresher courses), consistently and as part of "mainstream" training. The key issues it should cover include:

- Why have an equal opportunities policy?
- What equal opportunities means?
- How does it affect individual members of staff?
- How can it be implemented?

Work with existing tenants

While the participating associations had addressed the issues of training staff regarding equal opportunities, very little information had been provided to tenants. There is, however, a need to

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inform/educate existing white tenants with regard to the implications of equal opportunities to them. It would be naive to introduce black and minority ethnic elders into a scheme and then assume that everything is going to be alright. This does not mean bowing down to the racist beliefs of some tenants. It means informing them of the behaviour that is expected of them and highlighting the benefits of a mixed scheme i.e. an attempt should be made to present a mixed scheme in a positive light, rather than just adopting a "do this, or else" approach from stage one.

While house magazines/newspapers may be a useful forum for promoting (and explaining) equal opportunities to tenants they will not, in themselves, be sufficient. The written word should be backed up by visits from housing staff who would thus be available to answer the questions and address the concerns of tenants. This will not be an easy process and negative reactions from some tenants are to be expected.

Committee membership

In line with the recommendations concerning recruitment (see above) efforts should be made to ensure that the ethnicity of committee members matches that of the population of the area covered by the committee. Targets should thus be set for committee membership linked to local population data. In areas where there are few black and minority ethnic people, targets should reflect, at least, the national population.

A number of strategies could be adopted to encourage black and minority ethnic people to become committee members:

- (i) advertisements could be put in local newspapers and newsletters focusing on specific black and minority ethnic communities, to encourage them to come forward;
- (ii) approaches could be made to existing black housing associations and community groups;
- (iii) approaches could be made to local Race Equality Councils and local authority Race/Equalities Units, where these exist;
- (iv) black and minority ethnic people could be encouraged to come onto committee as part of the outreach process (see below).

The role of block housing associations

It may be that black housing associations are better able to meet identified needs due to their community links, cultural knowledge and skills in the relevant languages. That is not, however, to say that the housing of black and minority ethnic elders should be left exclusively to them.

In addition to opening up their own stock mainstream associations should consider transferring stock to black housing associations in appropriate areas. Good examples of how this can be done are the transfers of stock from Anchor and Housing 21 in Bradford.

In addition to stock transfer mainstream associations should investigate the possibility of carrying out Development Agency work and operating Management Agency arrangements. In operating such arrangements, however, mainstream associations need to work in partnership with black associations and avoid a paternalistic/ patronising approach.

Improving access

Before allocations can be made to black and minority ethnic elders applications must first be received from them. Access of black and minority ethnic elders to sheltered accommodation can be improved in a number of ways:

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- (i) by encouraging local authorities to explain about sheltered accommodation and the role of housing associations to potential black and minority ethnic applicants and to nominate such applicants to housing association schemes, where they have expressed a wish to move into sheltered accommodation;
- (ii) by working with other referral agencies. This might include using groups working with black and minority ethnic elders as sources of referrals;
- (iii) by increasing awareness of sheltered housing and housing associations through direct contact with black and minority ethnic elders.

The research showed that there is a clear need for mainstream housing associations to increase knowledge of what exactly sheltered housing is. In order to ensure that black and minority ethnic elders are aware of what they have to offer housing associations should carry out outreach work. This could either be done through the appointment of a specialist officer (as done by Hanover in the Bradford area) or through utilising existing staff. Outreach work should, however, be a two-way process: informing the communities with regard to what associations currently offer and finding out from them what they actually want.

With regard to outreach work, associations should look at the possibility of working collaboratively with other associations, such as is the case in the Bradford area with Anchor, Hanover and Housing 21. Where good practice exists it should be shared between associations.

Publicity materials should be available in a variety of community languages and in a variety of formats. Slide shows (as used by Hanover in Bradford), videos and cassette tapes may be particularly useful given that:

- they would overcome any potential illiteracy problems;
- they would help to overcome the problem of people being unable to read small print due to failing eye-sight;
- they may be a more attractive proposition than having to read leaflets.

If visual material is to be used (whether printed or on video/slides) it is vital that it should include pictures of black and minority ethnic elders. It would be self-defeating to produce material that reinforces a "whites only" image.

Other actions

As with employment, numeric targets (*not* quotas) should be set for allocations, particularly with regard to schemes in areas with significant black and minority ethnic populations. The very minimum target should be the proportion of those in the relevant age group from the black and minority ethnic communities (which can be identified from Census data). Anchor have adopted a more radical approach of setting a minimum target of six black and minority ethnic elders for any targeted scheme, in order to establish a sub-community of sufficient size.

In order to avoid potential black and minority ethnic tenants feeling isolated in schemes, associations should consider making block allocations. This is likely to require flats being kept empty for a period (this would not need to be done, however, until sufficient numbers of black and minority ethnic elders were on the Waiting List). The key factor in determining who is to be housed, however, must still be housing need. The ethnic origin of an applicant should not determine whether or not they are housed.

It is not enough for associations merely to keep ethnic records. Performance should be gauged against targets by monitoring on an on-going basis, with the production of regular (every six

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months at least) monitoring reports. Such reports should not consist of tables of figures alone but should contain explanatory text and (where possible) graphics to make the data more easily understandable.

Future provision

Type of provision

If housing associations are to identify and address actual needs, rather than force people into a form of housing (sheltered accommodation) that may not meet their requirements, a wider range of housing options will have to be considered. These would include options such as Staying Put/Care and Repair, shared ownership, small-scale "cluster" schemes (with appropriate support services) and the provision of mixed schemes (mixing general needs and sheltered housing on a common site).

Where the possibility of mixed schemes is to be considered, it may be possible in some cases to produce such schemes by adapting existing developments. In such a case this should only be done with the agreement of existing tenants.

It should on no occasion be assumed that members of a given group require a given form of service provision just because they happen to members of that group. Some black and minority ethnic elders may want Staying Put/Care and Repair while others may want sheltered accommodation. Black and minority ethnic elders, like white elders, are not a homogeneous group. The only way to establish what their housing needs and preferences are is to ask them.

Provider

As for current provision the future needs of black and minority ethnic elders are likely to best be met by a combination of direct provision and provision by black housing associations. Development Agency/Management Agency roles should be developed, if wanted by the black housing associations involved. Similarly the possibility of further stock transfers should be considered in appropriate areas.

Location

If schemes are to be built with the intention of targeting black and minority ethnic elders, then they should be built in appropriate locations. While there will be clear restrictions on the viability of this, given land availability etc., there is little point in building schemes in "white highlands" locations and then expecting to attract significant numbers of black and minority ethnic applicants.

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Quality v Quantity

Good performance cannot just be measured by numbers housed. The quality of provision (both in terms of the physical structure and, particularly, in terms of the services offered) is much harder to quantify, but even more important. Just housing people does not mean that you are meeting their needs. The NFHA's Policy Adviser (Supported Housing) has noted in a recent letter to the author that:

A reservation I would have regarding nominations of black and minority ethnic older people concerns the ability of some sheltered schemes to adequately cater for the differing cultural, dietary and religious needs. Improving access will not tackle the more fundamental problem of whether schemes, staff and residents are flexible enough to respond sensitively to different cultures.

The time has come to move beyond the numbers game and address issues of service provision. Accordingly in auditing the performance of housing associations the Housing Corporation should look beyond mere numbers housed to actions taken and the quality of the service delivered (difficult though that may be to quantify). A black or minority ethnic elder housed in isolation, in a scheme in which they can communicate with neither staff nor other residents and in which they are receiving no support services is not an indication of success.

Introduction

Very little attention has been paid in the past to the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders. This may be due to a combination of the small numbers previously involved and the common belief that 'they look after their own don't they' - a belief that has been reinforced by the low number of such elders applying for the sheltered accommodation provided by mainstream housing associations. This report, which seeks to find out why so few black and minority ethnic elders do apply for such housing and what could best be done to attempt to meet their housing needs, is the result of a two-year project funded by the four main specialist providers of sheltered accommodation for the elderly (Anchor, Hanover, Housing 21 and Servite) and carried out by the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.

Research parameters

This research project was envisaged from its inception as very much an "action research" project i.e. one in which the research process in itself would lead to changes in the organisations being studied. The aim of this research was not merely the static reporting of existing situations but the identification of key issues and, wherever possible, of examples of good practice.

The research was carried out specifically for the four funding housing associations and the results should be looked at with that in mind. It may well be, however, that the findings are of wider applicability.

The bulk of the research concentrated on three geographic areas: Bradford, London and the West Midlands. It should not be assumed that what is found in one area automatically holds true for another. As is emphasised throughout this report there is no substitute for research into housing need in specific areas.

Details of the methodologies used are given in the appendices.

Definitions

The use of "trade jargon" can sometimes be problematic. Seemingly straightforward phrases can mean different things to different people. Accordingly the following definitions apply to key terms used in this report.

Sheltered accommodation

For the purposes of this report sheltered accommodation is generally defined (as per the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular 82/69) as follows:

Category 1-schemes which are grouped self contained housing schemes (flats or bungalows) which are designed specifically for elders;

Category 2-schemes which are grouped self contained housing with a warden service and additional facilities such as a common room, laundry room, guest room etc.

Additionally Category 2 1/2 (also known as extra care, frail elderly or very sheltered) is defined (Tinker, 1990) as:

Sheltered housing with extra facilities such as 24-hour warden cover, help with domiciliary and care tasks and some meals.

Summary

Elders

The Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust report "Housing for Ethnic Elders" (1984) notes that:

We decided at the outset not to use the standard definition of elderly people as those over retirement age (60 for women, 65 for men). Because of different life styles and circumstances - in particular hard and unhealthy working experiences - and because of discrimination and economic disadvantage, it is argued that people in some cultures age early. We therefore decided a wider definition of elderly people was required in this context. Generally when we refer to elders we are considering people over 50 years old, but it is essential when planning services or allocations policies to accept that even some middle-aged people may present problems and require the support normally associated with someone over retirement age.

This is the definition of "older people" used in this report.

Black and minority ethnic

As with the FBHO report (Seager and Jeffrey, 1993) the phrase black and minority ethnic used in this report includes:

Asian (i.e. Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan and Indian), Caribbean, African, South East Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Chinese, Malaysian, Thai), a combination of the above groups.

It should be noted, therefore, that this report does not deal primarily with the needs of white minorities (such as those from Eastern Europe), real though their needs may be.

Black housing association

For the purposes of this report (as for the FBHO report 1993) a black housing association is seen as an association:

Where at least 80% of the group's [members] are of black or minority ethnic origin.

Mainstream housing association

An association that has not focused primarily on the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities. Accordingly this would tend to be an association where the vast majority of the committee, staff and tenants are white.

The black and minority ethnic population of Great Britain

One of the key questions that this research set out to address was "is lack of black and minority ethnic take-up of sheltered accommodation due to the fact that there simply aren't enough elders from these communities out there"? Blakemore and Boneham (1994) have noted that :

A major reason for the non-appearance of older black people on the national agenda is their perceived status as a tiny minority within a minority. Put simply, it is easy to disregard a minority considered to be too small to bother about.

The 1991 Census shows that members of "non-white" groups make up only 1.1% of Great Britain's population aged 65 and over. In the 45-64 age range, however, they make up 3.8% of the population.

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	Overall share of Population (%)	Share of population 45-64 (%)	Share of population 65+ (%)
White	94.5	96.2	98.9
All non-white	5.5	3.8	1.1

(Source: 1991 Census)

It needs to be stressed, however, that even this comparatively low figure of 1.1% represents 97,086 people - a population almost the size of that of Tunbridge Wells. Further, as Blakemore and Boneham note:

Rapid rates of increase, geographical clustering and questions about official statistics affect the picture.

Rates of increase will be rapid, especially over the next 20 years as the cohorts of migrants of the late 1950's and 1960's reach retirement age. Already the numbers crossing the frontier of 60 years of age represent the fastest-growing age group in the black community. The proportion of black and Asian people in the age group immediately before retirement (45-59/64) is substantial (16 per cent in 1987-9) and suggests a four- or fivefold increase among the pensionable age group by the year 2000.

They also note that:

The concentration of older black people in certain regions and metropolitan areas (chiefly Greater London) also makes the label of 'small minority' rather misleading.

Indeed, in the three areas in which my research was concentrated (Bradford, London and the West Midlands) the population data for black and minority ethnic elders was as follows:

Bradford

Age Group	White	Black	South Asian	Chinese and other	Total Population
55-64	91.1	1.1	7.4	0.4	44,623
65-74	96.8	0.5	2.6	0.1	38,013
75+	98.8	0.2	1.0	0.1	13,733

Greater London

Age Group	White	Black	South Asian	Chinese and other	Total Population
55-64	85.6	6.5	5.7	2.2	627,175
65-74	93.4	2.8	2.6	1.2	521,782
75+	96.7	1.2	1.3	0.8	206,003

(N.B. this clearly makes major differences between individual Boroughs)

West Midlands

Age Group	White	Black	South Asian	Chinese and other	Total Population
55-64	90.2	3.7	5.5	0.6	267,987
65-74	95.7	1.7	2.4	0.2	232,747
75+	98.0	0.7	1.2	0.1	81,274

(Source: Owen, 1993 – data drawn from the Local Base Statistics of the 1991 Census of Population, for Local government and districts in England – Crown Copyright)

Introduction

Definitions

White: White

Black: Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black-Other

South Asian: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi

Chinese and others: Chinese, Other-Asians, Other-Others

Thus even leaving aside the argument for premature ageing in the black and minority ethnic communities (see Blakemore and Boneham), elders in such communities can be seen as forming a small but significant and growing percentage of the elderly population - particularly in specific parts of Great Britain.

The participating associations

The research was funded by the four main providers of specialised accommodation for elderly people, namely Anchor, Hanover, Housing 21 and Servite. All four are national associations, although not all consistently covering the same parts of the UK. Brief details of the comparative sizes of the four associations are given below.

Stock at 31st March 1994

Association	No. of units	No. of schemes	No. of tenants	% sheltered
Anchor	21,923	657	25,936	100
Hanover	9,201	310	12,036	98
Housing 21	11,641	350	18,000	94
Servite	3,919	-	3,919	68

(n.b. figures show rented accommodation only)

The numbers game

When this research project was first mooted it had the somewhat drab working title of "Ethnic Minority Elders and Specialised Housing Association Provision". While the research was taking place, however, it became evident that there was a clear general perception from the participating associations that the Housing Corporation was forcing them into a "numbers directly housed equals success" approach to meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders.

Alongside this it was felt that other actions taken to meet these needs, such as stock transfers to black housing associations or the development of schemes for/ in partnership with these associations, were either ignored or could actually have a negative effect on the association's image in the eyes of the Housing Corporation. For example, if an association transferred tenanted stock then its overall number of black and minority ethnic tenants might actually fall (as they would be transferred to the black housing association along with the stock). Additionally, if a mainstream association developed a scheme for a black association then the likelihood of its attracting black and minority ethnic applicants to its own schemes in that area might be reduced. This then was the feeling expressed by the participating associations and became a key area to be examined during the course of the research.

ANCHOR

The Housing Corporation's criticisms of Anchor were concerned mainly with the association's ethnic record keeping and monitoring. Anchor was criticised by the Housing Corporation in its 1992 monitoring report as follows:

Summary

The Association has only recently begun ethnic monitoring of all applications and lettings- previously only targeted schemes were monitored. At present the Association does not carry out ethnic monitoring of transfers, the quality of accommodation offered, nominations and complaints.

In response to this the Association's then Chief Executive stated, in a letter to the Housing Corporation of 1 June 1992:

We have been carrying out racial origin monitoring on all applications for some years. Since the implementation of our applicants register system on the central computer the information of ethnic origin has been entered. It has taken a considerable time to design the reports to extract this information in a way that will be useful. However we now expect the computer-based reporting system to be giving us quarterly reports in all 11 new Anchor regions with effect from August. This report covers all areas highlighted in the CRE Code of Conduct for Rented Housing.

It is questionable whether this has actually happened. The Housing Corporation's 1993 Performance Audit Report does, however, refer to the association's:

Improved monitoring and standardised reporting format.

Thus Anchor seems to have fared fairly well in terms of its treatment from the Housing Corporation.

HANOVER

Hanover staff interviewed certainly felt that the Housing Corporation had not sufficiently appreciated either the steps they had taken to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders, or the difficulties they faced given the type of accommodation the association provided and the areas in which the bulk of its stock is located (the "white highlands").

The Housing Corporation's Performance Expectation Report of May 1992 graded Hanover 3 in terms of Race Equality and Equal Opportunity, stating that:

Little progress has been made and it is clear that the Association has yet to undertake a comprehensive review of its performance against the NFHA Fair Housing Programme and the CRE Code of Conduct.

Hanover's Chairman strongly contested this assessment, feeling that:

We have reviewed performance against the NFHA Fair Housing Programme ... [and] so far as the CRE Code of Conduct is concerned the Committee adopted the Code in April 1991.

(Source: letter to Housing Corporation Performance Audit Manager, September 1992)

while the Association's Chief Executive felt that:

[the Housing Corporation are] not sufficiently aware of, or sympathetic to, what has been tried.

HOUSING 21

Given its previous image (as the "Royal British Legion Housing Association"), its previous client group (ex-service people only, who are predominantly white) and its poor previous record in attracting black and minority ethnic tenants, Housing 21 was starting from a lower base-line than the other participating associations. While it still housed very few of such elders the association had taken a number of steps to rectify this, not only in terms of direct provision but also in terms of enabling black housing associations to act as providers.

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Given these actions it is, perhaps, understandable that staff were disappointed with the outcome of the 1993 Housing Corporation Performance Audit Report, which graded the Association 3 for Equal Opportunities and Race Relations. The Audit Report states that (para. 4.5):

Considerable work has obviously been undertaken to develop both Equal Opportunities policies and procedures and also monitoring and reporting systems. Positive action has also been undertaken: the translation of key policy documents, liaison with Racial Equality Councils and the commissioning of research into the provision of services to people from ethnic minorities. The recent establishment of the Equal Opportunities working party is also to be welcomed.

However, Housing 21's housing provision still fails to attract applications from the ethnic minorities and is thus failing to meet the housing needs of ethnic minorities in their areas of operation.

Given the Housing Corporation's apparent reliance on CORE data (which excludes initiatives such as the Manningham three-way transfer), and concentration on statistics, in coming to this latter conclusion it is not surprising that the interviewees made comments such as the following:

Whilst we may not be achieving the statistics that they think we should it doesn't mean that we aren't sympathetic with and proactive in trying to meet the needs of ethnic minority people.

I think the Housing Corporation are bloody wrong, it's as simple as that.

SERVITE

Servite (which like Housing 21 is a provider of both sheltered and general needs accommodation) has fared quite well in its Housing Corporation audits. The most recently available monitoring report noted that:

The Association provides a good standard of information on Equal Opportunities. It is clear the implementation of Equal Opportunities policy has been considered across all key activities with regular monitoring and positive contacts with black groups.

Thus two of the participating associations fared well in their Housing Corporation performance audits, while the other two fared rather less well. This does not mean, however, that any one association is really performing better than any other, other than in strictly numeric terms. Factors such as starting position (i.e. past history with regard to client group, image etc.), type of accommodation provided, location of schemes and other actions taken to meet the housing needs of the black and minority ethnic communities need to be taken into account.

Given the above, however, without the Housing Corporation's (albeit limited) push on Equal Opportunities one wonders how much would have been done by mainstream housing associations to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic elders.

Previous research

The field of 'the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders' is not one that has previously been the subject of much research — possibly due to the comparatively small numbers of such elders from these communities in the past. The first major study appears to be the Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust's study in 1984. Some nine years later

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Louis Julienne, the Director of FBHO, notes in his introduction to the FBHO report on "Housing Black and Minority Ethnic Elders" (Jeffrey and Seager, 1993), that since the 1984 study:

The neglect of black and minority ethnic elders' housing needs continues virtually unabated

and draws attention to:

the lack of information not only about the housing needs of black elders, but also the fact that the subject appeared not to be on anybody's agenda.

It has certainly been one of the findings of this research project that while attention is now being paid to the *numbers* of black and minority ethnic elders coming into sheltered accommodation, little attention has been paid to their actual housing *needs* with, perhaps, the assumption being made that what is good for one group will also be good for another.

Previous provision

The previous "one size fits all" approach clearly failed to lead to significant numbers of black and minority ethnic elders being housed in sheltered accommodation. Barker noted in 1984 that:

Most white people do not relish the prospect of going to live in an old people's home although they may consider that sheltered housing or domiciliary support in their own home is a more attractive option. But all of this could prove to be unbearable to many Black or Asian people.

Being, perhaps, the only non-white in a home or housing scheme could be a very lonely experience, especially if there is discrimination or if other residents do not readily associate with him or her... As a result of these factors, disproportionately few elderly people from any ethnic minority group are to be found in residential care or in sheltered housing even in cities like Liverpool where a significant number of black people have lived for many generations.

Similarly the Age Concern/ Help the Aged Housing Trust report notes that:

Policy has been guided by the assumption that what is appropriate for the majority is appropriate for the minority and that any special treatment would in itself be discriminatory and hinder integration. To this several objections can be raised.

Firstly, not to recognise genuine differences of culture or lifestyle in the provision of a service is to discriminate. An example is the refusal to allocate a number of flats in sheltered housing schemes to black people because this might be seen as creating a mini ghetto. This kind of response has persuaded ethnic minority groups to try to help themselves and their endeavour is reflected in the growth of special housing projects, such as ASRA (Asians' Sheltered Residential Accommodation), developed with the support of more responsive housing associations. Secondly, it is a very one-sided view of integration: 'If you don't like what we are offering you, you can leave it'. Thirdly, it ignores the fact that the present and coming generations of elderly people in these communities are unable to integrate because of language, customs and habits.

The housing circumstances of ethnic elders are the product of a number of factors, most notably lack of information about housing in the public sector, lack of housing stock, discrimination in the public/private housing market, family circumstances and choice. As our findings show, very few have found their way into sheltered and other housing specifically provided by the local authorities and housing associations.

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Speaking with regard to social services provision (but with an applicability far beyond this) Ward (1985) notes that:

We must not simply replicate or add on to white provision. This may be convenient, but it is likely to result in services which are inappropriate or not even needed. Needs arise in cultural contexts. Services should take account of different cultural contexts.

Similarly Norman (1985) notes that:

Some housing associations are taking an interest in providing specialist sheltered housing on their own initiative, but they often do not consult the relevant community group members early enough in the planning stage, with the result that serious mistakes in design and layout may be made... putting neighbours together who are compatible in terms of sex, religion and language, for example, can be crucial.

Louis Julienne, Director of FBHO, draws attention (in Jeffrey and Seager, 1993) to the false assumptions that underlie the, in many cases current, attitude towards housing black and minority ethnic elders:

Assumptions about black elders are still rife. Black people do not use sheltered accommodation, for example, because it is a culturally alien concept, it is in their tradition that they will be looked after by their families - the celebrated extended family system. These assumptions are misguided, Black elders disproportionately do not go into sheltered accommodation for the same reasons they under-use home helps and meals on wheels. They do not know about these services and where they do, these services are not sensitive to their particular needs. The accommodation is located in an area away from the communities they feel comfortable in, away from shops catering for their needs and places of worship; staff and residents don't understand and are often hostile to their language and customs, diets are often not catered for, and publicity about the schemes is targeted in areas in which they do not live and in a language they cannot read.

Although the extended family system is still a prominent feature of black and minority ethnic communities, it is under severe stress because of economic and social circumstances.

Thus the "one size fits all" approach, linked in with the idea that 'if they don't want sheltered accommodation its because the very idea of such accommodation is alien/inappropriate to them', has failed to lead to larger numbers of black and minority ethnic elders entering mainstream housing association sheltered accommodation. What is needed, ideally, is accommodation (sheltered or otherwise) that actually meets the needs of different communities, and different people within those communities.

Identifying need

In order to meet a need one first has to identify what that need is. Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust noted in 1984 that:

There was, in our survey, little evidence of housing organisations attempting to define needs in any systematic way and, as our results indicate, responses from housing organisations are often based on uninformed opinion.

Further, they were of the opinion that:

All local authorities, we believe, have a responsibility to undertake studies of the housing conditions of the ethnic population in their areas. Such studies should cover the housing needs of ethnic elders... If local authorities do not conduct studies of this kind, the needs of

Introduction

ethnic elders are likely to go unnoticed because they are less pushing than others about their requirements, less knowledgeable about what is available and seldom know to what they are entitled. Ethnic elders are also less likely to be referred to the housing department, social services or other statutory bodies by GP's, community nurses, local Age Concern groups and Citizen's Advice Bureaux because they are less likely to visit them.

Such studies are few and far between. Indeed, Jeffrey and Seager (1993) note that:

The assessment of housing related needs of black and minority ethnic elders was at best based on small scale, ad hoc surveys and at worst based on no evidence at all. The lack of assessment of need was often accompanied by the lack of an awareness of need.

Failure to carry out research into housing need prior to the provision of sheltered accommodation can be calamitous. A spokesperson for Sadeh Lok (a black housing association) quoted in Ryan (1993) notes, with regard to a scheme transferred to that association by Anchor, that:

- (a) no one had researched the area to find out if there was a need for sheltered housing;
- (b) no need for such accommodation had been identified from the black and minority ethnic community in the area.

The result of this was that the scheme remained empty for two months. While it is now full, at the time of Ryan's research only eight of the 37 units were occupied by tenants from the black and minority ethnic groups.

By contrast St. Vincent's Housing Association had built a 33 unit scheme in Rochdale that was specifically aimed at and designed for the black and minority ethnic elderly, following a survey amongst Asian elders into the level of interest in sheltered accommodation. While this research found that there were some reservations with regard to this type of accommodation, of 20 units occupied at the time of Ryan's research, 19 were occupied by black and minority ethnic elders.

Is there then, a need for sheltered provision for black and minority ethnic elders? Jeffrey and Seager (1993) quote three research reports:

1. a Coventry report of 1984 which noted that three quarters of black and minority ethnic elders said they would not use sheltered accommodation and none said they would use it;
2. a Blackburn report of 1989 which noted that none of the survey's respondents had applied for sheltered accommodation and only 8% said that they intended to;
3. a University of Wales report of 1991 which found that 49% of its 100 respondents would consider sheltered accommodation at that time, and 76% would do so in the future.

These findings clearly differ, but it must be remembered that they were conducted at different times, among different black and minority ethnic groups in different parts of the country.

A number of commentators have drawn attention to the changing face of the extended family. Brailey (1991), notes, for example, that:

Some ethnic minority families wish to have their elders living with them, but on the other hand growing numbers of ethnic minority elders live alone... The assumption that the extended family system caters for all the needs of elderly people has always been something of a myth

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Similarly the Asian Special Housing Initiative Agency survey in Rochdale (ASHIA, 1990) noted that:

The specific housing needs of the Asian elderly require further investigation as the cultural requirements and individual preferences have been largely ignored by the existing authorities. This is due mainly to the widely accepted myth that Asian people in this country are able to care for their old under one roof because of the extended family system. However, a number of factors existing in contemporary Britain combine to put severe strain on this family system with adverse effects. The different economic and social structure in this country make it impossible for married children to shoulder their traditional responsibilities towards their elders, e.g. the smaller houses and different life styles are examples... Thus, there is an increasing number of elderly Asians who find it difficult to be accommodated with their families or feel rejected and unsupported.

Thomas' s (1992) study on Asian elders in Bradford notes that:

In both the Asian and British cultures the elderly are subject to a form of stereotyping - the white elder being naturally frail and dependent and living either alone or in a residential home; the Asian elder is thought to live with his/her extended family who cares for him/her. Both of these stereotypes are myths which have succeeded in pigeon holing these elders.

Finally, Jeffrey and Seager (1993) recommend that:

Housing providers should carry out their own investigation of the housing related needs of black and minority ethnic elders in their areas, to take account of local preference and levels of demand.

The balance between these different types of provision should be decided on the basis of researched need and preference, not on the basis of stereotypical assumptions and prejudice.

Knowledge of housing associations and sheltered housing

The problem of lack of take-up of services, partly due to lack of knowledge of them is, highlighted by Louis Julienne above. The Age Concern/ Help the Aged Housing Trust report (1984) also notes that:

Those housing associations working with community groups explained that some groups did not understand housing management and were unclear as to the role of housing associations.

Similarly the report on Birmingham City Council's seminar (1993) on the "Housing Needs of Black Elders" notes that:

It was stated that many black people did not know what housing associations or sheltered housing were and information would have to be provided about them.

Indeed the ASHIA/Age Concern (1991) report on Rochdale notes that:

Elders identified lack of information (84%) and language (72%) as the greatest barriers to receiving assistance.

and that:

One of the clearest messages emerging from our interviews has been the need for information to be communicated in an appropriate language through an accessible

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medium. Elders repeatedly expressed a demand for more Asian staff to enable direct communication and the delivery of services in a culturally acceptable manner.

While Ward (1985) states that:

What all surveys have shown is the primary need for information. We constantly underestimate the need to explain what benefits and services are available. How can an elderly person speaking little English, whose experience of the state has been largely negative, even know what help exists, let alone what it might be or how to obtain it, unless we do something about informing him?

How then can housing associations best inform the black and minority ethnic communities of what they are and what sheltered accommodation is about? Jeffrey and Seager (1993) recommend that:

Housing providers should take steps to ensure that black and minority ethnic elders know about, and become familiar with, the range of housing provision available for elderly people. Outreach work is needed to promote "Staying Put" schemes and sheltered housing, for example.

Written material should be available in a range of languages, and consideration given to making some available in translated forms on tapes. Videos too could be used in outreach work ...

Housing providers should consolidate the links that many of them are making with local community associations, both to promote their services and to seek referrals.

The report of a seminar held in Haringey (1986) noted that:

... The public image of Associations ... is still a mystery to many people

and suggested the following strategies:

- (1) **The use of an open 'day', (perhaps 2 or 3 hours) when the main office would be open for people to come and see what the organisation does and to talk with staff ... One idea suggested in this borough is for a display in the local shopping centre, as a combined endeavour of all the associations ...**
- (2) **Co-option of members of established Black and Ethnic Minority Groups onto the management committees of Associations. This is being done by one or two associations in this area and works well because; (a) the association makes the invitation which will be read in a favourable manner by those receiving it and (b) their new members will be able to make personal reference to the organisation, when meeting with other groups.**
- (3) **Visits to local Black and Ethnic communities can be undertaken by both staff and members, to either functioning 'umbrella' groups, community centres or local organisations.**

If an open letter was sent to local organisations by an association ... in which they said they were willing to come and meet them, then because of the growing interest in housing, (or more accurately the worry about the lack of housing), a fair response could be expected and some direct contacts made.

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The housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders

The Age Concern/ Help the Aged Housing Trust (1984) notes that:

The housing needs of all elderly people, including ethnic elders, vary and change. It would therefore be wrong to assume that any one type of housing is likely to be preferred by all elderly people. Some would benefit from accommodation in a scheme of improved terraced houses in the inner city, others from assistance with maintaining their homes to a high standard and yet others from living in a sheltered unit. Elderly people of Afro-Caribbean origin seem to settle well in sheltered schemes provided and managed by their own people... Sheltered housing is therefore an option that should be available for ethnic elders. But the provision of sheltered schemes for all ethnic elders would present considerable problems.

First of all, there is the question of location. Land is often scarce in areas where ethnic minority people have set up their communities, mosques, churches, temples and centres. If the intention is to rehouse elders within their community or as near to it as possible, then the availability of land becomes a problem. There is also the question of the mix in the scheme. As already mentioned, most ethnic minority people live in the inner cities. In the main, each area contains not one but several ethnic groups. There are usually people of Pakistani, Indian, Chinese and Afro-Caribbean origin, and within each of the major groups there are subgroups who might find it difficult to share common facilities with one another because of differences in either religion or culture.

There is also the problem that in operating schemes of this kind applications for rehousing from elderly white people would have to be considered. If white elderly people have the same or greater housing needs than ethnic applicants, then they must be rehoused or the housing association or local authority could be challenged on the grounds of racial discrimination.

In some areas there is a need for sheltered housing schemes that reflect the nature of the ethnic community. Whether this is achieved in a separate or a mixed scheme is not the issue.

The issue is one of specialist provision, that is catering for the different needs of ethnic groups by providing access to cultural facilities, employing wardens of the same cultural background, incorporating particular design features etc. Such a unit would consist of a cluster for each ethnic group.

In keeping with this Norman (1985) notes:

The prime need for the elderly population in general is not for sheltered housing but for APPROPRIATE housing - in congenial surroundings and within reach of relevant community services.

Social isolation, fear of harassment, language difficulties and inexperience in independent living make it important for older people from ethnic minorities, not only to be housed in their own communities, but also to be housed in groups so that they can provide mutual support and receive help from a warden or volunteer who is of the same ethnic background.

Dixon and Turkington's (1993) research in the West Midlands found that:

The overwhelming response [from the organisations approached] was that there was a need for housing which could meet such needs as: the independence of Asian and Caribbean groups; appropriate cooking facilities; prayer facilities and, accommodation which would not restrict visits by relatives. Above all, such needs could be best satisfied in purpose-built housing or centres for the Asian and Caribbean elderly.

It was felt that specialist housing schemes for the elderly could meet such needs but only where the problems indicated above, and previously listed, could be overcome. Otherwise,

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the general response from the agencies themselves and on behalf of elderly black people was 'not yet'. This is a very revealing finding which was further amplified by the question which invited organisations to comment on the 'acceptability', 'suitability' and 'adequacy' of specialist housing for black people 'in your area of operation'. The consistent response was that such housing was acceptable and suitable subject to clearly identified cultural requirements. In the case of South Asian groups, these centred on religious and dietary considerations but for both groups, the proximity to relatives and friends, to shopping and recreational facilities, 'drop-in' facilities and public transport were strongly emphasised. Whilst some of these factors are concerned with location, the consistent message is that the most successful specialist housing schemes are likely to be those which are purpose-built to adjust to their users' needs.

With regard to already existing schemes which have white tenants i.e. schemes that have not been purpose built for a particular black or minority ethnic group, Jeffrey and Seager (1993) recommend that:

Housing providers should consider block allocations to black elders in previously white schemes to help reduce isolation and harassment.

Separate or mixed provision?

If sheltered accommodation is to be one of a number of housing options made available to black and minority ethnic elders what form should it take: should schemes be ethnic-specific (i.e. for one ethnic group only) or should they be mixed?

Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust (1984) state that:

There are many ethnic elders who will, in old age, wish to be housed with people from their own culture. The provision of housing and welfare facilities to bring about integration has the effect of limiting choice and imposing, for example, certain types of food, leisure and other facilities totally unsuited to the needs of ethnic elders, while also limiting their opportunities to relate to others of their own culture. The argument for separate housing provision for ethnic elders is not therefore an argument against integration, nor is it an argument based on the inability of ethnic elders to 'change their ways', but it is an argument to tailor the housing and welfare provisions to satisfy specific and pertinent needs.

and later in their report that:

In our view, because of culture, diet, religious and language differences, separate provision is required for some ethnic elders. For example, where housing is provided, people from the same ethnic, cultural and religious background ought to be able to live together in a special scheme.

Referring to research in Glasgow, Brailey (1991) notes that:

Once the nature of sheltered housing has been explained, 83 per cent [of the interview sample] thought it would be useful to have sheltered housing for elderly people which catered positively for their cultural needs, and 29 per cent thought that there should be separate projects for different cultural groups. In particular, two-thirds of the Chinese sample wanted separate provision. This is a particularly pertinent issue among elderly people, many of whom are unable to read, unable to speak English, and have not developed many links outside their own cultural group.

Interestingly while ASHIA/Age Concern's (1991) research among Asian elders in Rochdale found that:

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77% of elders expressed a clear preference for segregated male/female provision and clearly any culturally sensitive provision would need to accommodate this.

They also note that:

50% were favourable to integrated services with British white elders and there is clearly potential to develop both integrated and segregated provision in each area.

Following from this Ryan's (1993) research among Bradford's Indian community found that:

No persons interviewed were in agreement with 100% Asian complexes. However all thought it necessary to have staff who were trained to care for the Asian community in the complexes and enough ethnic residents to provide a proper mix.

This is not to say that all schemes should be mixed. If housing associations are seeking to widen the range of available housing options for black and minority ethnic elders then there is room for the provision of both ethnic-specific and mixed sheltered schemes. Once again this points to the need for research to be carried out among potential tenants. The making of assumptions along the lines that because someone is from a particular ethnic group then they are bound to prefer a particular housing option should be avoided.

Attracting black and minority ethnic tenants

The issue of access to housing association accommodation is a key one (see Chapter 1). It is clear that, in general, mainstream associations are finding it difficult to attract black and minority ethnic elders. Given their closer community ties and access to community networks it would seem likely that black housing associations would find it easier to attract such tenants. Jeffrey and Seager (1993) note (with reference to 16 local schemes visited that were "all aiming to meet the housing related needs of black and minority ethnic elders") that:

A problem faced by approximately half the projects was finding suitable, initial residents for their schemes. One reason for this..[was]..the inability of most local authorities to take up their nomination rights.

Another reason was the apparent reluctance of black and minority ethnic elders to move to what initially could seem a strange form of housing provision. This reluctance was usually overcome once the first few residents had moved in. However, the projects sometimes found themselves having to cope with higher void levels than they had expected during this initial letting period.

How then did these schemes go about attracting potential tenants? Jeffrey and Seager (1993) state that:

All the projects used similar methods to find potential residents. The most commonly cited were word of mouth referrals or via black and minority ethnic community organisations such as day centres, churches or luncheon clubs.

Other sources of residents included local social services departments, doctors and hospitals and nominations from other housing associations ...

The local authorities ... tended to have very few black and minority ethnic elders to nominate to the various projects both because few black and minority ethnic elders seemed to view their local authority as a possible way of meeting their housing related needs, and because their monitoring systems were inadequate.

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The issues of how black housing associations attract black and minority ethnic elders, and the difficulties they face in so doing, are expanded on in Chapter 3.

Working with black community groups and housing associations

Given the lack of knowledge of housing associations highlighted earlier and the need to provide culturally sensitive services, black community groups and black housing associations can play a major role in providing services that are appropriate to need.

Ward (1985) notes with regard to community groups that:

They are closer to communities, can enlist their support and are more likely to recruit appropriate staff. Elderly people are less likely to be suspicious of them.

Similarly Patel (1993) recommends that:

Housing Management should be provided by Community Associations, this would reduce the stigma of having to move away from home for Asian elders [my italics]

What then should the role of black housing associations be? Haringey Community Relations Council (1985) clearly see the role of such associations as meeting specific (and previously unmet) needs:

The establishment of such Associations is for the purpose of making up the shortfall in present Housing Association provision ... Secondly, these Associations give Black and Ethnic Minority groups the possibility of expressing in concrete terms (both literally and figuratively) what their needs are, and hence promote what they see are the priorities in housing provision. Although the majority of the community would not want to live in small groups, completely segregated from the rest of the community (and this applies across the board), there is sometimes the need to assist people with housing geared to their needs and this provision can be met by establishing more Black Housing Associations.

At present, and in the foreseeable future, the role of black housing associations, in all but a few cases, will be one of working, at best, in partnership with mainstream associations in order to provide accommodation that meets the needs of black and minority ethnic elders. Norman (1985) notes that:

At present [joint] projects . . . usually result from a community group persuading an existing housing association to develop a project on their behalf and co-operate with them in its management. This is neither an easy nor an ideal arrangement. Housing associations may be sympathetic, especially as the programme manager of the Housing Corporation is on record as stating that the Corporation would consider the housing of elderly ethnic minority groups as a very high priority. Work in this field may therefore improve an association's chances of getting some funding. However, the community group concerned will have no control over the association and no means of making sure that it succeeds in carrying out its undertakings.

On the same lines Age Concern/ Help the Aged Housing Trust (1984) state, with regard to community groups that:

Many had little knowledge of the way housing associations worked. Some members of community groups thought housing associations were in the business to make profits for their directors and committee members through rents.

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A few said they had no trust in the housing associations with which they worked. The distrust was due to the nature of the financial arrangement or to the lack of one between the community group and the housing association.

... The problems are wide ranging and they raise some important questions for housing associations. Do they provide enough information and support for community groups? Having established a special project, how can the housing association assess the performance of the community group in management and in service delivery? What sort of training is required? Regardless of these problems, many of the community groups we visited were determined to provide decent homes for their elders, but some remained suspicious of existing housing associations and felt that the impetus for such provision had to come from themselves.

While welcoming the action taken by the Housing Corporation in encouraging the formation of black housing associations, noting at the same time that this may no longer be a priority for them, ASHIA (1990) drew attention to the part that mainstream associations should be playing:

A programme of blacks helping blacks will be insufficient to meet the real needs of the Asian community. It is important that all associations have a commitment to a fair housing policy and an equal opportunity policy. Relying solely on black and Asian groups may be seen as a soft option for organisations that are not prepared to direct resources and time to housing black and Asian elderly.

Thus both mainstream and black housing associations have a role to play in housing black and minority ethnic elders. The nature of the relationship between the two can be problematic but it is not enough for mainstream associations to see the provision of accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders as a job for the black associations alone. This theme is further explored in Chapter 3.

Design, requirements

If there is a need for sheltered accommodation to be provided for black and minority ethnic elders are there any specific design requirements that need to be taken into account?

Norman (1985) draws attention both to "design features reflecting the customs of a particular community":

These are especially important in Asian housing and may include baths which are designed so that the user can pour clean water over himself in the traditional way; deep kitchen cupboards suitable for storage of items bought in bulk such as chapatti flour; and gas cookers (Asian cooking requires a naked flame).

and to "the need for housing to be set within a concentrated population of the relevant community and have communal facilities":

There should be a communal sitting room where residents can meet together to watch video, play cards and chat, and which can also be used as a drop-in centre by people not living in the accommodation so that the risk of stigma and isolation is avoided. There is evidence that, although such communal facilities are often unused in sheltered housing occupied by elderly English people, the ethnic minority communities do make extensive and successful use of them and they offer a valuable and valued resource.

Once again assumptions should not be made with regard to the design needs of a given community without first discussing these needs with the community in question. For example ASHIA (1990) argue that:

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It would not be unreasonable to speculate that the myth of having a preference for bidet and squat (Asian) toilet is deceptive ... the installation of an Asian toilet is considered desirable in some cases but... this facility is not seen as necessary by the Asian community as a whole.

The issue of design requirements is returned to in Chapter 7. For an in-depth study of the design requirements of black and minority ethnic elders the North Housing/NFHA publication "Accommodating Diversity" is recommended.

Scheme location

The location of a scheme can be crucial in attracting (or failing to attract) black and minority ethnic elders.

Ryan (1993), a warden in a Bradford sheltered scheme, notes that the most important thing for an elderly person is:

To remain within their family unit or as close as possible to them, while still being able to keep their independence.

Being able to shop in the same neighbourhood and to recognise friends, neighbours and familiar faces on the street is very important. A visit to the day centre where friends meet, to the church of their choice, these points are the most important points to look at when picking a scheme.

The findings of ASHIA/Age Concern's (1991) survey in Rochdale would appear to back this up. With regard to choice of area of residence they report that:

Of the 18 who expressed a desire to move 15 wished to remain in the same area and the remaining 3 within Rochdale. This highlights the value and importance of living within the community, near to the mosque, shops etc., illustrated in the high daily contact with these services.

The All Faiths For One Race (AFFOR) report on "Elders of Minority Ethnic Groups", published in 1981 (and quoted in ASHIA, 1990) states that:

This survey shows that Asian and Afro-Caribbean elderly are mostly intending to stay in the neighbourhoods in which they now live. We recommend the setting up of special sheltered accommodation by local authorities and other agencies. Such accommodation should be within easy reach of shops, post office, medical and religious centres which cater for minority groups. A cluster of converted flats, possibly in an improved terrace of two storey houses is a recommended form of sheltered accommodation for inner-city dwellers; suburban locations are inappropriate for the time being.

Accordingly if mainstream housing associations are to address the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders (either directly or in partnership with black housing associations) they need to look at the locations of their schemes. Are they located in areas which are likely to be attractive to such elders? If not, where are they planning to develop schemes in the future?

Staffing

In meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders, the importance of recruiting staff with an appropriate ethnic or cultural background (or, at the very least, with knowledge of/sensitivity to the relevant culture) has been highlighted by several commentators.

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ASHIA(1990) state that:

Housing associations should recruit more Asian staff. It is one area in which steps can be taken to help meet the needs of Asian households.

Ward (1985) notes that:

One of the key issues is a positive policy of recruiting black staff. We cannot hope, for example, to provide for Chinese elderly people unless we have Chinese staff. We have to see language and cultural knowledge as primary qualifications which are more important than formal certificates.

Bowes, McCluskey and Sim (quoted in Brailey, 1989) argue that there is a need to recruit wardens with relevant language skills and to recognise that racism exists among white tenants (which can be a particular problem in sheltered housing which has communal facilities). This latter issue is explored in Chapter 5.

If mainstream housing associations are to progress beyond the "numbers game" and address issues of service delivery, then staff recruitment will be a key issue. How can staff address the needs of tenants if they lack the necessary cultural or linguistic knowledge, or the knowledge of how to access such expertise?

The future

What then needs to be done in the future if efforts are to be made to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders?

Age Concern/Help the Aged Housing Trust (1984) refer to the need for mainstream housing associations to:

Decide at the outset how they intend to provide housing for ethnic elders. They may rehouse them and use their own staff to provide the necessary management and welfare support, as for their other tenants, or they may work through community groups.

In terms of existing services Thomas (1992) notes that:

Services could be improved for Asians firstly by ensuring that all the information available to the white population is also available to the Asian population in the appropriate languages.

and further that:

All policies are culturally aware of the different needs of the Asian elder.

Given that there may well be some need among black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation, thought needs to be given to where such accommodation should be located and who is best able to provide the services tenants will require. While there may be some demand for separate ethnic-specific provision, such needs may not necessarily be long-term ones. For example, Lee Samuel (the founder of Carib) is noted in Norman (1985) as taking the view that:

Specialised housing of this kind will only be needed by Afro-Caribbeans for the next fifteen or twenty years to meet the particular needs of the immigrant generation. She believes that the next generation will be very different and will not need separate help.

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Be that as it may we are, at present, concerned with the current generation and their housing needs. With reference to those needs the report on Birmingham City Council's 1993 seminar on the "Housing Needs of Black Elders" makes the following recommendations for sheltered housing specifically for black and minority ethnic groups:

- **Priority allocation of housing sites to black-led housing associations**
- **Stock transfers from Housing Department to black-led housing associations**
- **Alternative sources of funding should be explored and used to aid the development of schemes**
- **Agencies should work together to facilitate the development process or partnership arrangements should be entered into that can make effective use of resources, particularly financial ones**

With regard to the location of schemes the report states that:

A scheme should be developed and located within the communities that black elders live in, that have established community facilities.

The report states with regard to scheme design that:

Design should be culturally appropriate. Designers need to be aware of the needs, cultures and experiences of black people and incorporate them into the design of sheltered schemes.

With reference to the dissemination of information the report recommends that:

Information about sheltered housing schemes should be provided to black elders in a 'face to face' way.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly it recommends that alternatives to sheltered housing should be investigated:

Other ways of meeting housing needs for black elders should be promoted or developed e.g. shared ownership schemes, stay put schemes or three generation homes.

This is one of the key issues. Because a particular type of accommodation (sheltered accommodation) has been provided for a particular type of person (white elders) for a number of years, this does not mean that that type of accommodation will meet the needs of other types of people (black and minority ethnic elders). If the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders are, therefore, to be properly addressed changes may be needed in either the type of accommodation that is provided, the way in which it is provided or who is providing it.

The key questions

Following the review of existing literature and the research into the four participating associations (detailed in Chapter 1) a number of key questions were identified. These questions underpinned the subsequent stages of the research:

Was the product being offered (i.e. sheltered accommodation) one that was wanted by black and minority ethnic elders?

Was it a matter of the provider rather than the product being wrong i.e. was it the case that black and minority ethnic elders wanted this type of accommodation but that they

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would prefer it to be provided by organisations other than large "white" housing associations?

Was it a matter of lack of knowledge i.e. were both the product and the provider potentially right but not known by black and minority ethnic elders?

Was it a matter of schemes being located in the wrong areas?

Was there no market i.e. were there insufficient black and minority ethnic elders or were such elders all taken care of within their own families/communities (the "they look after their own" argument)?

In order to investigate these issues three "depth" areas were selected for further research, namely London, Bradford and the West Midlands, with further research being carried out in Liverpool to compensate for the fact that Servite had no schemes in Bradford.

The issues identified for the research in these areas were:

- Existing tenants
- Potential tenants
- Other housing associations
- Black housing organisations working with the four participating associations
- Local authorities

Chapter 1 The Participating Housing Association Study

The first stage of the research consisted of an in-depth study of the four participating associations. This involved a review of documentation provided by the associations and of existing literature concerning the study topic and other related areas, together with a series of 59 interviews held with staff of the four associations at all levels, both centrally and in regional offices. This was written up in June 1993 in the form of individual reports to all four associations and a composite report covering the key findings that were of relevance to them all.

The research looked at a number of key issues:

1. The policies of the four associations with reference to equality of opportunity
2. Their performance in terms of housing black and minority ethnic elders
3. Possible barriers to access to sheltered accommodation affecting such elders
4. Actions taken to open up sheltered housing to black and minority ethnic elders
5. The ethnic record keeping and monitoring systems operated by the participating associations
6. The way forward
7. Identification of the key questions that needed to be answered through the later stages of the research

Policy

All of the participating associations had clear written commitments to Equal Opportunities, although Housing 21 initially lacked a specific Equal Opportunities Service Delivery policy. There is, however, a world of difference between the adoption of a policy and its enactment. Following from this it was a matter of concern to see that, at the time of the research, only one association (Servite) had an implementation document (although Anchor, Hanover and Servite have since developed Action Plans). If policy is to inform practice, then the importance of an implementation plan cannot be over-emphasised.

SERVITE'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENTS

The Association's current Equal Opportunities statements read as follows:

In furtherance of a policy of equality of opportunity the Association will ensure that no applicant for employment or housing or any employee or tenant receives any less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origin, or on the grounds of sex, marital status or physical disability.

The statements go on to say, with reference specifically to service provision:

The Association will ensure that information about its activities is as widely available as possible to all sections of the community. All applications for housing are monitored in furtherance of the policy of equal opportunities and the Association will ensure that no applicant for housing receives any less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, religion, ethnic or national origins or on the grounds of sex, marital status or physical disability.

The Association is actively working with ethnic groups in its areas of operation in order to develop housing schemes specifically for ethnic groups. Housing management practices are regularly examined in order to ensure they do not discriminate against any individual or section of our tenants. The Association will give active consideration to the culture and religion of tenants in operating housing management practices.

In addition the statements cover harassment and development. With regard to the latter the statement reads:

The priority is to ensure access to all mainstream housing provided by the Association to all sectors of society but we will also seek to develop schemes with agencies meeting the specific needs of other groups. The Association will also seek to offer advice and assistance to any housing organisations representing ethnic groups...

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES: POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION - INITIATIVES TAKEN BY HANOVER

Hanover:

Hanover's Business Plan 1991-1996 states that:

Hanover has a published equal opportunities statement and since 1988 has embarked upon a training programme on equal opportunities for staff and committee members. Hanover has also adopted the 1991 CRE Code of Practice for rented housing...

Hanover's take-up of housing by people from the ethnic minorities has been low as the proportion of retired people of ethnic origin has only recently started to become significant nationally. Cultural differences and the location of existing stock in areas of low ethnic minority population have also contributed to this situation

However, since 1990, the association has selected areas where the ethnic minority population is highest and has committed resources so that ethnic minority elderly people are given better information and greater opportunities to apply for, and be selected for, Hanover accommodation.

The Association's Annual Report 1992 states, with regard to Equal Opportunities, that:

Hanover is committed to serving the whole community, including people from minority ethnic communities for whom sheltered housing is less of a tradition...

So far as housing is concerned, Hanover is following two main approaches.

First, recognising that many of our existing estates are in areas with low concentrations of minority ethnic communities, we are focusing on estates in more mixed areas, building links with community groups and ensuring that wide multi-lingual publicity is given to the availability of vacancies. These efforts are now beginning to bear fruit and we are increasing the number of targeted estates accordingly.

Second, we are working with several minority ethnic housing associations, providing agency services for development and, in some cases, management. In this context, we are prepared to look seriously at stock transfer.

Given the need to translate policies into action, it is encouraging to see that the Association has a Race and Housing Working Party, made up of representatives from each of the Regions, whose remit is:

To identify ways in which the number of applications and allocations from members of minority ethnic groups can be increased.

The existence of such a group, so long as it meets regularly, should help to keep Equal Opportunities a "live" issue, keep staff aware of its importance and monitor progress made.

In addition to this the Equal Opportunities Policy is sent to all tenants with the association's newsletter and forms part of the package given to all applicants for housing.

The Participating Housing Association Study

Performance

Applications

In all cases there was a low number of lettings to black and minority ethnic elders, which reflected a low number of applications from these groups. It is not that people are applying and being rejected but rather that they are not applying at all.

ANCHOR

Waiting List details at 31.3.93 and 31.3.94 reveal the following:

	31.3.93		31.3.94	
	Number	%	Number	%
White	32,560	93.1	29,673	97.1
Black-Caribbean	165	0.5	86	0.3
Black-African	35	0.1	21	0.1
Indian	23	0.1	41	0.1
Bangladeshi	0	0	3	*
Chinese	39	0.1	18	0.1
Pakistani	2	*	7	*
Black-Other	2	*	12	*
Other	111	0.3	101	0.3
Unknown	2,033	5.8	594	1.9
Total	34,970		30,556	

* percentages too small to show

Thus there has been a huge fall in the number of applicants for whom there is no information on ethnic origin (down to 594 i.e. 1.9% by 31 March 1994) while the overall percentage share of "non-white" applicants has remained largely static (with some changes in representation between the individual groups, most notably a large fall in the number of Black-Caribbean applicants) at approximately 1%.

In one region an interviewee commented that:

'I can't recall us ever having received an application from any other than White [applicants].'

This low number of applicants was reflected in the low percentage of allocations to these groups (see below).

HANOVER

Up-to-date details of the ethnicity of those on the Waiting List was not immediately available, however, staff interviewed felt that minority ethnic applications to Hanover were few and far between:

'We just don't seem to attract the ethnic minorities . . . [because] . . . ethnic minorities don't want to move, into the type of environment we've got.'

In the former Eastern Region, for example, out of 163 applications received for the period ending 30th September 1992, none were from black applicants.

It was, however, difficult to compare this applications data to allocations data because, while ethnic monitoring of both applications and allocations was carried out regionally on a

The Participating Housing Association Study

monthly basis, as part of the "Regional Statistics on lettings", it did not appear to be compiled centrally i.e. no overall figure was available.

HOUSING 21

Housing 21 have previously attracted very low numbers of black and minority ethnic applicants. As one interviewee noted:

'We basically get no [black applications]. . . it's not even very few it's none.'

The association's monitoring data for 31.3.93 and 31.12.93 is shown below:

	Position 31.3.93		Position 31.3.94	
	Number	%	Number	%
Asian	3	*	10	0.1
Caribbean	0	*	45	0.6
African	0	*	67	0.9
SE Asia	3	*	5	0.1
British/European	3,668	51.0	5,008	70.2
Irish	31	0.4	25	0.4
Other	10	0.1	528	0.4
Combination of above groups	4	0.1	11	0.2
Question refused	267	3.7	189	2.7
Info. not available	3,213	44.6	1,742	24.4
TOTAL	7,199		7,130	

**percentages too small to show*

Two things are immediately noticeable from the above: there has been a huge fall in the number of applicants for whom ethnic origin data is not available (due to updating of applications including the collection of ethnic details) and "Asian", "Caribbean", "African" and "SE Asian" applicants have risen from 0.1% of the total to 1.8%. It should be noted here, however, that, the vast majority (if not all) of these applications would be applications to family properties i.e. not applications for sheltered accommodation.

SERVITE

While the ethnic origin of all those coming onto the Waiting List during the year was monitored, no detailed breakdown of the entire Waiting List was available.

Allocations

All four of the participating associations performed badly when it came to housing black and minority ethnic elders. The one possible exception to this was Servite who made a comparatively high percentage of allocations to black and minority ethnic applicants - the association's allocations figures, however, also included allocations to general housing (as do those of Housing 21 for 1993/94) and thus were likely to be skewed by general housing (together with a concentration of minority ethnic lettings in the London area which masked differing regional performance).

The Participating Housing Association Study

Allocations by ethnic origin of household (CORE data - HAR 10/1 Categories)

Ethnic Category	Association							
	Anchor		Hanover		Housing 21		Servite	
	93	94	93	94	93	94	93	94
Black: Asian/S.E. Asian	9	20	9	8	2	2	15	10
Black: African/Caribbean	9	14	—	2	0	21	37	16
Black: British/Other	4	26	—	0	0	5	0	0
White: Brit./Eur./Other	2,744	2,739	957	1,219	1,259	1,360	546	568
White: Irish	5	8	2	2	3	2	20	20
Mixed	4	1	2	2	1	17	5	15
Other	3	1	1	32	0	1	1	2
Total	2,778	2,809	971*	1,265*	1,265	1,408	624	631
Unknown	0	1	6	0	3	6	1	12

(Data shown allocations to households for each financial year i.e. 92/93 and 93/94)

* Adjusted NFHA CORE data

Tenants' audit

Only one of the associations (Anchor) had carried out an "ethnic origin audit" of its existing tenants (although Hanover have carried one out since the research phase was completed) but the feeling in the other participating associations was that the number of black and minority ethnic tenants was very low. While they had no hard data on this, the low numbers tended to mean that such tenants were individually known to staff.

Access channels

Principal access channels varied between the associations. With regard to local authority nominations, all of the associations, with the exception of Servite (possibly due to the fact that the association also provides general needs housing) found it a problem getting local authorities to exercise their nomination rights. It was further felt that where local authorities do make nominations they tend to nominate white applicants only. These issues are explored in Chapter 2.

Source of referral: 1993/94

	Anchor		Hanover		Ho. 21		Servite	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nominated by LA	1,015	36.1	395	31.2	431	30.5	305	47.4
Direct Application	1,360	48.4	513	40.6	759	53.7	180	28.0
Internal Transfer	295	10.5	261	20.6	154	10.9	78	12.1
Other	140	5.0	96	7.6	70	4.9	80	12.5
Total	2,810		1,265*		1,414		643	

(Source: NFHA CORE data 1993/94) *

Adjusted NFHA CORE data

ANCHOR TENANTS' AUDIT

Anchor carried out an audit of the ethnic origin of all tenants in September 1992. This showed that of a total of 25,346 tenants 143 (0.6%) were Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black Other, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese or Pakistani, with a further 77 (0.3%) classifying themselves as "Other" (the ethnic origin of 732, i.e. 2.9%, of tenants being "unknown"). Anchor's "non-white" tenants therefore constitute only 0.9% of the total number of tenants. Comparison with the other Associations involved in this research is difficult as, unlike them, Anchor uses the Census ethnic classification categories, rather than those set out for CORE, for its monitoring.

More recent data reveals that at 31.3.94 the ethnic origin of Anchor's tenants was as follows:

	Number	%
White	25,219	97.6
Black-Caribbean	68	0.3
Black-African	24	0.1
Indian	35	0.1
Bangladeshi	1	*
Chinese	17	*
Pakistani	18	*
Black-Other	2	*
Other	88	0.3
Unknown	354	1.4
Total	25,826	

Thus of 25,826 tenants 165 (0.6%) were Black-Caribbean, Black-African, Black Other, Indian, Bangladeshi, Chinese or Pakistani, with a further 88 (0.3%) classifying themselves as "Other" (the ethnic origin of 402, i.e. 1.6%, of tenants being "unknown"). Anchor's "non-white" tenants therefore still constitute only 0.9% of the total number of tenants. In other words while in terms of the number of black and minority ethnic elders housed there has been some improvement, in percentage terms there was very little change over the period.

ANCHOR

Interviewees acknowledged that access was mainly through direct application with the main way people found out about the Association being:

[Through] word of mouth probably.'

It was felt that not many direct applications came from black or minority ethnic elders. Due to difficulties in recording access channel data on the Sheltered Housing Register it was, at the time of the research, difficult to analyse access channel by ethnic group.

As the Association had what was perceived to be a low profile in terms of publicity, it was felt that most applicants would already know somebody in Anchor accommodation and that this would thus exclude black and minority ethnic elders. To counteract this it was felt that the Association needed to place emphasis on actually getting information out to people (e.g. by advertising in Asian areas and using the Asian media), not just leaving it up to them to find it out.

HANOVER

As for Anchor, as the CORE figures showed applicants were more likely to get on Hanover's Waiting List by applying directly to the association. It was felt that people found out about the association mostly through friends or family who were already in Hanover accommodation or through seeing a Hanover sign-board

'Word of mouth ... is the strongest advertisement.'

While it was felt that applications from black and minority ethnic elders were likely to be as a result of word-of-mouth, if applicants were indeed most likely to find out about the Association through existing tenants, then it should come as no surprise to find that the majority of applicants were white, given that the same was true of existing tenants.

HOUSING 21

For Housing 21 more than the other participating associations the main access channel was direct application. Interviewees noted that direct applications may occur through people getting to know about Housing 21 through friends who were already tenants:

'It's word of mouth.'

This process was described by one interviewee as a:

'Referred lead.'

And by another as:

'Contact allocation'

that is providing housing for people known to you through contact, rather than on the basis of housing need.

It was also felt that an ex-Service connection still existed, with the Royal British Legion telling people about the Association.

If this is, indeed, the case, with applicants finding out about the Association through existing tenants, then as for Anchor and Hanover, it is no surprise to find that the overwhelming majority of applicants were white.

SERVITE

The situation for Servite was rather different than for the other participating associations with local authority nominations taking up a higher share of allocations than direct applications (41.3% as compared to 35.1%).

For sheltered housing, under the new lettings policy, there was an open Waiting List which anyone could come on. For general family accommodation the majority of referrals came from referral agencies and local authorities. It should be noted, however, that referral arrangements with black organisations, so far as these existed, would appear to have been

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informal, with people coming through such organisations being defined not as referrals but as 'direct applications'.

While it was felt that there were potential problems in getting black and minority ethnic referrals through 'mainstream agencies':

'I don't know if ethnic minority people . . . use Age Concern, CAB . . .'

the difficulty of getting black organisations to act as referral agencies was also commented upon. For example in the London and South-East Region no referral agencies that would cover African-Caribbeans or Asians had been identified.

In the West Midlands Region attempts had been made to obtain referrals from black groups but these groups had said that they could not convince Asian tenants to move in unless there were other Asian tenants in the particular scheme. The Region had looked at the possibility of keeping a group of flats empty so that they could be let as a group to Asian applicants, but had identified a number of problems:

- financial pressure (of keeping flats empty); problem of identifying potential tenants (as, with respect to local authority nominations, Birmingham City Council could not easily identify Asian elders);
- size of accommodation not meeting Asian elders' needs;
- schemes have electric cookers rather than gas;
- opposition from existing tenants.

Clearly, with the exception of Servite there was a reliance on word-of-mouth as an access channel. As the CRE's research on employment has shown reliance on such informal networks of information acts to exclude those who are not part of such a network i.e. it would act to ensure that "white" schemes remained white. It should be noted, however, that all four associations were taking steps to increase their public profile (these steps are listed under 'Actions' below) and thus to increase knowledge of the associations thereby (hopefully) bringing black and minority ethnic elders into the network.

It was evident at the time that this stage of the research was being carried out that (with the Servite exceptions mentioned above) there was a lack of use of black organisations as referral agencies, although some attempts had been made (largely unsuccessfully) to encourage black organisations to make referrals.

Barriers to access

A number of possible barriers to access for black and minority ethnic elders were identified by the staff of the participating associations. These included:

Image/knowledge of the participating associations/housing associations in general/ sheltered housing;

Location of existing schemes;

Fear of isolation;

Design/appropriateness of accommodation;

Affordability;

Language problems.

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(A) Image/knowledge

This was seen as problematic on three levels:

- (i) **The Participating Associations:** Interviewees from Anchor, Hanover and Housing 21 tended to see their employers as having a white, middle-class image — as being run by whites for whites. This was coupled with the feeling that many minority ethnic elders may not be aware of the association. For Servite the problem was seen very much as this latter point i.e. it was seen as a problem of lack of knowledge, leading to the association having no image at all rather than a negative image.
- (ii) **Housing Associations in general:** It was felt that black and minority ethnic elders were less likely to know about housing associations, but where they did know about them they were likely to view them as "White Providers" i.e. as providing for white elders alone.
- (iii) **Sheltered Housing:** This was felt to have a white image (in some cases possibly due to hostility from existing tenants), but it was also felt that ethnic minority elders either did not know about or misunderstood sheltered housing.

(B) Location of existing schemes

For all four participating associations existing schemes tended to be located in areas with very small black or minority ethnic populations. This does not explain, however, why, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. a Hanover scheme in Slough and Anchor schemes in the Lozells area of Birmingham), the associations were failing to attract applicants in areas with significant black and minority ethnic populations.

(C) Fear of isolation

The view was expressed that fear of being the only person from a given ethnic group living in a scheme may dissuade people from applying for accommodation in the first place, or accepting an offer of accommodation. As a possible solution to this problem associations should seriously consider the possibility/feasibility of holding a number of units vacant in appropriate schemes so that "block" allocations could be made to minority ethnic elders.

(D) Design/appropriateness

The question was raised by a number of interviewees of whether the design or, indeed, the type of accommodation provided by the associations meets the needs or aspirations of minority ethnic elders. The question of how appropriate sheltered housing now was generally (given a perceived increase in "difficult-to-let") was also raised by some interviewees. In attempting to answer this question it is first necessary to establish what those needs are (housing aspirations of both existing and potential tenants are featured in Chapters 5 and 6). With regard to housing *need*, this is an issue about which housing associations should not make assumptions - housing need can best be established by asking potential tenants and their representative organisations in specific geographic areas what they want and need.

(E) Affordability

The issue of the affordability of the accommodation provided by the associations was another possible reason put forward for the low number of minority ethnic tenants. Linked to this was the feeling that minority ethnic elders may be unaware of their eligibility for benefits. These issues are returned to later in this report.

(F) Language

The problem of communication was highlighted by a number of interviewees as being an issue of concern. Language problems, coupled with illiteracy (which negates the use of translated materials) were seen as necessitating the use of other strategies to get the associations' message across. Some of these strategies are covered below.

Actions taken

The four participating associations had adopted quite a broad range of strategies in order to:

- (a) increase awareness of their commitment to Equal Opportunities (both among staff, tenants and potential applicants);
- (b) increase the number of applications from members of the black and minority ethnic communities;
- (c) ensure all applicants were treated fairly.

These strategies can be grouped under the broad headings of:

Policy Review
Targeting
Publicity
Training
Work with black housing organisations
Employment

(i) Policy Review: Stated commitments to equality of opportunity will not have any positive effect if they exist alongside eligibility/allocation criteria that may indirectly discriminate against minority ethnic elders.

In line with the above it is pleasing to note that Housing 21 has (since 1986) moved away from its previous role as a provider of sheltered housing only for elderly ex-Service people. This is not to say that there are no elderly minority ethnic ex-Service people but rather that, because of the network involved and the reliance on word-of-mouth such people tended to be excluded. The association has replaced its allocations system with a needs-based point system for all applicants and transfers. It is also worth noting that Hanover has replaced its former subjective allocation system with a more objective points-based system.

Following from this the interim report to the four associations recommended that they continued to look carefully at their policies to ensure:

- (a) that they did not prevent minority ethnic elders from applying in the first place (i.e. they needed to look at their eligibility criteria);
- (b) that, if they did apply, ethnic elders were treated fairly.

(ii) Targeting: At the time of the first stage of the research none of the associations had, set formal numeric performance targets against which performance could be measured. Anchor had targeted action strategies linked to target areas and schemes. Hanover had strategies linked to targeted estates. Housing 21 had selected areas which were being looked at as part of the CRE's (then current) investigation of housing associations for an initiative to introduce liaison meetings with the local "CRC's". It should be noted that these were targeted actions, **not** numeric targets against which actual performance could be measured.

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While the research was being carried out Anchor actually introduced numeric performance targets for housing black and minority ethnic elders for its targeted schemes. As this is still a very new initiative it remains to be seen how effective the targets will prove to be and whether or not performance with regard to housing the targeted groups will improve.

From our interviews with Anchor staff following the introduction of this initiative it became clear that in some of the association's regions staff were somewhat confused as to the difference between a target and a quota. Accordingly "housing need" criteria appeared to be being abandoned in order to meet the targets, and then only being reintroduced when the targets had been met. In the light of this it should be stressed that targets are not quotas. That is to say they are not hard and fast figures that must be met exactly and not surpassed. They are something to aim at and failure to achieve them (or surpassing them) should be investigated - it may have happened because the initial targets were unrealistic in which case the targets themselves should be changed.

Hanover stated in July 1993 that:

As part of the Business Planning process it is proposed to establish Equal Opportunity targets for both employment and housing allocations, and to introduce procedures for achieving them.

The association's "Equal Opportunities: Action Plan" states that targets:

On the basis of 1991 census information,

will have been set by 1st September 1994.

Housing 21's "Equal Opportunities, Policy Statements and Targets" (December 1993) proposes the setting of numeric targets in three areas of housing activity: lettings, applications on the Housing Register and nominations. For the former it states that:

Each Region has identified those Local Authorities where ethnic minority households constitute 2% or more of the local population and have identified schemes in those areas which may be appropriate to meeting the needs of the ethnic communities ... The target nationally is 70 lettings during 1994 to black and ethnic minority applicants ...

With regard to applications the association states that:

To achieve the letting targets it is necessary to attract more applications from the black and ethnic minority communities onto the Housing Register. It is calculated that for each letting made three applicants are required. On this basis the target of new black and ethnic minority applicants required is 200 which is 3.5% of our current Housing Register of 6,000 applicants.

While targets are useful as a performance measurement tool it is essential that associations go beyond, mere numbers. Attracting black and minority ethnic elders in order to meet the obligations set out in one's Equal Opportunities statement and/or to keep the Housing Corporation happy is not enough. There is a need to go beyond the "numbers game" and to look at the quality and relevance of the service provided to tenants. This theme is implicit throughout this report.

ANCHOR'S TARGETING APPROACH

There are two clear themes to Anchor's targeting approach: TARGET SCHEMES and TARGET AREAS

Target Schemes

Target schemes are defined as follows:

10% of elderly population are from ethnic communities in the ward or adjoining ward to the sheltered housing scheme.

Target Areas

This is a new approach for Anchor and aims to have a medium-to long-term objective of increasing awareness about sheltered housing for the future. Target areas are defined as those local authority areas which have 5% of their elderly population coming from ethnic communities.

Both Target Schemes and Target Areas were initially concerned with the targeting of action (i.e. with the focused use of resources) rather than with the production of numeric performance targets. Anchor has now moved beyond this stage to the production of such performance targets for the Target Schemes. In future the efficacy of the association's targeted promotional strategies will be able to be gauged against these target figures.

(iii) Publicity: A number of strategies had been used by the participating associations to publicise themselves, some better organised than others and with varying perceived degrees of effectiveness. Among those used were: posters/leaflets (translated into appropriate languages), local radio, slide presentations, "road shows", open days and meetings with CRC's.

Particular examples of good practice in increasing community awareness of housing associations and their role were Hanover's production of "Staff procedure notes on increasing allocations", which listed strategies which could be adopted and useful contacts, and the same association's appointment of a Liaison Officer based at their Shipley Office (a very sensible strategy given that making community contacts was identified as being of crucial importance by a number of interviewees).

A further example of good practice in terms of promoting housing associations and spreading awareness of them is the initiative currently being undertaken in Bradford where Housing 21, Hanover and Anchor (n.b. Servite have no schemes in this area) have combined resources and expertise in order to promote themselves together, thus avoiding the problem of independently trying to target the same market and thus duplicating each others work. It is interesting to note that the terms of reference for this initiative identify the need to look at post-entry service provided rather than solely concentrating on attracting black and minority ethnic applicants in the first place.

POSITIVE TARGETING OF ETHNIC MINORITY APPLICANTS

(The Bradford collaborative model)

1. It was agreed that each of the three Associations would examine the potential for pooling additional staff resources to target specific ethnic minority community groups initially in the Bradford Metropolitan area, with an eventual aim of spreading this to the whole of the West Yorkshire area. It was felt that pooled resources in terms of literature would be helpful, but more importantly, that emphasis should be put upon personal contacts with Community Groups and their Leaders. It was recognised that there was an immense diversity of groups within both the Southern Asian and the Afro Caribbean communities, and that specialist attention needs to be paid to this diversity.
2. It was recognised that there is a lack of understanding amongst most ethnic minority groups as to what Housing Associations have to offer, and in particular as to what is meant by sheltered housing. Again it was recognised that personal contact was the key to overcoming this situation. It was also recognised that by pooling staff resources, information could be disseminated about the availability of accommodation across the range for the three Associations so that applicants would have equal choice in terms of access to any scheme in the defined locality.
3. In order to aid the happy settlement of a new household into a scheme where they might otherwise feel isolated, it was agreed that the three Associations should elicit support packages from the ethnic minority community of the origin of the applicant concerned. This ongoing association with a given housing scheme was more likely to produce further applicants and new tenants from the same community.
4. It was felt that all three Associations will probably need to continue to educate their existing tenants in the need to target those living in housing need within specific ethnic minority communities who would otherwise not get to hear about the provision which is available.
5. It was agreed to link in with the Local Authority in its enabling role in terms of contacts with ethnic minority communities, as Authorities such as Bradford have substantial resources devoted to this particular end.
6. It was agreed that there was a continuing need to educate staff, including Resident Managers, in the need for positive action with ethnic minority communities.
7. Most importantly, it was agreed that each representative would aim to establish additional resources in terms of staffing to service this new initiative. If, for instance, each of the three Associations were to appoint a part-time or full-time member of staff whose work would be devoted or partially devoted to the joint aims of the initiative, this would be a major step forward. It was perceived that such an initiative would be a forward looking step and would be recognised as such by such as the Housing Corporation. Additionally, it was recognised that there was a need to change some established perceptions, perhaps in bodies like the Housing Corporation, which interpret target setting purely from a numbers perspective and do not recognise the subtlety of different community distinctions within the larger cultural groups.

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It should, however, be noted that publicity and promotional initiatives do not exist in a vacuum - they must be looked at in the context of housing association policies, scheme location and what is on offer. Further they will not achieve overnight successes - the process of attracting minority ethnic applicants is likely to take time given lack of knowledge of housing associations/ sheltered housing, the need to build up/access networks of communication and the negative experiences black and minority ethnic elders may have had in dealing with predominantly white organisations in the past.

(iv) **Training:** The CRE's "Code of Practice in Rented Housing" (1991) states that:

Training on Race Equality Policies needs to be part of an overall training strategy.

The type and extent of Race/Equal Opportunities training varied between the four associations. Both Hanover and Housing 21 had recently provided training for all office-based staff on Equal Opportunities (although this training had not previously been extended to cover wardens, a somewhat baffling, and rather worrying, omission given their crucial front-line role) — Hanover now provide wardens with such training. Since the production of the interim report Anchor have carried out extensive staff training on both equal opportunities and targeting, using an external consultant.

The need for regular Equal Opportunities training, organised in a consistent manner, was highlighted in the interim report to the four associations. As we identified, ideally this should form part of the induction training for new staff and not be presented as a "stand alone" separate from mainstream training. The content of such training needs to be carefully considered but should, at the very least, cover such issues as:

Why do we have an Equal Opportunity Policy?

What does it mean?

How do we implement it?

(v) **Work with black housing organisations:** The amount of work done in co-operation/ partnership with black housing organisations and the nature of this work varied considerably between the four associations.

Both Anchor and Housing 21 had carried out stock transfers to black housing associations. In Anchor's case this was the first transfer of a tenanted scheme (to Manningham Housing Association), while Housing 21 had carried out an innovative three-way transfer (involving both Manningham and Brunei Housing Associations). Hanover had developed a scheme in Merton with a black housing association (Millat) while Servite had developed a scheme in Birmingham in conjunction with a black community group (Birmingham Community Association) that was principally targeted at African-Caribbeans.

The question of what exactly the relationship between the large national association and the smaller black association should be needs to be looked into carefully. One interviewee identified the ideal situation as:

'Black associations developing and managing schemes for ethnic elders. But it's not an ideal world.'

Given this a number of different approaches had been used by the four associations including:

- Development Agency work
- Management Agency arrangements
- Stock transfer

Such work was seen as being beneficial both to the large association and to the black housing organisation involved. It was also seen as a more effective strategy than attempting to meet needs through direct provision.

While the necessity of working with black housing and community organisations was recognised, both in terms of obtaining applications from ethnic minorities and helping to provide housing that was appropriate to their housing needs, it was also recognised that this is not an easy option. There are problems involved in such a relationship: the national association can be seen both as a big association and as a "white provider", so there is a danger of being seen as patronising or merely out to score "Brownie points" from the Housing Corporation. There may also be problems due to the Housing Corporation's current strategy of directing its resources through large associations, rather than giving them directly to smaller, community-based ones. The issues of the role of black and mainstream housing associations and of their inter-relationship are dealt with in Chapter 3.



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STOCK TRANSFERS

Housing 21:

Housing 21's clearest success has been the three way transfer with Brunei and Manningham Housing Associations, which would appear to be an innovative and successful way of meeting clearly identified housing needs that could not be met by the association through direct provision. Through this transfer Housing 21 transferred sheltered units to Brunei Housing Association, who in turn transferred large family units to Manningham Housing Association, thus helping Manningham to meet the need for larger family units that they had identified.

Anchor:

Anchor's transfer of a tenanted scheme to Manningham Housing Association in Bradford was the first tenanted hand-over in the country. Other transfers that had either taken place or were in the pipe-line at the time of the research included:

- a Residential Care Home in Leeds - to United Caribbean;
- Mahatma Gandhi House in Leicester — to ASRA. n.b. regarding this scheme the comment was made that:

'It just seemed to be let. . . without any trouble.'

- a tenanted sheltered scheme in Birmingham, which had few Black tenants but was in an area with a large Black population to United Churches Housing Association;
- a new sheltered scheme in Reading developed with Reading Afro-Caribbean Elderly Housing Association with the aim of eventual transfer;
- an upgraded Housing-with-Care scheme in Bristol - to United Housing Association;
- a Cat. 2 scheme developed with Nottingham City Council and Acacia (an African-Caribbean group) — to Tun Tum (an umbrella association for several Black groups).

Anchor has taken significant steps towards helping to meet the needs of ethnic minority elders through working more closely with black housing organisations. Such a strategy was seen by the association as "probably" more effective than direct provision for these groups by Anchor - it was felt that Anchor lacked the necessary expertise and that it would be "foolish" for the Association to go out and build a scheme specifically for a given ethnic group.

(vi) Employment: It was widely recognised by the staff interviewed that the associations needed to employ more minority ethnic staff. Servite's employment record looked particularly good, but these staff were concentrated in London and there were no details available of their grade or their work status (full/part-time)-this latter point was a problem with all the associations, highlighting the need to improve ethnic monitoring of employment as well as of service delivery.

Anchor's adoption of new recruitment strategies, linked to numeric targets for applications, is particularly to be welcomed. Under this new approach Anchor is seeking to ensure that:

Our staff and our tenants reflect the community they live and work in.

Accordingly recruitment targets have been set in order to ensure that the staff reflect the community in the area in which they are working. These targets are, therefore, based on:

The percentage of the local community which is black or from an ethnic minority.

Interestingly while those recruiting may, if the number of black or minority ethnic applicants does not reflect their numbers in the relevant area, request permission to proceed with recruitment without meeting the applicant percentage for "Pressing Operational Reasons", out of a possible 437 appointments (during the period April 93- April 94) there were only 27 Exemption Requests. As Anchor have noted:

This is only 6% of all appointments, implying that in general it is possible to attract a representative sample of people applying for most jobs. There were only a few cases where the cost of re-advertising was necessary.

The need to recruit more minority ethnic wardens was particularly highlighted during the interviews with staff from the four participating associations, both with regard to attracting more minority ethnic applicants and to better meeting the cultural and linguistic needs of minority ethnic tenants. This latter point is of key importance if associations are to move beyond numbers into the delivery of appropriate services.

BRIEFING NOTE

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AT ANCHOR

A NEW APPROACH

Although Anchor has had an Equal Opportunities Policy for many years now, we still employ and house very few black and ethnic minority people. Whilst Equal Opportunities cover other groups who experience discrimination, such as women and people with disabilities, gay men and lesbians, the lack of progress with regard to racial equality is striking.

As a result, Anchor has decided not to focus exclusively on ensuring that no-one is deliberately discriminating, but to be more positive in our approach-to seek to ensure that our staff and our tenants reflect the community they live and work in. This means that we need to be proactive in encouraging black and ethnic minority people to apply for housing and jobs with Anchor.

In order to do this we have decided to set ourselves targets. In terms of employment, we are trying to ensure that our staff in a particular area reflect that local community and we have therefore set benchmarks for recruitment. These benchmarks are the percentage of the local community which is black or from an ethnic minority. We hope to attract people to apply for jobs, to ensure that they are short-listed and hopefully appointed in numbers which reflect these benchmarks. This does not mean we will be positively discriminating. We *will not* be offering interviews or jobs to people simply because they are black. Instead, we will try to ensure that our advertisements attract people from the widest pool of talent and that our short-listing techniques do not exclude anyone unfairly.

In terms of housing, we have looked at the local population around our sheltered schemes and where more than 10% of that population is black or from an ethnic minority we have said that these will be 'target schemes'.

This means that in target scheme areas we will work specifically in the local ethnic minority communities to ensure that elderly people have heard of Anchor, know what we have to offer and are considering us as one of their housing options.



PATRON: HRH PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

We are also aware that people who come from a different culture or speak a different language will feel isolated unless they live in a group of people with whom they share a similar background. We are therefore going to try and ensure, again by setting a target, that identified schemes have a 'community within a community' of black or ethnic minority elders.

Other areas of Anchor's work will also continue to take Equal Opportunities into account. In maintenance and development we will seek to ensure that contractors follow Equal Opportunities practices. Our Development Departments already assist a number of black housing associations and we will continue to develop this work. We will continue to look for opportunities to transfer some of our stock to the management, and eventually the ownership, of a black housing association.

In Housing-with-Care we are working to ensure that our schemes in Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol and Bradford house people who reflect the local community. In some cases we are doing this by setting targets, in others we are working closely with local voluntary agencies in seeking referrals and providing support for residents.

In our Staying-Put projects we are seeking to ensure that we help all sections of the local elderly community. In housing provided by Guardian, we will ensure that schemes are marketed to all sections of the community, that staff reflect the community and that building contractors also follow Equal Opportunities practices.

In order to ensure that all our staff are aware of what is going on and what is expected of them, we will be arranging Awareness sessions in Equal Opportunities for everyone. This will be specifically tailored to Anchor's needs and run by specially trained Anchor staff. You will appreciate that organising local Awareness sessions for all Anchor staff is a fairly complex task and it will take a while before everyone has attended a session. Your line manager will give you details of the session you will be invited to attend nearer the time.

Ethnic record keeping and monitoring

While all four associations collected details of applicants' ethnic origin on the application form (either using a tear-off strip or, as would be recommended, as an integral part of the application form) it is, at best, debatable whether any of the associations truly *monitored* that information. Monitoring means actually analysing and making use of the data rather than just collecting it or reporting it in the form of a mass of tables.

While each association had a number of specific problems with regard to ethnic record keeping and monitoring (ERKM) a number of broadly common issues did emerge:

- (a) **Refusal rates:** how could these be minimised (for example through publicity, question wording, question location)?
- (b) **Content:** were the tables in the monitoring report comprehensive enough? What other things (e.g. quality of property allocated, length of time on the Waiting List) could realistically and usefully be monitored?
- (c) **Lay-out/Presentation:** could any analysis of key points (rather than mere reporting) be included? What presentational methods (pie-charts etc.) could be used to make the figures clearer?
- (d) **Frequency:** how often did the reports need to be produced?
- (e) **Distribution:** how was the monitoring information to be fed-back? Who was it to be fed-back to?
- (f) **CORE:** How was CORE data to be obtained (for example from the initial application form, or by asking the tenant at the point of letting)? How could CORE be filled in if the association's ethnic origin categories did not match those on CORE?

The research revealed wide ranging regional differences in the way ethnic origin data was collected (particularly CORE data) within specific associations. This may be linked to the "working with Nellie" approach to training with regard to ethnic record keeping and monitoring that seemed to be prevalent. There was a clear need for staff to be trained/ informed with regard to the "whys" and (more importantly) the "hows" of ethnic monitoring so that a more consistent approach could be adopted.

The way forward

The first stage of the research showed that a multi-pronged approach was required if the participating associations were to improve their performance in terms of housing black and minority ethnic elders. Such an approach would need to cover the following:

- (i) **Maximising applications:** Maximising applications by better publicising the association, increasing the pressure on local authorities to exercise their nomination rights (and stressing to them that the association would welcome black and minority ethnic nominees), looking at alternative sources of referrals and minimising barriers to access;
- (ii) **Non-discriminatory policies and procedures:** Ensuring that allocation policies/ procedures do not discriminate against black and minority ethnic applicants and looking at the possibility of making "block" allocations to applicants from these groups (to help avoid problems of isolation and the consequent refusal to take up offers of accommodation);
- (iii) **Work with black housing associations:** Continuing to work with (and, indeed, expanding on the work with) black housing organisations:

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- (a) to help to establish needs;
- (b) to develop strategies to help meet those needs;
- (c) to publicise the association and its work.

The best form of such a working arrangement would need to be established, depending on the particular situation, and would need to be concerned both with the provision of future units and the maximisation of black and minority ethnic use of existing stock (possibly through stock transfer);

(iv) Target setting: Setting numeric targets by which the effectiveness of performance can be judged and producing regular and clear monitoring reports regarding this performance. These targets would need to run alongside targeted action strategies (where they exist) and would be invaluable in gauging the effect of such strategies;

(v) Employment: Employing more black and minority ethnic staff-analysis of such employment to look at grade and location as well as overall numbers;

(vi) Scheme location: Looking carefully at the location of future schemes and the design and type of accommodation being provided;

(vii) Training: Providing on-going training for staff on Equal Opportunities, and keeping tenants informed as to what Equal Opportunities should mean to them.

Chapter 2 Other Housing Associations

In order to gain a wider perspective of the issue of mainstream housing associations and the provision/take-up of accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders a small postal survey was carried out. A sample of 11 associations was selected, all of whom were known to provide sheltered accommodation for elderly persons, and a short questionnaire sent out in February 1994. Six responses were received, a response rate of 54.5%.

Associations responding were:

Knightstone Housing Association, Liverpool Housing Trust, Methodist Homes for the Aged, North Housing, North British Housing Association, Notting Hill Housing Trust.

Stock size/location

The six responding associations provided between them 6,321 units of sheltered accommodation. While Liverpool Housing Trust, Knightstone and Notting Hill Housing Trust are fairly area-specific, the other associations provide accommodation on a more nation-wide basis. Provision of sheltered accommodation can be broken down as follows:

Association	No. of sheltered units
Knightstone	544
Liverpool HT	235
Methodist Homes	639
North	2,305
North British	2,071
Notting Hill HT	527

Tenants: number/ethnic origin

While the responding associations were able to give figures for the stock provided they were not so able to provide figures for the number of tenants in sheltered accommodation. Apart from the response of Methodist Homes this information was either not given or was given as number of *tenancies* rather than as number of *tenants* (while both figures would be the same if all units were for single occupation only this would not be the case if a unit could be occupied by more than one tenant).

While information with regard to all tenants in sheltered accommodation seemed to be somewhat difficult to obtain this is even more the case with minority ethnic tenancies:

Notting Hill Housing Trust noted that:

We are currently compiling a comprehensive ethnic database of our tenants which should allow us to do this analysis (by CORE category) in April.

North British Housing Association stated that:

A census is planned in 1994/95.

Other Housing Associations

North Housing Association were able to provide only CORE statistics (i.e. lettings for the year ending 31.3.93) and then only for all lettings i.e. a breakdown between sheltered lettings and other lettings was not available. The association was, however, carrying out a satisfaction survey based on a 10% sample of tenants, which included questions relating to ethnic origin. While this was only a sample survey the association felt that:

Following completion of the survey in December, we would be able to provide an accurate indication of the ethnic origin composition of existing tenants living in sheltered accommodation.

Knightstone Housing Association was unable to provide details with regard to the ethnic origin of its tenants, noting that:

Although we monitor ethnic origin for all new lettings (and indeed have targets) a large percentage of our tenants took up occupancy before such monitoring was introduced.

Liverpool Housing Trust were unable to provide the information requested in the format required (the categories requested were the OPCS categories, as used by Anchor, not the CORE categories, although the questionnaire did state: "if you cannot break down your tenants by these categories please write in the CORE categories and appropriate tenant numbers").

Of the six responding associations Methodist Homes alone was able to give a breakdown of its tenants in sheltered accommodation by ethnic origin. It is notable, however, that out of 825 tenants only two (0.2%) were classified as "Other" (one Irish and one Malaysian) with the rest being "White".

This lack of firm data (rather than hearsay) with regard to the number of minority ethnic tenants is hardly surprising given the experience of the four participating associations, of whom only Anchor had such data available (although their data was somewhat suspect, given the inaccuracies, particularly in terms of the under-counting of black and minority ethnic tenants, found during the course of the research).

Work with black housing associations: nature/rationale

While data with regard to their existing performance in housing black and minority ethnic elders may have been, on the whole, somewhat lacking, the associations that responded to the questionnaire had all clearly recognised that the provision of housing for such elders was, at the very least, an issue. All of those responding were either working with black housing associations or, at least, thinking of doing so.

Notting Hill HT were currently working with Ebony Sistren HA, ASRA HA, Inquilab HA, Abbeyfield Mangrove and ARHAG, with the nature of this working relationship being one of stock transfers and management agreements.

North British HA were already working with Ashiana (in Blackburn), APNA (Bolton), ASHLA (Bury), Manningham (Bradford), Unity (Leeds) and Sadeh Lok (Kirklees). In addition they were planning to work with Oldham Muslim (Oldham), Tun Tum (Nottingham) and Nashayaman (Calderdale). Not all of these associations are concerned with the provision of sheltered accommodation. The nature of the working relationship was/ would be one of stock transfer with Manningham, Unity, Sadeh Lok, ASHIA, Oldham Muslim, Tun Turn and Nashayman, and management agreements with the others (who were identified by North British as being unregistered). To date 203 properties had been transferred to black housing associations.

Other Housing Associations

While North Housing (the largest provider of sheltered accommodation of the associations to respond to the questionnaire) had not worked with any black housing associations so far they noted chat:

We are currently in discussions with two Black Housing Associations however no plans have been finalised.

and that:

We would be happy to work with Black Housing Associations on suitable development opportunities as they arise.

Knightstone Housing Association were currently working with two black housing associations - United Housing Association and Aashyana Housing Association. With regard to these two associations Knightstone noted that they have:

Transferred 4 properties to United Housing Association. United manage a further 17 properties for Knightstone under a management agreement and the intention is that these will eventually be transferred. Knightstone Housing Association are also currently working in partnership with United Housing Association with regard to spending their major repair allocation (£1.5 million) on further stock prior to transfer. Negotiations are currently taking place to establish a further five year stock transfer programme. There also is joint working between the 2 associations with regards to housing management issues.

Aashyana Housing Association are an embryonic group. Knightstone have been working with them since March 1993 as their main partners offering support, training, advice and guidance on the process of becoming a registered Housing Association. This has included securing funding and formulating a business plan. To date, Aashyana Housing Association have made 2 direct referrals to Knightstone properties.

Methodist Homes are currently planning to work with Nehemiah Housing Association on a collaborative research project:

To understand the housing needs of ethnic minority elders.

Liverpool Housing Trust are currently working with the Steve Biko Housing Association. Six units had already been transferred at the time of the research, while a further four units were to follow in the near future.

It is quite clear, then, that the responding associations were working (or planning to work) with a substantial number of black housing associations, with the working relationships taking a number of different forms - from collaborative housing needs research to management agreements and stock transfer. What then was the underlying rationale behind this work? Why were the responding associations taking this interest in black housing associations?

Liverpool Housing Trust stated that they believe:

In the right of autonomous Black Housing Associations to exist. We are committed to working with Black Housing Associations to assist with their development, such as, providing management advice, stock transfers and helping them to achieve viability.

Methodist Homes succinctly stated that they are working with black housing associations:

To raise the profile of the subject of Race and Housing.

Other Housing Associations

Knightstone referred to their Equal Opportunities Policy and their commitment to:

Redressing some of the inequalities in housing provision. Knightstone work with a number of agencies who have particular expertise or who represent more directly particular customer needs. Knightstone Housing Association recognise the discrimination suffered by people from minority ethnic and black communities and consider that black led housing associations are one way of positively responding to this issue.

Notting Hill HT state that they are working with black housing associations as they:

Can provide an enabling role.

The Association's "Policy on Stock Transfers to Partner Housing Agencies" states that:

Increasingly the provision of new housing is by means of housing associations working together in partnership and consortia. Many such partnerships exist between Notting Hill Housing Group (NHHG) and smaller or emerging housing associations which serve particular client groups with special needs or specific ethnic minorities.

These smaller housing associations benefit from access both to development opportunities which might otherwise not be available to them and to Notting Hill Housing Group's development expertise and resources. NHHG also benefits from these partnerships: they help meet its overall objectives of meeting housing need; helping ethnic minority housing associations is one of the ways of implementing our equal opportunities policy; and the partnerships can bring access to contacts and to subsidies and therefore to new development opportunities.

With regard to stock transfer the policy states that:

For some smaller housing associations a successful partnership is one that results in the ownership of stock, because of the independence and asset base that comes with ownership. One method of building up this ownership is for larger housing associations to transfer some of their stock. NHHG supports this principle.

Stock transfer is encouraged by the Housing Corporation, particularly in the 1991 NFHA/ HC report on stock transfers. NHHG's policy has been developed with these recommendations in mind.

North British HA sent details of their "Policy on Transfer of Stock to Black Housing Associations" which lists the reasons for stock transfer as:

- 2.1 Stock transfer is supported and encouraged by the Housing Corporation as part of it's objective of creating financially viable and independent Black Housing Associations.**
- 2.2 NBHA is committed to race equality policies and supporting the growth and development of new Black Associations should be part of that commitment.**
- 2.3 Through stock transfer and assisting Black Associations, NBHA is contributing to meeting the needs of black people and promoting self help within the black community. In certain circumstances, this involvement also improves NBHA's knowledge of the black communities and their particular needs e.g. Ashiana in Blackburn.**

Other Housing Associations

2..4 Assisting Black Associations through stock transfer provides good public relations opportunities with the Housing Corporation, Black Housing Associations, The Housing Association movement generally and Local Authorities.

2.5 Development possibilities and potential development agency work can result from establishing partnerships with Black Associations through stock transfer. Stock transfer can also enhance existing development agency relationships with clients.

It is refreshing to see that both NHHT and NBHA are open in recognising that operational [for example the so-called "Brownie Points" effect of 2.4 above and NHHT's reference to the Housing Corporation's encouragement of stock transfer] as well as purely altruistic motives can underlie work with Black Housing Associations.

Demand

Given the large amount of work that has been done, or is planned, with black housing associations, albeit not purely with regard to the provision of sheltered accommodation, is it generally recognised that there is a demand from black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation?

Of the six responding associations five felt that there was such a need. This was based on:

Existence of black tenants and applicants, albeit in very small numbers (NBHA).

**We have experience of demand for the sheltered schemes we have developed.
(Notting Hill HT).**

Research into demographic trends, housing conditions, anecdotal evidence suggests this (Knightstone).

In a multi-racial/ethnic society, the need for sheltered accommodation is becoming increasingly demanded by *all* elders (Methodist Homes).

The fifth positive, though somewhat more qualified, response was from North Housing:

There is evidence of demand by the use of existing specially designed sheltered schemes. However it is our understanding that demand is not always sufficient which sometimes leads to the need to widen the criteria for the allocation of properties [N.B. my italics].

The only dissenting voice came from Liverpool Housing Trust who based their response on the situation in Liverpool:

From a position in 1989 when there was little provision for ethnic minority elders this situation has changed in Liverpool. In 1989 LHT opened Friendship House which is an ethnic specific sheltered scheme. There have been problems maintaining a Waiting List for the scheme and attracting Council nominations [N.B. the latter being a common complaint from housing associations generally]. **The reason for this is because the two Black Housing Associations working in Liverpool have developed their own ethnic specific sheltered schemes.**

This latter point may be of particular relevance to mainstream housing associations trying to either open up existing schemes to black and minority ethnic elders or to build schemes in areas where local Black Housing Associations are already providing for this market.

Other Housing Associations

Meeting needs in the future

Having established that the majority of the responding associations felt that there was a demand for sheltered accommodation from black and minority ethnic elders, how could this demand best be met?

The questionnaire listed four pre-set categories. The responses to this by the individual associations are shown in the table below.

	Kn	MH	NH	NB	NHHT
(1) Provision of ethnic-specific schemes;	X	X	X	X	X
(2) Provision of ethnically mixed schemes;	X	X	X	X	X
(3) Through black housing	X	X	X	X	
(4) Through a combination of black housing associations and mainstream association provision.	X	X	X	X	X

As a fifth category respondents were offered an "Other" category and asked to specify their responses. North Housing added two other responses:

Through other socially aware landlords.

Local Authorities.

All of the responding associations who felt that there was a demand from black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation identified a combination of black housing association and mainstream association provision as one way by which this demand could best be met. All five ticked both the ethnic-specific and ethnically mixed options (i.e. felt both strategies could be adopted). The issue of whether it is best to produce ethnic-specific schemes or ethnically-mixed schemes or both is one which is covered in Chapters 3 and 6.

On the wider issue of how the housing needs of minority ethnic elders (i.e. moving beyond the area of sheltered accommodation alone) could best be met in the future, the responding associations produced a variety of answers:

Methodist Homes felt that these needs could best be met:

Through positive action and collaboration.

Liverpool Housing Trust (who, as shown above, felt that there was little demand from minority ethnic elders for *sheltered* accommodation) thought that it could be done:

By asking ethnic elders what they want and who they want to provide it through their recognised representative organisations and by speaking to them directly.

This would seem to be the most common-sense approach to the issue and would avoid the problem of providing accommodation first and then finding out if it is the sort of accommodation people want afterwards.

This theme of actually going to minority ethnic elders and asking them what they want was also picked up by Knightstone HA:

Other Housing Associations

By providing quality, affordable accommodation and related services in appropriate areas which meet their particular needs. These needs can only be established through close consultation with minority ethnic elders and/or their advocates.

Notting Hill HT identified:

Provision of sheltered schemes and appropriate provision in mainstream stock - units for extended families etc.

This is important in recognising that the provision of sheltered accommodation alone may not be enough, and that, if housing associations are truly to meet the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders, alternative or supplementary strategies may need to be adopted.

Actions taken

Given that most of the responding associations felt that there was a demand from black and minority ethnic elders for sheltered accommodation, then two questions must be asked: 'what exactly have they done in order to attract applications from them?' and 'how successful have these measures been?'

A number of strategies had been adopted by the responding associations: Steps taken by North Housing were identified as:

- 1 In each office there are tapes available in the following languages: Hindi, Cantonese, Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu.**
- 2 Copies of our equal opportunities policy and lettings policy are also available in these languages.**
- 3 Open days for ethnic minorities have been held in Newcastle.**
- 4 Staff positively contact ethnic minority communities to publicise our services.**
- 5 Applications received, offers and lettings made to ethnic minorities are all monitored.**
- 6 All applicants from ethnic minority groups are visited by our lettings staff.**

Regarding the effectiveness of these measures the association noted that:

In common with other Associations we have had little success in attracting applications from ethnic minority elders.

While this may be the case it is to be hoped that the situation will improve in the long term. With this in mind it is interesting to note that North Housing Trust sponsored research into the design of housing for ethnic, religious and cultural groups (this research being published by NFHA as 'Accommodating Diversity').

North British Housing Association identified the measures it has taken as:

1 Positive publicity in minority communities, including:

- translated leaflets**
- translated tenancy agreements**
- taped information**
- interpreting service provided by specific budget allocation**

Other Housing Associations

- posters/leaflets
- harassment helpline
- harassment pack
- video and translated versions.

- 2 Close links with Black HA's including the provision of training and office facilities.
- 3 Seeking to employ minority staff e.g. wardens.
- 4 Open Days and receptions.
- 5 Sponsor/Donations to specific regional groups dealing with housing need and harassment support.

The Association noted that:

All have helped but minimal success.

Liverpool Housing Trust has tried to attract black and minority ethnic applications:

Through direct contact and liaison with local community groups e.g. The Pagoda, Liverpool Somali Association, Merseyside Somali Association and Liverpool Muslim Society.

In terms of effectiveness the Trust felt that these measures had been:

Partially successful. It has been very difficult particularly from the Muslim community to attract elderly female referrals.

Notting Hill Housing Trust had not taken any special steps to attract applications for the Association's sheltered housing in general, and thus could not comment on their success. The Association had, however:

Taken steps to attract applications for vacancies in our ethnic-specific schemes where the local authority has been obliged to suspend its nomination requirements [i.e. where the local authority was unable to make any nominations]. The response to these initiatives has been limited but sufficient to maintain full occupancy.

Knightstone Housing Association identified a number of 'special steps' that had been taken:

- 1 Through our work with United Housing Association and Aashyana Housing Association.
- 2 In addition, we have accepted the local Polish church as a referral agency to one of our particular schemes which is situated beside the church. The Polish Church are using their nominations for Polish elders [N.B. The Association felt that this had been successful].
- 3 Our Bristol office has held an open afternoon specifically for community groups working with people from ethnic minority backgrounds. [N.B. this had in part resulted from the Association's partnership with Aashyana Housing Association, from which they anticipated "future successful applications from Asian elders"].
- 4 Information in languages other than English.
- 5 Equal Opportunity awareness training for all staff.

6 Relationships with "Care and Repair" [N.B. the Association hoped that this would "in time, provide results"].

Methodist Homes admitted that:

Whilst hitherto, it cannot be said our organisation has not welcomed applications from ethnic minority elders, nevertheless there has not been the positive action necessary to generally attract ethnic minority elders.

However, we are now seeking to put into place a strategy, which when formulated will assist the planning aspects. Further research will need to be developed.

Clearly immediately identifiable outcomes from the "special steps" taken had been few and far between. Given the paucity of ethnic origin data it is clearly difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such actions. CORE statistics will, however, reveal an association's performance in terms of housing black and minority ethnic elders on a yearly basis. Even given this it should be emphasised, however, that any measures taken are unlikely to be a "quick fix" - progress, if it occurs at all, is likely to be gradual. As North British Housing Association point out:

Continued attempts to attract ethnic minority elders are better than a 'one-off' exercise. There is a need to get known, earn confidence and trust, and this takes time and persistence.

It must, however, be stressed that if housing needs are truly to be met then nothing beats actually establishing what those needs are in the first place and then taking appropriate actions to meet them. If the service you are offering is not one that people want then no amount of marketing, no matter how well targeted, will persuade them to take it up.

Chapter 3 Black Housing Associations



As identified in Chapter 1, a key method utilised by the participating associations in meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders has been to provide accommodation in tandem with (predominantly local) black housing associations. In order to see how these relationships worked and how they were perceived by the black associations involved, interviews were held with staff from the following associations:

ASRA

ASRA was set up in 1984 to provide accommodation for Asian elders. Its role has undergone something of a change with (at the time of the Association's 1991-92 annual report) sheltered accommodation accounting for 50% of the homes in management, and with family housing making up the bulk of the development programme. ASRA's purpose is:

To provide and maintain good quality affordable homes for Asian and other people in housing need (Annual Report 1992-1993).

By April 1993 ASRA had 1,064 properties in development or management with its development activities being centred on London, the South East and the West of England. Of lettings made in 1992/93 94.4% were to people of Asian/ SE Asian origin.

ASRA does its own development and had no formal working arrangement with the four sponsoring associations.

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

BCA currently operate a sheltered scheme (managed by Servite) in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. This scheme, which is Cat.2 and opened in August 1992, is largely targeted at African-Caribbean elders but the scheme is ethnically mixed - of 37 tenants in the 34 flats, 29 are African-Caribbean and 8 (i.e. 21.6%) are white.

Black Housing Associations

MANNINGHAM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Manningham Housing Association was formed in 1987 as a result of research carried out in the Manningham area of Bradford by the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation. While the association mainly provides general needs accommodation it also has one (ethnically mixed) sheltered scheme, as a result of the transfer to it of a tenanted scheme by Anchor.

The Association's purpose is to:

Provide affordable, quality housing for rent in the Bradford District for those in greatest need, having particular regard for identified and unsatisfied need in the black community

(Source: Annual Report 1993).

At the time of the Association's 1993 Annual Report of the 248 tenants 68% were of Asian origin, with 19% African-Caribbean and 14% White/European.

MILLAT ASIAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Millat Asian Housing Association was established in October 1990. The Association's aim is to:

Develop permanent housing predominantly for the Asian community

(Source: Annual Report 1992).

As well as managing five units of family accommodation (developed by London and Quadrant Housing Trust and with the aim of eventual stock transfer), the Association currently runs one twelve unit Cat. 1 scheme targeted at Asian elders in the London Borough of Merton. This scheme was developed with Hanover with the aim of eventual stock transfer to Millat.

NASHAYMAN

Based in Halifax Nashayman, by June 1994 provided 73 units of general needs accommodation, with approximately 100 in the development/stock transfer pipeline. Nashayman focus primarily, but not exclusively, on Halifax's Asian communities. The Association does not provide sheltered accommodation.

NEHEMIAH

Based in Birmingham (but seeking to widen its area of operations to include areas outside the West Midlands) Nehemiah was registered with the Housing Corporation in January 1989. The Association was formed by members of the Church of God of Prophecy.

As identified in the Annual Report 1992:

Nehemiah's main aim is to address the housing needs of the predominantly black population who live in the metropolitan districts of the West Midlands.

In April 1991 Nehemiah had 40 homes in management, although it was hoping to increase this to 94 (plus others in development) by March 1993. At the time of the research the Association was working in partnership with five housing associations, including developing a partnership agreement with Hanover.

Lettings statistics for 1991-1992 revealed that over 70% of the 33 lettings to the Association's homes went to people aged 65 or over. Owing to the development and acquisition of schemes for families and single people the range of the Association's provision is broadening, with the result that in future the elderly are likely to form a smaller percentage of lettings.

Of the 33 homes let in 1991-1992, 89.7% went to "Black: African/Caribbean" and 10.3% to "White: British/European/Other".

RACE

Reading Afro-Caribbean Elderly Housing Association run one 30 unit sheltered scheme (Cat.2/ 2 1/2) in Reading. Although this scheme is targeted primarily at African-Caribbeans there are five white tenants. The scheme was developed with Anchor and has been open since July 1993.

In addition to these interviews with the staff of black housing associations, interviews were also held with the Federation of Black Housing Organisations and the Housing Corporation.

WORK WITH BLACK HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Nehemiah Housing Association, Annual Report 1992

John Gatward, Chief Executive, Hanover Housing Association:

Like many housing associations we were seen as being essentially a white middle-class organisation. We were keen to change this image and working closely with Nehemiah seemed an ideal way of demonstrating this.

Nehemiah has the potential and the ambition to work nationally. As we ourselves are a national organisation Nehemiah seemed to be ideal partners.

We're working with them to establish a couple of schemes and the relationship seems to be going very well. We're also now working on a more formal partnership agreement.

Manningham Housing Association, Annual Report 1993

3-way Stock Transfer

With the help of Housing 21, MHA achieved its first three way stock transfer. Through a swap arrangement with Brunel Housing, Manningham gained more homes in the inner-city. Initially, Housing 21 offered us a 20 unit sheltered scheme in Keighley as a gift. MHA asked Housing 21 to provide this gift to Brunel Housing who, in turn, would transfer the equivalent of 50 bedrooms of family housing in appropriate locations. Such innovative practices are common in Yorkshire where associations work to achieve common equal opportunity objectives.

Anchor Housing Association

With the help of Anchor Housing Association we achieved the first tenanted transfer to a black housing association creating a genuinely multi-racial elderly scheme at Anchor Court.

Is there a need for black housing associations?

Given the apparent commitment to equality of opportunity and to meeting the housing needs of all community groups expressed by a number of mainstream housing associations, the question could be asked 'why are black housing associations needed'? What can they do that a mainstream association cannot?

The Housing Corporation felt that black and minority ethnic elders would be attracted to black-run schemes by the sensitivity of such schemes to their needs. White housing associations, on the other hand, would not be able to attract such elders unless they took account: of cultural needs in providing accommodation. On similar lines, the FBHO felt that black associations were more likely to be in touch with community groups and thus find it easier to allocate properties and that, unlike mainstream housing associations, they have been successful in housing black and minority ethnic elders. White associations have the twin problems of their "white provider" image and the location of their existing stock (which is often located in areas with small black and minority ethnic populations). It was, however, recognised that black associations would still have a problem in making lettings due to:

- lack of local authority nominations;
- the attitude of black elders to sheltered accommodation;
- the false assumption that elders in the relevant communities will know about sheltered accommodation;
- lack of knowledge of black elders of black housing associations on the whole.

It was further felt that it is important that black and minority ethnic people should be involved in running housing associations, and that black housing associations are the quickest way for black people to gain the necessary experience.

The importance of a shared cultural and or religion/language was highlighted by several interviewees:

'We know more . . . we can recognise our people's problem'.

'Schemes need to be managed . . . by Black African people if it's for that community . . . Element of mistrust when white folks approach black elders about housing . . . [as] . . . they think they're being offered residential care homes.'

This links in with greater access to, and credibility with, the black and minority ethnic communities:

'We can access black elders.'

'We're more successful in attracting black tenants I think it's just the way people relate to us.'

It was felt that the ethnic make-up of both the staff and the Management Committees of the black housing associations helped members of the relevant communities relate to them, particularly as it was felt that people tend to get more "set in their ways" as they get older, with the result that they would prefer to have staff who share their cultural background. On the other hand (predominantly white) schemes run by mainstream associations were seen as:

'Just white people . . . that's the way it's perceived.'

Black Housing Associations

Past experience of racism was identified as being of importance. Such experience, it is argued, makes black and minority ethnic elders unwilling to approach organisations that are perceived as being "white":

'It's not for us really.'

While this is of relevance both to local authorities and housing associations it has a particular impact on the latter because:

'A housing association is something they're not familiar with . . . Unknown quantity.'

Black housing associations, however, are more likely to be known in the relevant communities due to their community base. Additionally it was felt that people would be more likely to approach black housing associations as they would prefer to be:

'Mixing with people of their own kind.'

This is an issue that is covered in more depth in Chapter 6.

The role of mainstream associations

Given that the interviewees clearly felt that there was a need for black housing associations, what role was envisaged for the mainstream associations?

The need for mainstream associations to work through black associations was highlighted. Possibly owing to a lack of research, mainstream associations seem to feel that they will not have any difficulty in attracting black applicants. Owing, however, to their lack of community links they build the wrong types of property in the wrong areas and/or cannot attract applicants. It was felt that mainstream associations need to acknowledge that they are unable to fulfil both their own allocation targets and the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities. Accordingly they need to bring in the services of an organisation that has the ability to meet these needs i.e. they need to bring in the services of someone who understands the community:

'People need to understand the communities they are supposed to be serving.'

Thus one role that mainstream associations might play would be that of a "signpost", pointing black and minority ethnic elders towards black housing associations rather than housing them themselves.

In addition to this referral function a further role of the mainstream associations would be that of stock provider, either through development agency work or through stock transfer. Such work could be seen as mutually beneficial: while the black association gets more accommodation at the same time:

We help them to achieve their equal opportunities objectives.

On the positive side the view was expressed that:

Most of these relationships are mutually beneficial.

On a more negative side it was suggested that:

All mainstream associations try to take some advantage of the smallness and inexperience of the black and ethnic minority associations.

One interviewee felt that at present black housing associations needed the help of the large white associations but in future they may well be swallowed up by the mainstream associations:

I see the white housing association as opposed to helping ... taking them over lock stock and barrel.

Accordingly there is an:

Element of exploitation

in the relationship. This should ideally, be replaced by a situation in which, if the black associations are not able to carry out their own development, the mainstream associations should:

Work as your agent rather than as your master, or as partners.

If the mainstream associations are to attempt to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic elders through their own provision then they need to employ more black staff, with the relevant language skills (the language barrier was seen as a major barrier to attracting applicants). This is crucial, too, if the mainstream associations are to move away from the issue of mere numbers to that of quality of service provided. It was felt that the more successful mainstream schemes are those with a support group/management group or with black staff delivering the service.

The role of the four participating associations

All four of the participating mainstream associations had been working, to some extent, with black housing associations. All had, to some degree, taken the issue of meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders on board. Given the perceived role of mainstream associations shown above, what form were their relationships with black associations taking and how were they progressing?

ANCHOR

Anchor had achieved quite a high profile through its work with black housing associations. The development of the scheme in Reading with RACE was seen as entailing a relationship that had both advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side it was stated that:

'Anchor has been extremely kind and supportive . . . RACE has benefited a great deal through working with Anchor.'

It was recognised that without Anchor's input the scheme would not have been established. On the minus side, however, there was a danger that Anchor would see the scheme as:

'Their baby,'

The worry was expressed that Anchor would be reluctant to let the scheme go as: it

'Would benefit Anchor to hold on to this project for as long as possible.'

There was a need to strike a:

'Happy medium between what Anchor wants and what RACE wants.'

It was, however, acknowledged that both parties had gained from the relationship. Anchor had gained knowledge of the black community and its needs, while RACE had gained support, experience and expertise:

Black Housing Associations

'Anchor has a lot to gain from RACE, RACE has a lot to gain from Anchor.'

One of Anchor's most notable, and publicised, achievements has been the transfer of a tenanted sheltered scheme in Bradford to Manningham Housing Association. This scheme had originally been built with an Asian clientele in mind (in terms of the design, provision of showers etc.), but had proved to be something of a failure in terms of actually attracting Asian applicants, with the result that the scheme was roughly 50% Asian/50% white. Manningham had previously not seen the provision of sheltered accommodation as part of its mission and lacked expertise in that field. Following a formal ballot of the tenants the scheme was transferred to Manningham. It is noticeable, however, that there are still problems in attracting Asian applicants to the scheme.

HANOVER

Hanover had, as referred to earlier, acted as development agent to Millat Asian Housing Association, and were planning to hand over a scheme to that association. Millat saw this relationship as:

'Very good, we learned from them.'

Consequently the relationship was seen as:

'More of a partnership . . . we're gaining together.'

Hanover had also entered into a relationship with Nehemiah Housing Association (as mentioned above). This relationship was seen as one in which Hanover did the development (as Nehemiah's asset base was low, so it could not carry the development risk on its own) and Nehemiah did the managing.

On a perhaps less successful level Manningham Housing Association had contacted Hanover with regard to a sheltered scheme that Hanover were building in the heart of Manningham. Manningham Housing Association saw this scheme as:

'Totally inappropriate'

but felt that it could take over the scheme on a management agreement basis, as it was opposite one of the Association's general family schemes, and thereby maybe generate some demand or, failing that, convert the scheme into single person's accommodation. This issue remains to be resolved.

HOUSING 21

Of the four participating associations Housing 21 probably has the greatest problems in attracting black applicants, due, one might argue, partly to its image (its former identity as the Royal British Legion Housing Association and the power that lay with the House Committees), partly to the location of its schemes (most, but not all, of which have a "white highlands" location) and (possibly due to the previous two factors) partly to the fact that it has housed so few black and minority ethnic people to date. To its credit, though, the association has taken steps to redress this, particularly in the Bradford area.

Housing 21 offered Manningham Housing Association a scheme in Keighley but this was turned down as there was:

'[Not] sufficient demand within the black community.'

The three-way transfer with Brunel and Manningham was, on the other hand, a notable success:

'They [Housing 21] 've got to be congratulated.'

In addition to the three-way stock transfer Housing 21's Bradford office had taken on a Nashayman staff trainee under a positive action scheme, with the trainee spending three days of the week with Nashayman and two at Housing 21. This:

'has worked out excellent. . . To all intents and purposes he's just a housing officer who needs a little support.'

One possible problem, however, lies in the differences between the two organisations: with one primarily providing sheltered accommodation for white elders and the other managing general family stock.

On a more negative note the view was expressed that the Association's efforts to attract black and minority ethnic applicants in the Bradford area may be futile as:

'A cursory glance at the Census figures would indicate that they're wasting their time.'

Alongside this, however, is the need to demonstrate to both the black and minority ethnic communities and the Housing Corporation that the Association is serious about its commitment to equality of opportunity i.e. there is a PR function to be performed.

SERVITE

With a strong local presence in Birmingham, Servite had developed a scheme in Small Heath with the Birmingham Community Association. Under the agreement, Servite are the landlords (providing the scheme's warden while BCA provide a housing officer). The plan is that eventually BCA will take over the running of the scheme but there is no official time-scale for this.

Is there a need for sheltered accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders?

As is mentioned under "The Black and Minority Ethnic Population of Great Britain" in the Introduction, the 1991 Census shows that members of "non-white" groups make up only 1.1% of Great Britain's population aged 65 and over. In the 45-64 age range, however, they make up 3.8% of the population. Nehemiah Housing Association note, however, in their annual report 1992, that:

The numbers of black elderly people can be expected to increase almost three-fold by the end of the decade as today's 'approaching elderly' population matures into old age.

The question needs to be asked, however, 'do these population figures represent a need for sheltered accommodation'? There is no simple answer to this question. Different situations would appear to apply in different parts of the country and for different ethnic groups.

With regard to African-Caribbean elders, in Birmingham it was felt that:

'There is a need [for sheltered accommodation] but it's a hidden need. . . Why did I find it difficult to fill this scheme? Was I looking in the wrong place? . . . Where are they? Are they not here yet?'

It was felt that many black elders were living in poor quality owner-occupied properties:

'There is a hidden need. . . They don't want to leave the properties . . . [but]. . . cant afford to maintain it. . . Pride comes into it as well. . . [and]. . . a lot of them can't be bothered with the move.'

Black Housing Associations

This was backed up by another interviewee in Birmingham who noted that African-Caribbean elders prefer to live in their own homes (see also Chapter 5), adopting an attitude of:

'It was my slum'

(rather than being a "slum" that belonged to someone else).

Again the view was expressed that:

'These people are there'

but that they had not been coming forward. This was put down partly to their religious beliefs (which led to them being grateful for having any kind of home), partly to their reluctance to register with local authorities or with housing associations (who they saw as "white providers") and partly due to their lack of knowledge of sheltered accommodation:

'It's never been done for them before and therefore they don't expect it.'

RACE in Reading felt that the needs of African-Caribbean elders failed to show up in the local authority's statistics as black elders would not approach them (due to their disillusionment with the system). As they did not approach the local authority there were no statistics to prove that there was a need for sheltered accommodation for African-Caribbean elders, although RACE clearly felt that such a need existed.

In Bradford the lack of detailed research into the housing needs of the city's Asian communities was pointed out. It was felt that there were very few Asian elders in the 65+ age group - indeed the 1991 Census figures showed that of 51,746 persons aged 65 or over in Bradford only some 1,380 (2.7%) were "non-white", with approximately 1,130 being "South Asian" (Owen, 1993). Consequently the poor performance by mainstream associations in attracting Asian applicants in Bradford may be due not to discrimination but to the fact that:

'There simply aren't the numbers... wanting to move into sheltered accommodation or in absolute terms.'

As a result of this Manningham were not planning to expand their provision of sheltered accommodation beyond the one (transferred) scheme currently provided as there was:

'No real demand or prospect for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders.'

As a result mainstream associations would all struggle to house a significant number of Asian elders in Bradford, mainly because it was perceived that such people did not exist. Accordingly any steps taken to attract such tenants would be nothing but a cosmetic exercise. It must be stressed, however, that this was the situation in Bradford and that it was recognised that the situation might be different in other areas. For example it was acknowledged that sheltered accommodation has successfully been provided for Asian elders in London and Leicester by, for example, ASRA, but it was felt that this accommodation was:

- (a) for Indians (especially Sikhs), whereas Bradford was predominantly Muslim
- (b) for:

'Exceptional cases who are victimised by the main household,'

whereas in Bradford it was felt that disputes such as those surrounding Halal meat and Ray Honeyford had led to the Muslim community closing in on itself:

'Bradford's different... The breakdown of the extended family has been reduced.'

Similarly in Halifax it was felt that if there was a need for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders then it was very small and the greater need was for the provision of general family accommodation and "Staying Put" schemes. Asian elders were seen as being:

'Reluctant to move into... independent elderly accommodation.'

In South London Millat Asian Housing Association felt that there was a clear need for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders. It was further felt that the needs of such elders were:

'Very much different'

from those of white elders in relation to: location desired (near to the next two generations of the family); type of accommodation required (type of bathroom, method of cooking, direction of w/c etc.).

For ASRA in London there was a need for sheltered accommodation specifically geared towards Asian elders. It was, however, recognised that there are differences between different parts of the country with regard to this. In Bradford for example there is a predominantly Pakistani Muslim community whereas in London the situation is very different. Gujaratis were, for example, seen as being far more willing to go into sheltered accommodation:

'It appears to be the case... [that Gujaratis are easier to attract to sheltered accommodation although] ... we don't target that community.'

This was seen as being for a combination of class and cultural reasons.

Even ASRA, which has been so successful in attracting Asian elders to sheltered accommodation, admitted that when a new scheme is developed there is a delay in letting the property due to:

'General reluctance because people don't want to be the first to move in'

(and would also have to admit that their children will not look after them). It was, however, felt that once a scheme had initially been filled then a waiting list could rapidly be developed.

While it is clear that, in certain parts of the country, there may be significant numbers of black and minority ethnic elders who may, furthermore, may be in housing need, it does not necessarily follow that sheltered accommodation will be the answer to that need.

What type of provision is needed?

Nehemiah Housing Association have noted (in their Annual Report 1992) that:

Against a backdrop of a general under-supply of sheltered housing, there is a growing awareness that current models of sheltered housing may fail to meet the special cultural, dietary and religious needs of black elders.

Given the provisos with regard to these needs expressed above, how can they best be met:

- through the provision of ethnic-specific or ethnically-mixed schemes?
- through the provision of "stand alone" sheltered schemes or schemes that mix sheltered accommodation with general needs housing?

Black Housing Associations

Birmingham Community Association's Housing Officer had had the task of "selling" a scheme to the local African-Caribbean population. During the course of this promotional work the officer visited a number of African-Caribbean people who:

'Didn't like the idea that the scheme would be for predominantly African-Caribbean people.'

Indeed a number of people stated that they would prefer to live in an ethnically-mixed scheme. This may have had something to do with the fact that they had been living in multicultural area for 30 years or more:

'The area that a lot of them are from ... I don't see a colour issue here at all'

Possibly, partly as a result of this, a scheme that had been envisaged as being for African-Caribbeans is now mixed.

Similarly whilst Nehemiah's schemes are targeted at African-Caribbeans some 20% of their tenants are non-African-Caribbean. Indeed:

'All our schemes are mixed.'

With RACE's scheme in Reading, while this was targeted at African-Caribbean elderly some of the potential tenants expressed concern that the scheme might be black only due to the fact that they had white wives. RACE actually went so far as to set a target for the number of white tenants (6 out of 30).

It cannot be assumed that black and minority ethnic elders live in tightly defined communities in which they only socialise with others of their ethnic group. This may be true for some people (or for some groups) but it is not necessarily the case. RACE, for example, found that white tenants may have heard about their scheme through word-of-mouth, such as through black friends.

The warden in Manningham's (ethnically-mixed) sheltered scheme felt that:

'It's better if it's all mixed'

whilst at the same time stating re. ethnically-specific schemes that:

'I don't think it's a good idea.'

The white tenants in this scheme were also in favour of living in a mixed scheme:

'It's a good idea ... but ... some join with us and some don't'

'If you're right with them [Asians] they're right with you.'

Interestingly an Asian tenant stated, with regard to ethnically-specific schemes that:

"I wouldn't like that . . . we're a multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-racial society . . . I would not like to be segregated . . . It's not on at all. We are all human beings and we must . . . all live together . . . Segregation is danger."

It must be stressed, however, that that is the view of one tenant, and a possibly atypical one at that (being a Muslim in sheltered accommodation in Bradford).

Black Housing Associations

Interestingly, in light of the above, Manningham's Director felt that Asian elders have:

'Completely different needs to white elders'

but that it was:

'Practically impossible to provide a specific scheme'

as priorities are needs-based. Consequently the provision for one specific black or minority ethnic group was questioned, with the feeling being expressed that black associations should open up their schemes to the wider black community. On the other hand:

'Schemes should be assigned to all white or all black . . . [as elderly people are]. . . far more rigid in terms of how they want to live.'

In addition it was felt that mixed white/black and minority ethnic schemes would lead to anxiety for wardens and tenants. Thus, even though they currently run a mixed scheme, Manningham would support mixed schemes more in terms of "mixed black and minority ethnic" than in terms of "mixed white/black and minority ethnic".

It was the view of the Millat interviewee that separate schemes (by ethnicity) might be better for the elderly. While *schemes* could be mixed blocks should not be i.e. schemes could be mixed but with different and distinct white and Asian sections. In addition it was felt that it would be better if schemes consisted of a mix of family and elderly units, so that care could be provided by relatives.

This viewpoint was backed up by the FBHO who highlighted the problem of ghettoisation i.e. that sheltered schemes are not located with general schemes. He felt that sheltered schemes would be more attractive to black and minority ethnic elders if they were integrated with general schemes, so that elders could be near to their families. Similarly the Housing Corporation noted that many black elders:

'Don't want to live with a lot of old people'

Thus there may be a need for general housing schemes which include provision for elderly people i.e. mixed schemes in terms of providing a mix of general needs and elderly accommodation. In addition the Housing Corporation felt that at present there is a *need* for special provision for black elders but that in the future there will not be a need as such, only a *preference* for living in such a scheme.

Given the different views and experiences expressed above it would be foolish to claim, without looking at the specific area and the specific communities involved, that A or B is the right solution. Ethnically-specific schemes may be desired/needed in some areas but not in others. Before coming to any conclusions those desiring to provide accommodation in any given area should first carry out research (or examine existing research findings) into what people actually want *in that specific area*.

Getting the tenants

If there is a need for sheltered accommodation of whatever type for black and minority ethnic elders, how then do the black associations go about getting the tenants for such schemes (especially given the, on the whole, apparent failure of mainstream associations to successfully do this)?

Black Housing Associations

Birmingham Community Association, as noted above, employed a Housing Officer to promote the scheme they were developing with Servite. The officer found that:

'People weren't out there waiting to move into Harmony House.'

Accordingly it was:

'Really hard work'

getting people to consider sheltered accommodation as:

'A lot of people didn't understand what sheltered housing was'

"I don't think a lot of people understood . . . They either thought it was a Home . . . ill-informed or drew their own conclusions.'

Actually having someone who could go out and speak to potential tenants about the scheme was vital in attracting applicants, although the momentum was slow to get going due to an initial lack of demand/willingness to consider the scheme:

'It was so difficult and I really thought it was going to be easy.'

In order to attract potential tenants the housing officer phoned other housing associations (with a follow-up letter and information regarding the scheme); contacted churches, hospitals, social services and black organisations; gave talks in Day Care Centres and luncheon clubs; produced posters and worked through the Birmingham Community Association. Despite all of this:

'When the the scheme was actually opened it wasn't full right away'

(taking some three months to fill).

Nehemiah have recruited a PR company to publicise who they are and what they do. Every scheme is marketed. Strategies used include public meetings, the use of a video of existing schemes and the distribution of leaflets to local authorities and voluntary groups. At the end of the day, however, the association has found that:

'Nothing works more effectively than word-of-mouth'

i.e. knowing someone already in a scheme is the best means of publicity.

Nehemiah, like Birmingham Community Association, have found that:

'Not many black elders are aware of sheltered accommodation.'

Consequently their actions have been geared at raising awareness. For example potential tenants are taken to view existing schemes and question and answer sessions with regard to sheltered housing are held at meetings. As a result:

'We find at completion we have no problem [in attracting applicants].'

In RACE's case the local authority initially produced a list of black elders (which actually included white elders) from its computer and wrote to those on the list about RACE's scheme. Sixty letters only produced some six responses. RACE thus took the same list but backed it up

with door-step visits, thus creating greater interest. Initially potential tenants were somewhat cagey, but now that they have seen the scheme in operation this is reportedly no longer the case.

The West Indian Women's Circle (who were instrumental in setting up RACE) run a Day Centre. Many of those housed by RACE may be on the local authority's Waiting List, but use the Day Centre and are effectively housed through WIWC. Thus while the local authority has 50% nomination rights its actual performance record may exceed this, as many of those effectively housed by WIWC will be on the local authority's waiting list.

Local authority nominations

As with mainstream associations (see Chapters 1 and 4), black housing associations have often found it a problem to get local authorities to fully exercise their nomination rights.

Local authorities have 50% nomination rights to ASRA's schemes. It has, however, been difficult for them to nominate their full 50%. In 1993 reportedly 50% of the local authorities with whom ASRA works were unable to take up their full nomination rights.

Local authorities have 50% nomination rights to Nehemiah's schemes but they:

'Still nominate the wrong tenant.'

In some cases the local authorities do not monitor their Waiting Lists by ethnic origin and just send Nehemiah a list of elders (some of whom are white). Given this:

'We're bound to get white applicants.'

If a scheme is targeted at black people there is thus a clear need to make sure the local authority knows this so that they can nominate black elders to the scheme. This will not, however, always work as, for example, Kingston Council were reportedly opposed to Asians being housed together as this was seen as creating a ghetto.

It is not, however, necessarily the case that the local authority will not be able to meet its nominations target. With Millat, while Merton Council had 50% nomination rights to Millat's sheltered scheme (and, reportedly, initially found it difficult to meet this figure, due to the lack of Asians on their Waiting List), now all 12 units in the scheme are taken and 80% of the tenants were obtained through local authority nomination.

Where local authorities are unable to meet their nomination targets then they should consider waiving their nomination rights, rather than adopting a knee-jerk "give us 50%" reaction to all developments. Haringey, for example, have waived all nomination rights to Carib schemes as they know that they would have a problem in finding appropriate tenants. What is needed, therefore, is a more flexible approach on the part of local authorities.

The future

FBHO see the ideal for the future as black housing associations doing their own development and meeting community needs themselves - whether through direct provision or through stock transfers. Having said that FBHO do not want to see a situation in which black housing associations house only blacks and white housing associations house only whites. As opposed to the ideal the reality (given financial circumstances) is likely to be one in which black housing associations are unable to develop their own stock as they will be unable to borrow the necessary money. Thus development will tend to occur overwhelmingly through mainstream housing associations.

Black Housing Associations

Given the above what did the black housing association staff interviewed see as the way forward in meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic elders?

ASRA

While it is difficult for mainstream associations to meet the needs of the current cohort of Asian elders, due to such elders having experienced racism from white institutions, coupled with linguistic and cultural needs, the future may be different. Like all communities the Asian communities are not stagnant and, therefore, it is possible that the situation with regard to demand for sheltered accommodation and who people want to supply it, may change. On the other hand it was felt that in the future needs may be:

'Less for sheltered housing'

and more for extended family housing.

Whatever the shape of future demand it was clear that changes would take place, both to ASRA as an organisation and to the nature of its provision.

MANNINGHAM

The need for specialist black and mainstream housing associations to work together was identified:

'Working in partnership, I think that is the future.'

Local communities would thereby be able to benefit from the existing expertise of the mainstream associations. Notwithstanding this it was MHA's experience that the black communities:

'Want to integrate them (their elderly) within the family network.'

It was, however, recognised that there would still be some demand, even if this was only from "exceptional" cases. Working with other agencies in order to meet the needs of such people was seen as a:

'positive way in which the [mainstream associations] can accommodate the needs of the most vulnerable in society.'

As stated above it was, however, felt that previous assessments of the extent of the need for sheltered accommodation among Asian elders in Bradford were, to put it simply, wrong and had led to the provision of:

'Inappropriate accommodation for the wrong client group.'

Whilst the need for specialist black and mainstream housing associations to work together was identified, at the same time, the view of a "tightening up" and a "drawing together" of families was not one that was universally held. A further interviewee felt that in 10—15 years time there would be an extensive need among Asian elders for sheltered accommodation, with their children expressing a view by that time of:

'We've got our life to live, we can't live for our parents.'

In other words, as noted under "ASRA" above:

'The community is changing.'

Black Housing Associations

It was further felt that while black associations should target the black and minority ethnic communities they should:

'Meet needs [rather than race] first'

i.e. they should not be seen as "black only" in much the same way that mainstream associations are criticised for being "white only".

MILLAT

Millat envisaged a future with black housing associations:

'Eventually providing accommodation to whites also. White housing associations can also have accommodation for non-whites.'

If mainstream associations are serious about meeting the needs of all sectors of the community, then they need to help black associations to develop as such associations can provide a service that they would be unable to provide. As was pointed out by interviewees from several of the associations it is:

'Easy for them [black housing associations] to know the . . . special needs . . . linguistic, cultural and other aspects . . . than for the white associations.'

NASHAYMAN

While the view was expressed that Asian families are staying in the extended family system it was also felt that applications were coming through for smaller (i.e. nuclear family) units. Accordingly in 5-10 years the situation may arise in which the aspirations of elders (who want to keep the family together) clash with those of younger family members (who want a place of their own).

As a result of the above there may be a demand in the future for sheltered accommodation for Asian elders. Regarding the provision of such accommodation it was, however, felt that:

'If it's a scheme specifically for Asian elders. . . it has to be [run by] a black or ethnic minority housing association.'

While special schemes for Asian elders should be the responsibility of a black housing association (who would know about relevant cultural needs):

'That's not to say mainstream associations shouldn't house black people'

i.e. mainstream associations should not just stand back and let black housing associations get on with the job of providing accommodation for Asian elders. They cannot adopt a "sit back and let them come to us" approach. Mainstream associations need to start developing schemes in black areas. They need to look at ways of communicating with non-English speakers, at dietary needs, at the make-up of their Management Committee and at their source of referrals.

A two-pronged strategy is needed:

- (i) ethnic-specific schemes - to be run by black housing associations;
- (ii) mainstream housing associations should encourage applications from black and minority ethnic elders to their schemes.

Black Housing Association

In addition to this, however, there is a need for associations to look beyond the traditional "sheltered housing solution", to improvement grants (i.e. the "Staying Put" option) and/or to sheltered accommodation with less of a "Block and Warden" image and more of a "village feel to it".

NEHEMIAH

Ideally Nehemiah would see its role in the future as a direct provider i.e. developing and managing schemes independent of mainstream associations:

'That is the ultimate and that's what we're working towards.'

Alongside this, however, it was recognised that levels of housing need will always exceed Nehemiah's ability to meet this need:

'We'll never be able to provide opportunities for every black person . . . They [mainstream housing associations] will always house more black people than we [black housing associations] can house.'

Mainstream housing associations will, therefore, always have a role to play in housing black and minority ethnic elders it is just that:

'Their role won't always be to enable us.'

The future is thus seen as one in which black housing associations work in an independent role "in harmony" with white multi-cultural organisations whilst:

'Competing on equal footing.'

RACE

It was felt that in future mainstream housing associations would start to cater for black and minority ethnic elders, but that they needed to develop skills in order to do this as they had:

'A long way to go . . . [with regard to] . . . understanding black people's needs.'

Accordingly they needed to research needs before they developed projects.

In the long term it was felt that the situation may develop in which mainstream associations are providing for black and minority ethnic elders, so that the need for specific black housing associations no longer exists. This was, however, very much a "long term" view.

Chapter 4 Local Authorities

Given that local authorities have, on average, 50% nomination rights, they can have a major impact on the numbers of black and minority ethnic elders housed by housing associations.

Analysis of housing association allocation figures (see below) revealed that local authorities had not been taking up their full nomination rights to housing association sheltered accommodation. Alongside this interviews with housing association staff revealed a strong feeling that local authorities were failing to nominate black and minority ethnic elders to housing association scheme because they were keeping such elders for themselves in order to meet their own performance targets.

In order to investigate why they were failing to nominate and possible underlying reasons for this failure we sought to interview staff responsible for nominations in a number of local authorities in the research project's key areas: Bradford, Liverpool, London and the West Midlands. Accordingly approaches were made to the following boroughs:

Birmingham City Council

Bradford City Council

Liverpool City Council

London Borough of Haringey

London Borough of Lambeth

London Borough of Merton

London Borough of Newham

Of these, interviews were obtained with key staff from Bradford, Haringey and Merton. No response was received from Lambeth or Newham. Liverpool were unable to participate as the information requested was not readily available (although they were currently in the process of compiling some of it). Interestingly while Birmingham wrote to state that:

We are co-operating with a number of outside agencies on research projects at present and I am afraid we are not able to help with yours at the present time

only three and a half weeks later another council officer contacted Anchor's Regional Manager to state:

I am currently looking at the issue of nominations for elderly persons accommodation in view of difficulties which some Associations appear to be experiencing.

Although the Nomination Agreement now generally runs smoothly in respect of general family accommodation, it is less successful in dealing with the letting of accommodation designed for older people.

Although, at this stage I am not proposing any amendment to the Agreement I am interested in exploring ways in which we can improve our success rate in this area.

The housing association experience

An examination of the allocations data (see Chapter 1) held by the four participating associations revealed that the principal access channels varied between them, with direct applications representing the main access channel for all but Servite.

Local Authorities

ANCHOR

For Anchor local authority nominations were seen to be a particular problem:

'Local authorities generally don't take their nomination rights . . . many nominations from local authorities are of very poor quality.'

'The whole nomination system is a shambles anyway.'

Local authorities were seen as not very good at nominating full stop; as not promoting Anchor; and, where they made nominations, as nominating mainly White applicants. The knock on effect for Anchor of the latter was noted:

'Can't uphold any kind of balance really because if that's all they're nominating to us then we have to house those people..'

HANOVER

While no details were available with regard to what ethnic groups apply to Hanover through what access channel it was felt that local authorities do not nominate minority ethnic applicants as they have their own "quotas" to keep up. Getting minority ethnic applications from local authorities was thus seen as a real problem, with no black or minority ethnic elders being nominated:

'Not even in the West Midlands.'

HOUSING 21

In looking at nominations by local authorities to the participating associations it is clear that, while local authorities have 50% nomination rights, they fail to exercise them, and that this is particularly the case with Housing 21. While local authorities fail to exercise their nomination rights in general, their failure to nominate any black applicants was commented on by several of the Housing 21 interviewees:

'We 99% never get black nominations.'

'We ask but we don't receive very often.'

'I honestly can't recall one [black nomination].'

'We very rarely get black nominations from local authorities.'

While current application figures for members of the black and minority ethnic communities are too low for any meaningful analysis to be carried out by access channel, it is interesting to note the situation with the Metropolitan Police properties which recently came into the association's management: of the 12 allocations to these (family) properties in one area at the time of the staff interviews, five were as a result of direct applications — all of these were white; seven were nominated by the London Borough of Wandsworth — five of these were of an ethnic origin other than CORE categories five (British/European) white.

SERVITE

Servite had performed far better than the other participating associations in attracting local authority nominations. It is important to note, however, that the association also provides general (i.e. non-sheltered) housing and that details of allocations by access channel by household type and ethnic origin were not available.

Local Authorities

Given the above proviso interviewees still felt (with regard to local authority nominations) that they were:

'Accessible to most people.'

'Fairly open.'

It is clear from the above that none of the four participating associations were achieving the 50% local authority nominations figure that one might expect, although Servite were coming close (although this may have been due to nominations to general housing being included in the figures).

Coupled with this lower than expected level of local authority nominations in total was a feeling, within most of the associations (a feeling that could not be tested due to the poor state of their ethnic record keeping and monitoring systems) that local authorities were particularly unlikely to nominate black or minority ethnic elders. In other words while the level of local authority nominations may be low, nomination of black and minority ethnic elders is even lower. One reason suggested for this was that local authorities kept all black and minority ethnic potential nominations to themselves in order to meet their own performance targets. There was, however, little evidence to suggest that this might be the case.

The local authority sample

Nomination arrangements

Nomination arrangements to sheltered schemes were approximately 50% for all schemes in all three Boroughs.

For Haringey nomination arrangements were identified as being up to 100% for new schemes:

'And 50% thereafter.'

The nomination process

Logically local authorities cannot nominate to housing associations if they do not know of vacancies. It is important, therefore, to establish what exactly the nomination process involves.

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

In Merton the nomination process is housing association-initiated. Housing associations fax through vacancy details while, with regard to new schemes, regular meetings are held with the housing associations developing the schemes.

While the Borough would normally nominate from the Transfer List (thus freeing larger properties for general needs allocations), for accommodation with shared facilities they have had to move to the Waiting List. This is because it is thought that those on the Waiting List will have lower expectations than those who are already tenants.

Both those on the Transfer List and those on the Waiting List are visited prior to an offer being made. This enables staff to explain what housing associations are (the difference between secure and assured tenancies etc.) and pick up any problems.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY

Haringey find it no problem to make nominations to better quality schemes. The Borough advertises sheltered accommodation (both its own and that provided by housing associations)

Local Authorities

through a "glossy brochure" that it distributes to libraries, doctor's surgeries etc. "Less popular" housing associations (such as Anchor and Servite) are invited to Open Days in order to publicise themselves and their stock. These are held in sheltered schemes and attract good attendances. In addition the Borough have advertised through local papers and a mail-shot to users of the community alarm scheme.

While potential nominees normally know about housing associations the Borough has to work hard to convince people that sheltered housing is not the same as an Old People's Home:

'A lot of people do think that it's an old people's home.'

BRADFORD CITY COUNCIL

Bradford was to introduce a common application form in April 1994, to be followed by work on creating a common Waiting List. Traditionally nominations have been generated outwards from the local authority towards the housing associations. The Council felt that such an approach was "antiquated" and that housing associations should nominate to each other and to local authorities:

'Why should it be a one way thing?'

Under the nomination process in operation at the time of the research any of the city's 34 neighbourhood offices could make a nomination to a housing association on the prescribed form. The process was one in which Housing Department officers approached the housing associations, not vice versa, although the housing associations did inform the local authority about any new developments. Officers could nominate anybody on the Waiting or Transfer Lists as long as they had demonstrable need and met the criteria of the particular association.

Dialogue with the housing associations appeared to be good with a number of multi-organisational groups meeting. The relationship between local authority and housing association was seen as one of "partnership" with the local authority moving towards an enabling role.

Nomination performance

While the participating associations had poorly developed ethnic record keeping and monitoring systems (ERKM), given the greater experience of local authority housing departments in this field (following on from the Cullingworth report [1969], the Government White Paper on "Race Relations and Housing" of 1975 and the Commission for Racial Equality's studies in areas such as Hackney [1984]) one might have thought that their record keeping systems would indeed show whether or not they were failing to nominate black and minority ethnic elders to housing associations and, if so, if they were keeping such people for themselves. The research showed, however, that, perhaps not surprisingly, the responding local authorities had made varied progress in implementing ERKM.

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Of the three responding local authorities Merton appeared to be the most advanced in terms of implementing ERKM. The Borough were able to provide tabulated details covering:

- nominations made to housing associations for sheltered accommodation, broken down by ethnic origin and by housing association;
- number of elderly (aged 60 or over) applicants (single or a couple) on the Waiting List, by ethnic origin;
- number of offers (acceptances and refusals) of sheltered accommodation made to elderly applicants, by ethnic origin.

Local Authorities

Merton's ethnic monitoring data shows that of 48 nominations to housing associations for sheltered accommodation during the period 1.7.92-31.12.93, eight (16.7%) were Asians (according to the 1991 Census 7.8% of those aged 55 or over were Asian) while two (4.2%) were black (compared with a 1991 Census figure of 6.7%). Of the eight Asian nominations, six were to Millat Asian Housing Association — both of the black nominations were to this Association.

While both Anchor and Hanover received nominations from Merton, neither received any black or minority ethnic nominations (with the exception of one Irish nominee to Hanover). This may have been due to the fact that:

'A lot of Hanover's stuff... it's in the Wimbledon [i.e. white] area.'

Alongside this Millat had just completed its scheme in the Borough at that time and, consequently, Asian nominations were going to them rather than to mainstream housing associations.

With regard to its own stock, the Borough has neither targets for black and minority ethnic allocations to its own stock nor details of the ethnic origin of tenants in its own sheltered accommodation.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARINGEY
London Borough of Haringey have a:

'Separate Waiting List for elderly people waiting for sheltered housing.'

Detailed records are kept regarding new applications received, new applications approved, applications withdrawn and applicants rehoused, with a monthly information sheet being produced. No regular ethnic monitoring reports were, however, produced, although such reports had apparently been produced by the Race Equality team prior to its being disbanded.

Ethnic origin of those on the Waiting List is recorded and a running total of "ethnic minorities" housed as a percentage of all of those housed is kept, but this latter is a total "ethnic minorities" figure only i.e. it is not broken down into individual ethnic groups. Further this figure covers *all* allocations to sheltered housing - no detail was readily available with regard to nominations to individual housing associations (c.f. Merton). In other words while data regarding numbers of applicants rehoused is available, data concerning the ethnic origin of those housed by housing associations is not.

As with the other Boroughs studied several housing associations were providing sheltered accommodation in the area. Of the participating associations, both Anchor and Servite were active in the area. Both of them were, however, seen as providing hard-to-let accommodation as their provision was seen as largely taking the form of bedsits:

'Bedsits are very very unpopular'.

Accordingly if Haringey nominated large numbers of black or minority ethnic people to Anchor or Servite, rather than to other housing associations, this could be seen as racial prejudice as it would result in them getting bedsits rather than, for example, one bed flats.

Haringey do set performance targets but these were set several years ago and have not been updated. The present target is that 25% of those housed in sheltered accommodation each year should be from black or minority ethnic groups — but this includes both allocations to the Borough's own stock and nominations to housing associations i.e. it is not broken down

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between them. Haringey felt that if each individual housing association were to set targets then it would be:

'Impossible to meet targets for each organisation'

due to the demographic make up of the population.

With regard to meeting overall nomination targets, Anchor is seen as less of a problem than Servite due to the location of its schemes (near shops, transport etc.). Given the location of Servite schemes, on the other hand, it was seen as:

'Pretty much impossible'

to meet nomination targets, with the result that Haringey:

'Often had to hand properties back to Servite.'

While ASRA has two schemes in the Borough, Asians on the Waiting List are not automatically nominated to the association. The Borough has a comparatively small and scattered Asian population and of the two schemes one is scattered with a peripatetic warden, while the other is seen as having "astronomical rents":

'More than half the people we nominated to this turned it down.'

As a result while Haringey had 75% nomination rights to this scheme they only managed to take up 40%.

African-Caribbeans are the largest minority ethnic group in the Borough. At the end of February 1994 of 410 people on the Waiting List for sheltered accommodation, 102 were "ethnic minorities" of which 27 were "West Indian" (with a further seven "African").

Haringey had 50% nomination rights to a Carib scheme but if an African-Caribbean elder applied for sheltered accommodation then Haringey would not automatically look to Carib:

'Very very few will actually ask for a multi-cultural scheme ... or a scheme that represents their own community . . . (we) . . . have to push them that way . . . [we] . . . very rarely get anybody asking to be in an ethnic minority scheme just for its own sake.'

It was felt that far more important factors were proximity to family, shops, desirability of the scheme etc.

BRADFORD CITY COUNCIL

Bradford City Council produce an annual summary of nominations (covering lettings made by housing associations **not** nominations made to them). The data for the year 1991/92 reveals that nominees were rehoused by 14 housing associations including Anchor (18 nominees rehoused - 19% of all those housed by the association in Bradford in the year), Hanover (8-73%), "Royal British Legion" (9-45%) and Manningham (24-48%). The 50% average target for nominations had been met (or almost met i.e. 40% or more) for nine of the 14 associations (many of these will, however, have been providers of general needs, rather than sheltered, housing). No details were, however, available with regard to the ethnic origin of those housed.

The nomination form reportedly has a section for the nominee's ethnic origin but no analysis had been made of this data. It was acknowledged that:

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'Yes we should be monitoring, but it's just the time factor.'

With regard to the Borough's own stock no monitoring reports had been produced at the time of the research. A draft report had been prepared in late 1993 (the first one) but had not been presented to committee by May 1994 - the draft report appeared not to cover nominations to housing association sheltered accommodation.

With regard to nominating black and minority ethnic elders to sheltered accommodation it was felt that there were few such elders coming to the local authority due to the extended family system, but that there were:

'More now than 10 or 15 years ago'

(as barriers are breaking down). There were still few black and minority ethnic elders "pro rata" for the Borough to nominate to housing associations:

'You're not going to change thousands of years of . . . culture in just one generation.'

It was also felt that Manningham Housing Association was taking all the Asian applicants, but that this was partly due to other housing associations transferring stock (including tenanted stock) to them.

Ethnic classification

While all three of the Boroughs at least collected details with regard to the ethnic origin of applicants, the classification systems they used differed — not only from each other but also from those used by the participating associations.

<i>Bradford</i>	<i>Haringey</i>	<i>Merton</i>
White/UK	Asian	Asian
Indian	W. Indian	Black
Pakistani	Other European	Irish
Bangladeshi	Irish	White
Afro/Caribbean	Turkish Cypriot	Other
Other (Please specify)	Greek Cypriot African	

These can be compared with the OPCS-based categories used by Anchor:

Black Caribbean
White
Bangladeshi
Pakistani
Black African
Indian
Chinese
Black - Other (please specify)
Other

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and the two-part CORE categories used by most other housing associations:

Part 1	Part 2
Asian	Black
Caribbean	White
African	Other
South-East Asian	Mixed
British/European	
Irish	
Other	
Combination of the above groups	
Question refused	

The existence of such different, and not immediately comparable, classifications leads to difficulties when comparing, for example, nominees housed (using the housing association's categories) to potential nominees on the local authority's Waiting List (using the local authority's classifications). The introduction of Common Waiting Lists with Common Application Forms will have an obvious impact here.

Chapter 5 The Tenant Study

The schemes selected

In order to answer the key questions identified in the Introduction a cross-section of schemes was selected to give good coverage of:

Scheme type - Cat.1, Cat.2 and Cat. 2 1/2.

Scheme location - areas with significant black and minority ethnic populations and areas with smaller populations.

Ethnic make-up of the scheme - schemes with significant numbers of black and minority ethnic tenants (for the purposes of this study six or more) and schemes with smaller numbers.

Location

A total of 32 schemes were selected for the tenant interviews from all four participating associations and across the four key study areas. The scheme per area breakdown was as follows:

West Yorkshire:	5
London (and Region):	13
Merseyside:	3
West Midlands:	11

Ethnic mix

As the focus of the research was on black and minority ethnic elders, with white tenants being used as a control sample (to see if there were any key differences between the two groups), it had been intended to visit only those schemes where there was at least one black or minority ethnic tenant. Given that Housing 21 houses so few black and minority ethnic elders this proved not to be possible. Accordingly in order to cover a range of Housing 21 schemes, schemes with no black or minority ethnic tenants, but in the key study areas, were included.

Schemes included ranged from 0 black and minority ethnic tenants to highs of 29 out of 37 (78.3%) and 33 out of 55 (60%). This lack of black and minority ethnic elders led to more white than black and minority ethnic tenants being interviewed. While this was by no means ideal it did provide valuable insights, as part of the purpose of the research was to investigate the attitude of white tenants to black or minority ethnic tenants coming to live in the schemes in which they themselves lived.

Warden

In addition to ethnic mix and locational spread the research also included schemes with wardens of black or minority ethnic origin. This was the case with four out of 27 wardens in the study. All bar one of these wardens was employed by Anchor, the exception being a Servite warden. This does not necessarily mean that no other black or minority ethnic wardens were employed by the participating associations. The situation described is simply that found in the selected schemes in the key areas.

The issue of the ethnic origin of the warden is dealt with more fully in Chapter 7.

The tenants

In total some 155 tenants were interviewed, some individually and others in group situations. Of these 92 were white and 63 were of black or minority ethnic origin (split almost equally between African-Caribbeans and Asians). The key findings to emerge from the interviews are detailed below.

It should be remembered that the research was of a qualitative rather than a quantitative nature. Accordingly a 'therefore x% of all tenants feel that... approach should be avoided in reading this report.

It should also be noted that, owing to the small numbers of black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed (owing, in turn, to the small number housed) no attempt has been made in this Chapter to differentiate between the different groups that make up this category i.e. the information gathered is broken down by 'white' and 'black and minority ethnic' only.

Access

Reasons for moving into sheltered accommodation

For both white and black and minority ethnic tenants, the most important reasons for coming into sheltered accommodation were to do with health/inability to cope with previous accommodation (mainly due to its size or stairs). Roughly one in three of those interviewed cited these reasons.

Black and minority ethnic tenants were far more likely than white tenants to cite domestic problems as a factor leading them to go into sheltered accommodation and were slightly more likely to cite the desire to be nearer to friends or family.

How they found out about sheltered accommodation

The single most common explanation cited by white tenants as to how they had come to find out about sheltered accommodation was that they had either seen the scheme sign or had seen the scheme being built (this was mentioned by just under a quarter of the white interviewees). This was also a major reason mentioned by the black and minority ethnic tenants (with nearly a fifth of them citing this). Interviewees from both groups did, however, express some initial uncertainty as to what was being built:

White tenant:

'I wasn't actually sure if it was a small hotel'

Black tenant:

'I never knew what it was. I thought it was an Old People's Home before.'

Black and minority ethnic tenants were, however, slightly more likely to have found out through family or friends (the third most popular reason cited by white tenants) e.g. through a son or daughter trying to find accommodation for an elderly parent.

White tenants were much more likely than black and minority ethnic tenants to have found out through family or friends who already lived in sheltered accommodation. Given the ethnic make-up of the majority of schemes this is hardly surprising. It will, however, be interesting to see if the current efforts to attract black and minority ethnic tenants have any impact on this i.e. will an increase in black and minority ethnic tenants lead in turn to an increase in applicants as tenants tell friends/family (or are visited by them) about sheltered accommodation.

None of the black and minority ethnic tenants referred to having seen an advertisement for sheltered accommodation in a newspaper, but nearly one in ten of the white tenants said they had done so.

Black and minority ethnic tenants were proportionately more likely to say that they had heard of sheltered accommodation through the local authority (the equal third most common reason given by them). More black and minority ethnic tenants stated that they had found out about sheltered accommodation through a club or community group/centre than was the case with white tenants (although a substantial number of white tenants, all Housing 21 tenants, had found out about sheltered accommodation through the Royal British Legion).

While, with the exception of the newspaper articles and advertisements mentioned above, no white tenants referred to having heard of sheltered accommodation through direct promotional work (as opposed to more 'passive' promotional work such as scheme signs) on the part of the housing associations, a small number of the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed had found out via this route.

Knowledge of sheltered accommodation and housing associations

Those interviewed were asked if they had heard about housing associations and/or sheltered accommodation before they went through the process of obtaining their present accommodation.

Of the white tenants responding to this question slightly more (just over a third) had **not** previously heard of housing associations than had heard of them. Comments made included:

'I didn't even know they existed.'

'If anybody wanted a place they went to the Council.'

'Never knew anything existed like it.'

'No, out of the blue this was. . . I didn't know the first thing about it. . . I got it through the Council.'

'We never thought about it. . . it was all the Corporation.'

'We just understood this belonged to the British Legion.'

Of the black tenants responding just under a quarter had previously heard of housing associations, although only two of those interviewed said that they knew someone in housing association accommodation. Slightly more (just over a quarter) had not previously heard of housing associations. Comments made included:

'I think [that I had heard about housing associations] but I don't know nothing much about them. . . I was only depending on the Council to find me a place.'

'Yes, but I didn't know anything about it.'

With regard to sheltered accommodation nearly half of the white tenants interviewed had previously heard of sheltered accommodation (with almost as many actually knowing someone in such accommodation as having merely heard about it), while only a fifth stated that they had not previously heard of sheltered accommodation. Comments made by those who had not previously heard of sheltered accommodation included:

'Didn't really know what this sort of thing was like.'

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'I never knew anything about this.'

'You always associate that with very old people.'

'I never thought it concerned me . . . I got a bit confused between residential and sheltered housing.'

In line with the above, one of those who had previously heard of sheltered accommodation and was now a tenant of such accommodation stated that:

'I wouldn't like it. . . . This is really sheltered accommodation isn't it?'

While another, who did not realise that she was actually living in sheltered accommodation, felt that it was:

'Like a home ain't it. Like those nursing homes . . . for the people who can't get about.'

One of those who had previously heard of sheltered accommodation noted that:

'Whether I knew about sheltered housing and what sheltered meant I don't know.'

The response from black and minority ethnic tenant interviewees was much the same as for the question regarding prior knowledge of housing associations, with just under a quarter having previously heard of sheltered accommodation, very few knowing someone in such accommodation (one in housing association sheltered accommodation) and just over a quarter having not previously heard of such accommodation. Comments made included:

'I hear about it. I couldn't understand what it meant.'

'Not really acquainted with what it was about . . . I don't have no idea what it was at all.'

'Never [heard about it]. In Georgetown we don't have anything like this.'

One black tenant who had previously had a very negative view of sheltered accommodation stated that:

'I thought it was more restricted . . . You had to be in of a certain time . . . Couldn't do what you wanted to do. I found out I was wrong . . . I made a good choice.'

It would appear that knowledge of both housing associations and sheltered housing was fairly evenly split between the 'didn't previously know' and the "did previously know" for the black and minority ethnic tenants, although they were less likely than the white tenants to have had previous knowledge of either.

Access channel

Of the white tenant interviewees who stated how they had got into sheltered accommodation, the vast majority had made a direct application to the housing association concerned. Indeed the ratio of direct applications to local authority nominations was three to one. This seemed to be particularly the case with Housing 21, with a large number of tenants hearing about the accommodation through the Royal British Legion and then applying directly to the association. It will interesting to see if the changes in eligibility requirements have an impact on this.

Of the black and minority ethnic tenants identifying an access channel the main channel was once again direct applications, although the direct application/local authority nomination

ratio was substantially lower (being two to one). It would thus appear that black and minority ethnic tenants may be proportionately more likely than white tenants to get into sheltered accommodation through the local authority nomination route, with (conversely) white tenants being more likely to get in through making a direct application. Given the information set out in Chapter 4 this has interesting implications.

Views with regard to mixed schemes

In order to obtain answers to the issue of 'what do tenants feel about living in ethnically mixed schemes?' the following range of settings were used:

Black and minority ethnic tenants in:

- (i) schemes with six or more black and minority ethnic tenants;
- (ii) schemes with less than six black and minority ethnic tenants.

White tenants in:

- (i) schemes with six or more black and minority ethnic tenants;
- (ii) schemes with less than six black and minority ethnic tenants.
- (iii) schemes with no black and minority ethnic tenants.

The figure of six was chosen as a "break-off point simply because this is the minimum number recommended to Anchor by an external consultant as sufficient to create a self-supporting community within a scheme.

Schemes with six or more black and minority ethnic tenants:

Black and minority ethnic tenants:

SERVITE

Black and minority ethnic tenants in the Birmingham Community Association scheme managed by Servite (where 29 of the 37 tenants were African-Caribbean) were all happy living in a mixed scheme. Comments made included:

'I find no fault with them [i.e. whites].'

'We all get on very well here . . . We all get together . . . one family here.'

'It [the schemes]'s more West Indian than white, but still [I] get on with them [i.e. whites].'

'No problem . . . they [whites]'re all right.'

Some of those interviewed expressed a clear preference for living in a mixed scheme rather than in an ethnic-specific scheme (see also Chapter 6):

'I happy with the mixed ones.'

'We 're better off [with a mixture]. . . It's very fine having mixture and I think that's much better . . . We have to try to live amongst each other.'



When asked whether they would prefer an all-black scheme responses were negative:

'No I'm fine here... mixture is fine.'

'No, no chance.'

Similarly in a scheme in North London with eight black or minority ethnic tenants the (black) warden felt that:

'They (the tenants) get on very nicely.'

One African-Caribbean tenant while finding the scheme "pretty boring"

'British way of life... they're not very sociable.'

went on to say that he preferred to live in a mixed scheme:

'I don't believe in apartheid ... I like mixture.'

"I seem to get along fairly well with English people... much better than with my own people [in Jamaica]."

This tenant also stated that he had not experienced any problems such as racist abuse from white tenants:

'I don't experience that... that doesn't go on here.'

Another African-Caribbean tenant in the same scheme noted that:

'They [whites] 're always be nice to me.'

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She would not have preferred to live in an all-black scheme and stated that she had not been harassed by other tenants in the scheme (unlike in her previous accommodation).

This particular scheme was unusual in that it contained three Burmese tenants. They all favoured living in a mixed scheme:

'The tenants here, we are all getting on very very well.'

'We get on well here... we get on all right... we are all like a family.'

'We get on very well in this place.'

Reaction to the idea of living in an ethnic-specific scheme was:

'I don't like that. I am happy as I am now.'

As with the African-Caribbean tenants the Burmese tenants reported that they had had no problems from white tenants.

HANOVER

Twenty five percent of the tenants of a Hanover scheme visited in Slough were of black or minority ethnic origin- this included six Asian tenants. These tenants appeared to be happy to be living in a mixed scheme:

'All the old people are very co-operative with us.'

'I'm very happy here.'

The only problem identified was that of language. Indeed the lack of association staff with relevant language skills meant that there was a reliance on families, the local Day Centre and the local authority.

ANCHOR

The (black) warden of a Birmingham Anchor scheme (with six African-Caribbean and one Pakistani tenants, out of a total of 24) felt that there was something of an inter-racial problem in her scheme, but that this was:

'Against my Asian tenant'

(no problems being identified with regard to the behaviour of white tenants towards African-Caribbean tenants). As with the schemes previously mentioned the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed were in favour of (or at worst neutral about) living in a mixed scheme:

'We move together all right.'

'It doesn't bother me to live with mixed people.'

'I'm quite happy [living in a mixed scheme].'

It was, however, noted by one tenant (with regard to white people) that:

'I know what they're like. You don't get too friendly... They don't bother me.'

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Answers to the question of 'would you prefer to live in an all-black scheme?' were met with replies along the following lines:

'No ... I like mixed.'

'[I prefer] a mixed one.'

It was noticeable, however, that some animosity was expressed by one African-Caribbean tenant to the idea of living with "Indians" (see also Chapter 6):

'I can't stand the cooking. . . and you can't understand them.'

This theme emerged again at another scheme nearby (where more than half of the tenants were of black or minority ethnic origin, the largest group of these being Asian). One African-Caribbean tenant stated that he was "afraid" of "Indians":

"I am socially afraid of them . . . They do not have my ways . . . We still don't mix together. '

'I could never mix with them [Indians]. We kind of hate each other.'

This view was not extended to white people:

'White people are no obstacle to me.'

With regard to the other African-Caribbean tenants interviewed in the scheme a preference was expressed towards living in a mixed scheme:

'I'd rather live here.'

'I'd rather that [mixed scheme].'



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'I don't care to exchange ... to anywhere else.'

[I prefer] mixing with all kinds.'

With white tenants being seen as:

'No problem with me. No trouble at all.'

With regard to all-black schemes the view was expressed that:

'In this country we're supposed to mix isn't it.'

Asian tenants interviewed were generally positive about living in a mixed scheme:

'I'm quite happy with the tenants.'

'Happy to live with the mixed.'

'Everybody speak with me all right.'

Indeed one interviewee stated with regard to African-Caribbeans that they were:

'Not bad to me. Very helpful to me.'

There was, however, a desire among some of the Punjabi- speaking female tenants to have a warden that spoke their language (the warden was African-Caribbean).

An Asian tenant of a South London scheme (with a minority ethnic warden and seven out of the 64 tenants of black or minority ethnic origin) expressed a desire to stay living in a mixed scheme, stating that:

'I'm not uncomfortable living with white people.'

Another Asian tenant expressed the view that:

'Those who have lived with British people can live in mixed schemes.'

A further Asian tenant was happy to live in a mixed scheme, but felt that:

'Sometimes there is some harassment... I'm the only one Indian. They don't like me'

(this situation was, however, felt to be improving).

Similarly an African-Caribbean tenant felt that white tenants saw him as a "vagabond" or a "thief or "mad", but he was not interested in living in an all-black scheme.

An Asian tenant in a North London scheme (with a white warden and six out of 40 tenants of black and minority ethnic origin) expressed happiness with living in a mixed scheme:

'I'm quite happy. . . nobody interferes with me.'

'I don't know what they might think of me ... but when they're with me they're nice.'

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This tenant had experienced racist behaviour from another tenant who had complained about:

'All these coloured people coming here and making a noise"... I just thought that she was stupid talking like that.'

One African-Caribbean interviewee had been the first black tenant in the scheme, but had found no problems:

'Everybody get along well.'

With regard to living in an all-black scheme he stated that:

'[It] doesn't bother me one way or the other.'

Another African-Caribbean tenant was opposed to ethnic-specific schemes, feeling that schemes should be for everyone.

A scheme in East London had six Asian tenants out of a total of 57. The Asian tenants, who had only very limited English, felt that there was:

'No problem, only the language.'

'They're all nice here, all it is is the language.'

However, as one said as an aside:

'We're supposed to like it here . . . because where else can we go.'

A desire was expressed to live with more Asians, but it was preferred that they would come into the scheme, rather than the existing tenants having to move to another (Asian) scheme.

The Asian tenants said that they had had no problems from white tenants but one asked the interviewer:

'Do white people like Asians? . . . We like them but they don't like us'.

White tenants:

Whereas the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed were generally in favour of living in mixed schemes the response from white tenants was nowhere near as uniform.

SERVITE

The white tenants interviewed in the BCA/Servite scheme in Birmingham were generally positive :

"I get on with everybody ... no problem or nothing. . . You've got to live together anyway.'

'Doesn't make any difference.'

Similarly the white tenants interviewed in a North London scheme felt, with regard to mixed schemes, that:

'It doesn't bother me . . . I don't mind. . . I get on with all of them.'

'I like it.'

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'You have to accept that you have to mix. . . we've got to accept them'

'I don't mind. I think it's wonderful. . . There's just the odd few that are a bit bigoted'

'I couldn't care less... I get on with them all.'

HANOVER

At Hanover's scheme in Slough the reaction from the white tenants varied. One tenant felt that living in a mixed scheme:

'Makes no difference . . . you don't bother with them.'

Another complained about the smell of Asian cooking and felt that:

'They will flout the laws about overcrowding in houses.'

This tenant also felt that:

'I think if they were all put together they'd be happier.'

With regard to mixed schemes this tenant's attitude was:

'As long as they're unobtrusive . . . it doesn't bother me.'

Another white tenant expressed almost the same attitude, feeling that mixed schemes were fine:

'As long as they don't interfere with me.'

There seemed to be little mixing in the scheme (both among the white tenants as well as between white and Asian). The relationship between black and minority ethnic and white tenants seemed to be one of tolerance at arm's length rather than close co-operative coexistence. There was little interaction between the Asian and the white tenants due to the language problem, but, as one white interviewee pointed out:

'I suppose we're equally to blame.'

ANCHOR

At an Anchor scheme in Birmingham, the majority of whose tenants were of black and minority ethnic origin, varied views were expressed. One white tenant stated with regard to mixed schemes that:

'I don't mind at all. They don't hurt me and I don't hurt them.'

Another, however, felt that when the scheme had been all white:

'It was very nice . . . hasn't been as nice since [Asians came in]. . . It was lovely when it was all white . . . They [Asians] can't help being what they are.'

Another white tenant felt that:

'There's too many of them in here.'

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and that:

'We should all have our own buildings.'

(due to the linguistic and cultural barriers). On the other hand this tenant also said that:

'I've always found the ones in here very polite, they've never bothered me'

and

'I don't see colour . . . they're nice to me and I don't bother.'

Similarly negative/grudgingly acceptive views were expressed by a tenant in South London:

*'They're all over the place now aren't they . . . As long as they leave me alone in my flat
I'm all right.'*

Another tenant in the same scheme felt that if more Asians were to come into the scheme:

'I wouldn't like it . . . Always look at your home ground . . . look at your own . . . Why should I support[through taxes] people that haven't been born in this country . . . I don't see why they should come in and change this country. It's our country.'

Another white tenant in the same scheme stated that while she was:

'Not really fussed about them'

she would not want to be "outnumbered":

"I don't mind when I'm in the majority but I wouldn't like to be a tenant in the minority.'

As with the Hanover scheme mentioned above while black and minority ethnic tenants expressed satisfaction with living in a mixed scheme there appeared to be little actual mixing, with the black and minority ethnic tenants being tolerated rather than being active participants and opposition being expressed to many more black and minority ethnic tenants coming in. It should be noted, however, that the use of the dining-room as a dinner-club for Asian women from outside the scheme may have stirred up resentment among the white tenants - a feeling of 'how come they can have it and we can't?'.

By contrast the white tenants in the North London scheme referred to above were much less negative about living in a mixed scheme:

'It doesn't bother me . . . good and bad in all races and colours.'

"We've got Coloureds here. . . it doesn't bother me . . . They're all right. I've never found nothing wrong with them.'

A more negative view was generally expressed by the white tenants in the East London scheme. One white interviewee stated that while:

'I'm not racially prejudiced'

she did not like to see:

'All their [Asians'] washing on the line, leaving it out for the week.'

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With regard to living in a mixed scheme this tenant stated that:

'It doesn't worry me because I'm not near them.'

She felt that the Asian tenants were no trouble, but that:

'They don't mix with us at all.'

A more negative view was expressed of Asians living outside the scheme:

'With all the foreigners here. There's not many whites.'

'You've only got to look around. You can count the whites on your fingers.'

'It's not our country no more.'

This view of the Asians outside the scheme contrasts strongly with the view of some of the white tenants towards one particular Asian tenant of the scheme:

'Mrs... is a very nice woman. . . Lovely little, woman.'

'A lovely lady. . . she is a very nice person. . . she tries to speak our language.'

Another Asian tenant was described as:

'A very nice man.'

The warden made it clear to tenants that racist remarks would not be allowed in the Common Room and that they will be evicted if they racially harass other tenants. The warden noted that:

'They don't ignore each other. . . they acknowledge the fact that they live here. . . [they] talk about them behind their backs but are pleasant to their faces.'

It is worth noting that the warden has been described as a:

'Spineless Indian-lover'

by several of the tenants because she treats the Asian tenants equally.

Clearly then, while the black and minority ethnic tenants were generally happy to live in a mixed scheme (the main concerns identified being language and some evidence of inter-ethnic dislike) the same did not always apply for white tenants. What then of the situation in schemes with less than six black or minority ethnic tenants?

Schemes with less than six black and minority ethnic tenants

Black and minority ethnic tenants:

SERVITE

The two Black British tenants at a Servite scheme in Liverpool both strongly favoured living in a mixed scheme. One of these tenants had known about black housing associations before he came to the scheme but:

'I don't like them places. I like to be in a place where anyone comes in ... I wouldn't want to be in a place where it's dominantly one nationality.'

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He personally felt that he was:

'Born here and I'm more used to this style of life'

but at the same time he recognised that:

'A lot of black people . . . like to be together.'

The other Black British tenant also stated that:

'I've mixed with them since I was born.'

Neither had experienced any problems with regard to white tenants.

This scheme had originally been built for Polish elders (of whom there were only three among the 50 tenants), one of whom stated that:

"A mixed around... is better than one nationality. . . More disagreement on the one flag crew than on the many.'

The one African-Caribbean tenant living in a scheme in Birkenhead (all of the other 42 tenants were white) stated that she wouldn't prefer an all-black scheme:

'I'm happy living in a mixed scheme.'

A further scheme in Birkenhead had three Chinese tenants out of a total of 86 tenants. While the one Chinese tenant interviewed preferred to live in a mixed scheme:

"I live in England for... 52 years. . . mostly all my life my neighbour is all English people,'

it was evident that the other two Chinese tenants experienced severe language problems. Further all three Chinese tenants spoke different dialects. One was particularly isolated, speaking a minority dialect. The warden could only communicate with this tenant through her family and felt that the tenant should be housed with people she could talk to:

'[She] doesn't speak to anybody, she's in that flat day and night.'

The sole black tenant (an African-Caribbean) of a scheme in Birmingham was pleased to be in a mixed scheme:

'I am the only coloured here... I like it.'

In fact this tenant was opposed to the idea of more African-Caribbean tenants coming into the scheme:

'Some are too noisy. . . I'm feeling all right here on my own.'

A North London scheme had two Asian tenants (out of a total of 40 tenants). Both were in favour of living in mixed schemes:

'The people are quite nice. There's no colour bars or anything.'

'I don't have any trouble. Nobody has ever said anything.'

'Nothing to complain. We are all very friendly with each other.'

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In answer to the question 'would you like to live with more Asians?' Neither tenant was particularly in favour of this, with one replying:

'I don't think I would like that very much.'

This was due to the particular tenants' social class.

The two African-Caribbean tenants interviewed at a South London scheme (with five black and minority ethnic tenants out of a total of 55 tenants) were also in favour of living in a mixed scheme:

'Everybody that I see we get on all right... when I do see anyone'

'It doesn't worry me... Lot of white friends'

'Where I was born we have been used to meeting all types of people... it didn't pose a problem... People just accepted me.'

Neither expressed a preference for living in an all-black scheme:

'Not at all... I'm quite happy here.'

Two Asian tenants were happy to be in a mixed scheme, but felt that:

'People think we all come from a jungle or somewhere'

'Once they [other tenants] know you then they like you... [but]... some old people are still very antagonistic.'

HANOVER

At a Hanover scheme (with three black and minority ethnic tenants) in an area of Bradford with a large Asian population, the black and minority ethnic tenants were all happy to be living in a mixed scheme (although it could perhaps be argued that they would have been happy to have been living anywhere). An African-Caribbean tenant stated that:

'I rather to live among mixed people... I rather to live just as I am'

'I get along with white people quite well'

however this tenant did state that she would like to have a friend that she could visit in the scheme. Similarly a female Sikh tenant (with very limited English) was quite happy in the scheme but would like a lot of friends she could speak to - indeed she stated that she would prefer an all Punjabi-speaking scheme.

An Asian couple living in an otherwise all-white scheme in the Midlands were happy to be living in a scheme with white people. They did, however, express a wish that there more Asians in the scheme:

'Yes, if there were others it would be better.'

This was seen as particularly the case from a language point of view.

Rather than move to a scheme with more Asians these tenants would have preferred to have:

'More Asian people here.'

They would not, however, have minded living in an all-Asian scheme run by an Asian housing association. In other words as long as the accommodation was acceptable they did not really mind who provided it.

Unlike the majority of the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed, these tenants had experienced problems with white neighbours:

'I think she [the neighbour] doesn't like me because I am coloured.'

These problems were related to noise complaints by the white neighbours. This is covered in the section on 'white tenants' below.

The issue of language difficulties was also raised by an Asian tenant (the sole non-white tenant in a 60-tenant scheme) in South London. This tenant spoke virtually no English. She was quite happy living in a mixed scheme and had experienced no overt racist behaviour from the white tenants:

'Nothing against white people'

'No problem as far as people are concerned. It's the language problem.'

When the tenant had first come into the scheme (with her late husband) she had, apparently, been told that other Asians would be coming. This had not been the case and she was now linguistically isolated:

"It would be nice if there was somebody here from Kenya or Pakistan that [I] could talk to.'

As with the black tenant interviewed in a Servite scheme in Birmingham, the sole African-Caribbean tenant in an otherwise all-white 40 sheltered unit scheme in the Midlands was happy to be living in a mixed scheme:

'I love it. I like it like this'

'I like mixing. . . If you don't mix you don't know nothing'

but, at the same time, not in favour of more black tenants coming into the scheme:

'The blacks are a very funny type of people. They just like to be under one another's feet. . . They just like to be overcrowded.'

'The biggest problem with the blacks [is] they have too many chips on their shoulder.'

This tenant saw the possibility of more black tenants coming into the scheme as a potential threat to her privacy. She felt that if given a flat in the scheme a black tenant would bring others to live with them:

'Before you know it the whole complex, will be full of them.'

Given these views it is perhaps not surprising that this tenant stated that:

'I don't count myself as a black person. I just count myself as myself.'

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ANCHOR

The sole Asian tenant in an Anchor scheme in an area of Bradford that has a large Asian community (and that is very near a scheme run by Manningham Housing Association - see Chapter 3) expressed a preference for living in a mixed scheme. This tenant had been offered a tenancy in the Manningham sheltered scheme but had turned it down:

'I refused it. I said I'm all right here'

He would, however, have liked to have some more Asian tenants in the scheme but:

'Too many no good.'

In other words he wanted *some* more but not too many more.

The black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed in a scheme in South London were also happy to live in a predominantly white scheme, although there seemed to be very little mixing and more emphasis on keeping oneself to oneself:

'If you don't trouble them they don't trouble you'

'Everybody keep to their own'

'I'm well content here you know ... I like quietness. . . I just content'

One of the African-Caribbean interviewees in a scheme in Birmingham noted that:

'I believe people . . . don't like coloured... I don't think they like coloured living here'

'I love them but some of them don't love [me].'

This tenant did not, however, favour living in an all-black scheme. As she said:

'[I'm] happy to live in a scheme with white people . . . I worked with them for a long time.'

As a result:

'I don't like living amongst coloureds, I like mixed'

'I'd rather die [than live in an all-black scheme].'

As with the black tenants above who seemed to have a negative view of black people this tenant stated that some black people:

'Can be very horrible . . . Some coloured people doesn't have no manners... no discipline.'

Another African-Caribbean tenant in this scheme was opposed to all-black schemes as they seemed, to him, like prejudice:

'I would prefer to live in a mixed one like this,'

while another African-Caribbean stated that:

'Sometimes you're better off with these people than your own colour.'

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The sole African-Caribbean couple in a small (10 unit) scheme in West Yorkshire were quite emphatic in stating that they would not like to live in an all-black scheme. Living in a development where all the other tenants were white was not seen as a problem:

'Don't worry me at all... I always live good among the white people.'

As with some of the other African-Caribbean tenants interviewed (see above) some reluctance was expressed to the idea of living with Asians:

'They're tricky people... I wouldn't like to have them for me neighbour.'

This couple also expressed some reservations towards other black people:

'Some black people could be very very rough... especially Jamaicans.'

HOUSING 21

Housing 21 have, up to now, housed very few black or minority ethnic elders. The sole Asian tenant in a scheme in North East London stated that he preferred to live in a mixed scheme:

'I like mixed scheme.'

This tenant was ex-Services (he had found out about the scheme through the Royal British Legion), had lived in England for more than 40 years and (unlike many of the other Asian interviewees) spoke fluent English. Accordingly there were no language-related (or in this case indeed cultural) problems.

An Asian tenant in a South London scheme had had problems from white tenants that she felt were race-related (the, white, wardens incidentally disagreed). This tenant felt that white tenants created her:

'Like some tramp or something'

'They look at you as if you're from outer space or somewhere.'

The tenant felt that the situation would be improved by more black and minority ethnic people coming into the scheme:

'A few more coloured people comes here would put these people right'

'A few Brownies like me, it'd be a different atmosphere.'

A dark-skinned Southern European tenant in another South London scheme had had problems with white tenants due to her dark skin:

'[I] had a terrible time when I came here... I was called lots of ugly names... called "Black"'

"I think that [skin colour] had a lot to do with it... I think that anybody dark-skinned is going to have a hard time."

White tenants:

SERVITE

The warden at the Servite scheme in Liverpool felt that there were no race-related problems in the scheme "whatsoever". As with the Black British tenants interviewed (see above) the white interviewees were very positive about living in a mixed scheme:

'We like that.'

The warden at one of the Birkenhead schemes similarly felt that there were no race-related problems in her scheme:

'We haven't had a problem here... They get on great.'

This warden also felt that the fact that there were comparatively few black or minority ethnic elders in the area may have contributed to white tenants:

'Accepting them [Blacks] a little bit more.'

From interviewing some of the white tenants, however, it would appear that the opposite may be true — tenants having grown used to living with the black and Chinese communities on Merseyside for several years. Further the tenants' positive reaction to a black former tenant may have added to this positive view.

While there was a very clear communications problem between the white tenants and the Chinese tenants in the other scheme visited in Birkenhead, it was noticeable that the white tenants were very supportive to the Chinese tenant who spoke the least English:

'We love having her, if we could only understand.'

A much less positive attitude was expressed, particularly towards Asians, by the white tenants of the Birmingham scheme. The warden informed me that when an Asian woman had approached the scheme to find out about accommodation the tenants had registered their opposition and had questioned the warden as to why she had let the woman through the front door. The warden felt that the tenants would definitely be more accepting of "blacks" than of Asians:

'Blacks I think they'd tolerate... I don't think they'd tolerate Asians here at all... It's got to come... but I don't think it'll go down too well.'

This view was backed up by a white interviewee who, despite admitting that she had never actually spoken to an Asian, stated that:

'I know it's bad but I would rather have a black person than a Pakistani [in the scheme].'

This tenant then said:

'Don't you put any Pakistanis in here while I'm here.'

By contrast the warden of the North London scheme felt that, although she had had moans from white tenants regarding the smell of Asian cooking:

'When they know them they're all right.'

When the first Asian tenant came into the scheme comments like "we've got a Paki" were made. The warden handled this by saying:

'She's not a Paki, she's a Sri Lankan.'

Certainly, the white tenants interviewed were not averse to having an ethnically-mixed scheme:

'I don't care. I'm not a racist in any way'

'I think we all get on together.'

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The South London scheme warden felt that having a mixed scheme was:

'Brilliant. . . haven't been any race problems here whatsoever'

"I don't think there should be segregation. . . if you don't intermix then you're going to have ... a higher rate of bad feeling.'

Again, the white tenants here felt that a mixed scheme was:

'OK I've never heard any disagreements at all.'

HANOVER

A white tenant interviewed in the Hanover scheme visited in Bradford stated that living in a scheme with people of black and minority ethnic origin:

'Doesn't bother me.'

Similarly in the Midlands scheme with one African-Caribbean tenant the view expressed by a white interviewee was that:

'It doesn't bother me in the least.'

Conversely the white tenants interviewed in another Midlands scheme were far from positive about living in a scheme with, in this case, Asian tenants:

'Oil and water don't mix'

'I do not like the smell of curry in my home . . . If they weren't Asian we wouldn't have the smell.'

'When Asians visit they come in droves . . . It's a well known fact'

'I don't think it's ever going to work out. . . We're never going to lower ourselves to the gutter level to live like them'

"A good many of us... if we'd known [there were going to be Asian tenants] we'd have stopped where we were'

'Tell them to moderate their lifestyle or get out. Either one would do me.'

This was not the view expressed by the white tenants interviewed in the South London scheme. They did not see a mixed scheme as problematic:

"It wouldn't worry me. . . What would worry me is if they wanted to keep themselves to themselves.'

One did, however, state that:

"I wouldn't like to be the only one [i.e. white tenant]... I naturally prefer my own. . . but it wouldn't worry me, as long as I've got a roof over my head.'

ANCHOR

The warden of the Anchor Bradford scheme was quite positive about the possible reaction of white tenants to more Asian tenants coming into the scheme:

'I don't think they'd bother actually.'

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Certainly the white tenants interviewed were willing to accept a mixed scheme:

'As long as they keep themselves to themselves I don't mind.'

The smell of Asian cooking was, however, identified as a potential problem.

The warden of the South London scheme felt there were:

'No immediate problems'

in having a mixed scheme, although:

'They [white tenants] are prejudiced, there's no doubt about it.'

For example a black tenant had apparently been told by a white tenant that he was not allowed into the scheme's garden. A white tenant interviewed, however, displayed more of a 'live and let live' attitude:

'There's good and bad of them as there are of us... They just talk to us and we talk to them.'

Exactly the same view was expressed by white tenants in the Handsworth scheme:

'[There are] good/bad blacks and good/bad whites. . . We're all different aren't we,'

with mixed schemes being viewed as:

'A thing that's got to happen isn't it.'

Here, as on Merseyside, it was stated that white tenants had been:

'Brought up with them [people of black and minority ethnic origin],'

which may have had something of an impact on their attitudes.

With the West Yorkshire scheme the attitude of white tenants to black and minority ethnic tenants was one of "tolerance":

'They tolerate ... the attitude is one of tolerance, which I don't like personally. It's patronising really.'

As in the schemes with six or more tenants of black or minority ethnic origin, where there were smaller numbers of such tenants they were generally happy to live in a predominantly white scheme, although language and the related problem of isolation were more of an issue (particularly for Asian tenants). Once again, however, the same did not always apply for white tenants with a wide range of views being displayed (with negative views particularly likely to be expressed towards people from the Indian sub-continent). Given this what was likely to be the viewpoint of tenants in all-white schemes with regard to the possibility of admitting black and minority ethnic tenants?

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Schemes with no black and minority ethnic tenants

SERVITE

Mixed views were expressed by tenants in a West Midlands scheme. Whilst one tenant stated that:

'People are people, some you like some you don't'

another expressed her opinions with regard to "foreigners" along the following lines:

"Let them live in their own country, not come and live in this country"

'They [the British] should look after their own first.'

A tenant of East European origin recounted her own experience of being called:

'Bloody foreigner'

and expressed the view that if Asians were to be admitted to the scheme:

"I don't think they [white tenants] would like it no way ... I don't ever [think] it will be successful mixing [Black Country] people with the Asian community.'

HOUSING 21

Given the traditional stereotypical image of the Royal British Legion and the fact that Housing 21 (Royal British Legion Housing Association as was, and still is in the minds of many of its tenants) has housed so few black and minority ethnic elders to date, it might have been expected that the association's tenants would be more likely than the tenants of the other participating association's to express racist views. This was not necessarily the case.

Although, as mentioned above, a dark-skinned tenant of Southern European origin had received racist abuse in the past in a South London scheme the situation was felt (by that tenant) to have improved, although there were still:

'A lot of nasty ones here.'

One white tenant stated (with regard to mixed schemes) that:

'We've never really had to cope with that. . . I've never really lived with them.'

Although this tenant also felt that:

'I don't know if some of them [the other white tenant] would like it.'

Another tenant stated that:

'I have no colour bar at all'

but then went on to say

'I think we let too many foreigners into this country . . . We let too many people in after the war.'

This tenant also envisaged problems from other white tenants:

'There would be a little handful, I could foresee, would not be delighted in the prospect... I could foresee trouble with a handful of people.'

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Although not overwhelmingly positive about the idea of ethnically-mixed schemes the views expressed by the tenants interviewed in two Bradford schemes were not overwhelmingly negative either:

'Depends who they are I suppose'

'Live and let live . . . They've a right to a home as well as us'

'[It] don't bother me. I've no qualms about that'

'They've to live somewhere'

'If a black person came and was clean and respectable ... I would accept them'

'We just really accept it'

'They're all human beings. . . [but]. . . It'd take some getting used to really . . . Their ways is different to ours'

'It takes all sorts. . . There's probably some very nice people.'

The key issue seemed to be 'will they join in?':

'I don't mind as long as they muck in.'

One tenant stated that:

'We do sign a contract that we're not racist'

(presumably the Tenancy Agreement).

On the more negative side the view was expressed with regard to opening the schemes up to black and minority ethnic elders:

'I hope it doesn't. . . [because]... it might. . . just cause . . . tension.'

It was also stated that:

'A lot of the racist complaints here are created by themselves... I do believe they've created a lot of their own problems. . . created their own slums.'

and, predictably given the responses elsewhere, the issue of the smell of Asian cooking was raised. It was, however, noted, somewhat fatalistically, that:

'You wouldn't be able to do anything about it... if they [Housing 21] want them to come they'll come'

'We have to accept these things'

The housing of a Bosnian family in the general family accommodation adjoining the two schemes may have an impact:

'Everybody's accepted them all right.'

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As an African-Caribbean family have also recently been housed future developments will be interesting.

At a scheme in the West Midlands mixed views were expressed. One couple said on the one hand that:

"I don't mind [a mixed scheme]. . . [There are a lot of Asians] round here. . . They're quite nice, quite friendly'

"I don't mind living among them. They've all got to have somewhere to live,'

and on the other:

"I do think not having the darkies in [the scheme] is an advantage... I think you should keep to the all whites'

"I think it's wise to keep to the whites because the darkies . . . don't seem to want to have anything to do with you'

"I don't think I should fancy. . . [living in a mixed scheme]... I know very well that they're not very friendly'

Another tenant in the scheme, however, said that it wouldn't bother him if the scheme was mixed as he mixed regularly with black and minority ethnic people in the pub.

A further tenant felt that in some schemes:

'They mix them up too much'

but noted that:

'They don't have foreigners here . . . Mind you they [Housing 21] are very particular who they have.'

In a scheme in South London the warden had:

'Reservations about they [existing tenants] would deal with it. . . It's the unknown . . . [but] . . . once it has [happened] they'll probably cope with it.'

One tenant had had problems with black neighbours in her previous accommodation and consequently was loathe to live in a mixed scheme:

'I wouldn't approve of it really. . . You don't relish having it [noise problems] again.'

Another couple felt that a mixed scheme:

'Would turn a lot of people off'

but felt themselves that:

'They're all God's people.'

This couple stated that some of the tenants will not use the local shop as the shop-keeper is not white.

The final couple interviewed in this scheme had quite a positive view, based partly on their experience with a black former neighbour:

'One of the most decent fellows you could ever hope to meet.'

Consequently their view was that mixed schemes were fine:

'As long as they're decent people... [and]... there's decent people in every race.'

It would appear from the interviews carried out that, in general, the black and minority ethnic tenants currently living both in mixed and in predominantly white schemes run by the four participating associations, were happy to carry on doing so. It should not, however, be assumed from this that there is no place for ethnic-specific schemes or that there is no room (or need for) improvement. It may be that the black and minority ethnic elders interviewed were atypical of the wider communities in that:

- they had gained access to mainstream housing association sheltered accommodation in the first place;
- they were desperate for housing and thus would have been happy with almost anything.

Issues of social class and degree of "Anglicisation" may also be relevant here, with more middle-class and/or anglicised black and minority ethnic elders being, perhaps, more willing to consider living in a predominantly white sheltered setting.

It is also clear that the reaction (both actual and hypothetical) of white tenants to the idea of housing black and minority ethnic elders in "their" schemes varies in a way that is hard to predict. This is an issue that must, however, be addressed. In most cases black and minority ethnic tenants will not be entering a "virgin" scheme; they will be entering an already established scheme some of whose tenants may well be racially prejudiced. If a service that meets their needs is to be provided then the potential problem of the reaction of existing white tenants cannot be ignored. This does not mean pandering to potential racist views, it means dealing with them.

Preferred place of residence

The vast majority of those interviewed (both white and of black and minority ethnic origin) expressed satisfaction with their accommodation and wanted to stay living in their existing scheme. A small number did, however, express a preference for living elsewhere.

White tenants:

Four of the white tenants interviewed expressed a desire to move to the sea-side. As one said:

'I'd like to live by the sea... a little, place by the sea... that would be my ideal... I wouldn't fancy living in Wolverhampton if I had a chance to live somewhere else.'

A similar number wanted to move nearer to family, while moving nearer to shops, to a flat with a separate bedroom or with a balcony, to a bungalow, to Essex, or going back to their home area were wanted by one interviewee each.

Where a desire to move was expressed, however, this was often accompanied with a sense of resignation that they would stay living where they were:

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'I've just settled myself now and I think "that's it'"

'I'm settled here now.'

Black and minority ethnic tenants:

While one black and minority ethnic tenant expressed a desire to buy a flat of her own, another wanted to move into a bungalow and two wanted to be nearer their families the largest single category (with five people) was those wanting to go "home" i.e. to their country of origin. This was generally accompanied, however, by the realisation that (for health, financial or family reasons) this was not likely to be possible.

One African-Caribbean tenant who wanted to go back to Jamaica had children in both the UK and Jamaica. He felt, however, due to his poor health and lack of money he was unlikely to go back.

Another, who also lacked the money necessary to transform his desire into reality stated that:

'As I am here now I am contented... [but if I had to leave the scheme]... my preference now would be to go back home and stay... If I could afford it I could be back home... I would like to go back.'

One of the Burmese interviewees stated that:

'I like to [go back to Burma] but I'm not going now'

as she felt she was too old for air travel and:

'I am a British subject now.'

The majority of the black and minority ethnic tenants interviewed did not, however, express a desire to return "home". This could be because, as people who had actually taken the step of going into sheltered accommodation, they were not representative of the views and aspirations of the wider community (see, however, the views of potential tenants in Chapter 6). What reasons though did they themselves identify for wanting to stay in the UK (or at least for not wanting to go "home")?

One reason given for staying in the UK was to be near children/grandchildren:

'All my children is here... my mind is here... I have no intention of leaving here'

'All my children born here.'

Alongside this was a feeling that there was no one there for them in their countries of origin anymore:

'I have nobody to go to'

'This [flat] is my home... I have nobody there now'

'A lot of our people are going back now... If I had money I'd go... [but]... who would look after me?'

One Jamaican tenant who left Jamaica 45 years ago, stated that he did not know anyone there now and that the last time he went there he felt like:

'A stranger.'

With the result that:

[Jamaica is] not my home at all I regard England now as my home ... I will never go back to the West Indies, no way.'

Another Jamaican tenant had originally come to the UK intending to stay for five years, make enough money and then go back home and build a place for himself. Now he felt that if he went back to Jamaica he would return to the UK as he would not be able to live how he wanted to there. He felt that people who were worse off than him and were left behind when he came to England are now better off than him.

One tenant stated that:

If I get a two bedroom flat I would move as I have a lot of grandchildren in this country.'

This issue of the desire for more bedrooms is further explored below and in Chapter 6.

Why are there so few black and minority ethnic tenants?

Several possible reasons for the small numbers of black and minority ethnic tenants are detailed in Chapter 1 (e.g. scheme location, housing association image, lack of knowledge of sheltered housing etc.). In order to get a wider perspective on this both wardens and black and minority ethnic tenants were asked what they thought the main reasons were.

WARDEN PERCEPTIONS

White wardens:

The warden of a scheme in an area with a large Asian population but only one Asian tenant felt that:

The Asian community looked after their own'

but also thought that:

The younger generation are growing up with different ideas . . . they're rebelling'

(see also Chapter 6).

In a similar vein another warden felt that:

Blacks are more traditional than Asians at the moment. . . [They have] a sense of responsibility that I don't think the young Asian has anymore as they're brought up in a different culture . . . [Asian] kids just want to get rid of their parents now.'

The warden of an Anchor scheme in South London felt that the image problem was crucial:

'Very very twin-sets and middle-class white ladies.'

This image was felt to be reinforced by the Association's publicity leaflets (which were seen as presenting an overwhelmingly white image) and the kind of office staff the Association employed:

'All seem to come from the same class.'

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A change in the kind of people employed was seen as having a possible knock-on effect on the type of people who might come into the scheme.

Black and minority ethnic wardens:

An African-Caribbean warden felt that there were few African-Caribbean elderly in sheltered accommodation because their relatives and friends looked after them and they did not want such accommodation anyway.

It was also felt, with regard to African-Caribbean elders, that:

'A lot of them come here to work and then go home,'

i.e. they have returned to their countries of origin.

The initial reaction from large white organisations when they first came to the UK, which led to their having difficulty in finding accommodation, was also highlighted. It was suggested that they may look at mainstream associations and think "it's the same":

'Once an idea gets into someone's head it's difficult to get out.'

Another African-Caribbean warden noted that in her country of origin:

'You're responsible to look after your parents.'

If the same occurred once people moved to the UK then one would expect few applications for sheltered accommodation to come from this community.

TENANT PERCEPTIONS

One reason identified by African-Caribbean tenants was the fact that black people like to hold on to their possessions (although from the interviews with white tenants this would clearly seem to be true of them too — with several interviewees stating that they had reluctantly had to get rid of many of their possessions in order to come into a scheme) and thus will not move into sheltered flats that they see as too small:

"Black people like a lot of things . . . One bedroom? They wouldn't appreciate it very much"

'Some say it is small . . . that's the reason they turn it down.'

It was also felt that:

'Black people like to have big things,'

which again posed a problem when the accommodation offered was perceived as being small.

The lack of outreach work, in the past at least, by the mainstream associations was also highlighted as having the effect that:

'[People] may not even know who to go to'

'They [mainstream associations] don't have no agents to go around . . . they don't employ anyone to do it.'

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Consequently:

'Black people don't know anything about this sort of accommodation'

'Not all black people know about these schemes'

'They [housing associations] don't go to coloured organisations. . . Coloured people don't even know any thing about it. . . It's not well advertised'

'Our people are not well acquainted [with housing associations].'

Given the lack of knowledge of who to go to in order to get into housing association accommodation, it was felt that they were "not very easy" to get into unless you went through the local authority.

An unwillingness to move from owner-occupied accommodation was also identified by African-Caribbean tenants:

'They always like to live in their own house'

'Most [black] people have their own place . . . their own property.'

This has further implications in terms of the take-up of "Staying Put"/Care and Repair schemes. The issue of housing association rents being perceived as too high to afford was also raised:

'They think [housing association accommodation]... is very expensive, above their means.'

Clearly such a perception may well dissuade people from applying for housing association sheltered accommodation.

With regard to Asian elders it was felt that they would prefer to live within the extended family:

'They like to live with the community [e.g. the family]. . . that is the only reason [there are so few in sheltered accommodation]. . . [They] don't want to live alone.'

'Most Asians, they like to live with their own families.'

'The Asian community have their own homes [for the whole family]. . . they always keep their mothers and fathers with them.'

This does, however, raise the issue of 'if this was really the case then what were these particular Asian elders doing in sheltered accommodation'?

The fear of experience of racial prejudice was also identified as a factor that may dissuade Asian elders from entering mainstream association sheltered provision:

'Feel they will not be welcome.'

How could more black and minority ethnic tenants be attracted?

Given the above, what more could be done to attract black and minority ethnic elders to apply for sheltered accommodation?

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African-Caribbean tenants:

It was felt that mainstream associations should take a more pro-active approach, going out into the communities and selling their message, rather than sitting back and waiting for people to nonce individual schemes. In other words there was a clear need for outreach work (see also Birmingham Community Association in Chapter 4) and possibly for a specialist outreach worker (as used by Hanover in the Bradford area). With regard to where exactly this "outreaching" should take place, it was suggested that there was a need to go around hospitals, clubs, Day Centres and voluntary organisations as well as the areas in which black and minority ethnic people live.

There was a need to advertise what the associations were and what they had to offer. As an African-Caribbean warden noted:

'It's letting people know that you are there. Publicity is the main issue.'

But leaflets alone were not seen as sufficient. There was also a need for personal contact as identified above.

As for where exactly the advertising should be placed the following were suggested: the local paper, shops and the library. The need to advertise the fact that sheltered housing is not the same as an Old People's Home, that it was not an "institution", was also identified and it was suggested that:

'They could put up a sign... and tell people what it is... at the gate.'

The key role that existing tenants could play was also identified. It was felt that if they talked to their friends:

'That will encourage them to come in... That's about it... talking to my friends and... giving an advertisement.'

With regard to the problem of housing association rents being perceived as too expensive, to afford the only solution offered was:

'Maybe charge less.'

Asian tenants:

With regard to Asian elders it was felt leaflets should be left in Advisory Centres, Law Centres and Asian Community Centres e.g. Gurdwaras and Mosques. In addition to this the associations should work more through community groups and carry out poster campaigns (in the relevant languages) in community centres. Use could also be made of radio and T.V.

There was a need to target advertising specifically at Asian people. It was felt, for example, that Anchor:

'Don't advertise to the Asian people.'

The need to spread information through local authorities was identified, as was the need to recruit staff with relevant language skills:

'Main problem is the language.'

It was felt that sheltered accommodation is perceived by Asian elders (where it is known about at all) as something mainly used by white people. Asian elders would feel safer in a scheme if they had people to talk to. If there are already Asians in a scheme then it:

'Encourages people to apply.'

The key issue is thus getting Asian elders into schemes in the first place so that word-of-mouth advertisement can occur.

Chapter 6 Potential Tenants



In looking at the issue of black and minority ethnic elders and sheltered housing, interviews with both black and mainstream associations and with existing tenants may provide us with some useful information but the picture may be incomplete. Black and mainstream associations may have particular vested interests in putting a particular viewpoint forward, while existing black and minority ethnic tenants may be somewhat atypical of the communities from which they come (after all, unlike most black and minority ethnic elders they are actually living in sheltered accommodation). In order to get a more rounded view, therefore, it is necessary to examine a missing element - namely those elders (from both the black and minority ethnic communities and, as a control sample, i.e. to see if there are any differences between them and the minority communities, the white population) who are in the right age-range but are not living in sheltered accommodation. In other words "potential tenants".

Interviews (on a group basis) were held with "potential tenants" (i.e. people in the right age-bracket) in the following locations:

Birmingham: Birmingham City Mission Luncheon Club (white - mixed gender)
 Birmingham Community Association Lunch Club (African-Caribbean + one Asian - mixed gender)
 Annie Wood Day Centre (African-Caribbean - mixed gender)

Bradford: Age Concern Group (white - mixed gender)
 Indian Worker's Association Group (Asian - Sikh - all male)
 Muslim Day Centre (Asian - Pakistani - all male)

London Borough
of Merton: African-Caribbean Organisation Luncheon Club (African-Caribbean - mixed gender)
 Age Concern (white + one African-Caribbean - mixed gender)

This is by no means meant to be an exhaustive study of the attitude of potential tenants, but rather an indication of some of the key issues that emerged in these particular areas.

Potential Tenants

Knowledge and perception of sheltered accommodation

White groups:

Knowledge varied considerably with regard to knowledge of what exactly sheltered accommodation was. Comments in the Merton group ranged from:

'Heard about it... [but]... don't know anything about it.'

To:

'Warden-controlled isn't it'

'If you're in need you've got somebody at hand.'

Again, with the Birmingham group comments ranged from:

'What is sheltered accommodation? I don't know'

to those who saw a clear difference between sheltered accommodation and a residential care home:

'There's a difference between care and sheltered... you have to be able to look after yourself [to get into sheltered accommodation]'

'You have your own bits and pieces, your own living room... That's not a Home that's sheltered accommodation.'

'Old People's Homes are communal places. Sheltered accommodation is mainly separate accommodation.'

'In an Old People's Home you have to do what they say, when they say, how they say... Sheltered accommodation, I suppose you can do what you like in your own place.'

Those attending this group seemed to be pretty clear about what sheltered accommodation was:

'It's accommodation with a warden'

'There's a Common Room for social activities... Haven't got to go down if you don't want to.'

The importance of knowing someone who was already in sheltered accommodation and, perhaps more importantly, with a positive image of it, was evident:

'I've got a friend [in sheltered accommodation]... Marvellous complex... It's very well organised... They're ever so happy there.'

It was, however, felt that in order to become a tenant you have to be:

'Pretty poor'

'In need'

'I'd like to get in one but you have to be very bad to get in.'

Potential Tenants

Sheltered accommodation was defined by members of the Bradford group as:

'It's where they have a warden and only pay £5 for the TV'

'You get a bit of help when you need it.'

And more negatively as:

'The doors are closed at 8:00 at night'

'It's like being in prison isn't it?'

Those who had actually visited friends in schemes, however, were of the opinion that those schemes were:

'Lovely'

'Something going on'

'They're looked after'

'No worries.'

The local authority and housing associations were both identified as providers of sheltered accommodation (with the local authority being mentioned first). In terms of getting access to such accommodation it was felt that:

'You'd apply to the council.'

If applying to a housing association you could do so directly, finding the associations through Yellow Pages.

Asian groups:

In contrast to the white groups, where knowledge of sheltered housing was often quite detailed, those attending the Muslim Day Centre in Bradford did not know about sheltered accommodation (apart from that provided by Hanover, owing to the work of Hanover's outreach worker. They saw Manningham Housing Association as providing accommodation for Bengalis rather than for Pakistani Muslims). Similarly they did not know anyone living in such accommodation nor would they consider such accommodation themselves:

"I don't want to live separately without children... in case anything happens."

Accordingly they would not consider such accommodation unless there was a serious family breakdown and they could no longer get on with their children — this was not, however, seen as very likely. These findings would appear to support the views put forward by Manningham Housing Association (see Chapter 3).

The Bradford Sikh group knew about sheltered accommodation, due to having friends in a local authority scheme. There was, however, some confusion with regard to the differences between sheltered accommodation and residential care.

Members of the group had visited Manningham's sheltered scheme and had been impressed with it:

Potential Tenants

'It's a nice place.'

On the other hand:

[As they] have their own [owner-occupied] accommodation they don't think they need it.'

Sheltered accommodation was seen as being for elderly people who could no longer look after themselves:

'For elderly homeless people.'

They themselves would only consider it:

'If there is no one else to look after [them]'

'If we have to.'

Perhaps not surprisingly (given the above) those attending the group had little idea about how one would go about becoming a tenant of sheltered accommodation. In addition, sheltered accommodation was seen as expensive for those not on "income support".

African-Caribbean groups:

The extent of knowledge of sheltered accommodation in the African-Caribbean groups varied greatly. Members of the Merton group defined sheltered accommodation as:

'It's an organisation arrange a place for people who can't afford to buy or is looking for a cheaper place'

'Somebody come in to do your washing, cleaning and ironing'

'Sheltered accommodation is a house where . . . all the people in there must be monitored. . . Must be secure for all its inhabitants.'

The client group for such accommodation was seen as:

'People with physical disability or defect. . . have a warden. . . have a communications system'

'Very ageable person is in that sort of accommodation'

Those attending the BCA's Lunch Club had heard about sheltered accommodation (not surprisingly as the club meets at a sheltered scheme) but many of them did not know exactly what sheltered accommodation was. This may be because (as for the two Asian groups in Bradford) most of those present lived in their own owner-occupied properties and accordingly:

'Had heard of them but I don't use them as I live in my own place.'

Most of those attending the Annie Wood Day Centre did not know what sheltered housing was, who it was for or how they could get it. One of those attending had heard about the BCA sheltered scheme, while another referred to an Anchor scheme that was almost opposite the Day Centre.

Sheltered accommodation was seen as being for:

'Homeless people'

'For when you retire.'

Potential Tenants

Two of those attending expressed interest in moving into sheltered accommodation (when they needed it) but the others were not sure as they did not know what it involved.

Knowledge and perceptions of housing associations

White groups:

Housing associations were seen by the Merton group as:

'Alternatives to the Council'

'They've got wardens haven't they?'

It was felt that a key difference between the housing associations and the Council was that:

'[Housing associations have a] more expensive rent though.'

Members of the group were able to identify (without prompting) the following housing associations: Shaftesbury, Hanover, South London Family, Orbit, Church Army, Anchor. After prompting one was able to identify Servite, although another commented:

'Those wallpaper people isn't it.'

Housing associations were seen as being for:

'People with money'

'Supposed to be for people on low incomes'

'One's that can pay their rent.'

Again the perceived expensive nature of housing association accommodation was raised.

As to how to gain access to housing association accommodation the following routes were identified:

'Through the Council'

'Through Social Services'

'Just apply yourself.'

Members of the Bradford group had heard of Hanover, Northern, Anchor, Brunel and "British Legion" (but not Housing 21). Some knew people in housing association sheltered schemes but the reaction of others was:

'Heard about them but I don't know much about them.'

It was felt that housing associations house:

'Anybody'

'Elderly'

'Build for the retired.'

Potential Tenants

One member of the Birmingham group had tried, unsuccessfully to get into Anchor sheltered accommodation. She thought that:

'Somebody told me about them . . . and gave me a leaflet.'

As a result of her failure to get into a scheme she had a very negative view of Anchor:

'I've heard they were very good . . . [but]... it turned out a wash-out.'

Knowledge of housing associations was mixed among the group with the majority having at least heard of them.

Housing associations were associated (perhaps not surprisingly for this age group) with the provision of warden-controlled accommodation. Some members of the group were also au fait with the financial link (and the nominations link) between housing associations and local authorities.

Housing associations identified by the group were Harden, Carrs Lane Homes and Anchor. After prompting members were also able to identify Servite and Royal British Legion (but, once again, not Housing 21).

Asian groups:

In contrast with the white groups members of the two Asian groups in Bradford did not have the same extent of knowledge of housing associations. None of the Sikh group knew what a housing association was, although they knew about local authority housing for the elderly. Hanover's outreach worker had actually visited this group before, but all they remembered was that:

'[She] talked about some sort of housing but they're not sure which.'

While some members of the Muslim group had heard of housing associations due to previous visits from Hanover's outreach worker, Anchor and Manningham:

'A lot of people don't hear.'

Whereas:

'Everybody knows about the council houses.'

Among those who had attended these previous sessions it was felt that:

'Over time they just forget.'

Possibly because the sort of accommodation on offer from the associations is (with the exception of that provided by Manningham) not relevant to their needs i.e. large family housing.

With regard to the clientele of housing associations, they were seen as providing for:

'Unemployed people, for old aged people'

'Homeless or extended families people. [N.B. this probably referred to Manningham Housing Association].'

Potential Tenants

While members of the group were willing to consider housing association properties, they were only interested in large family housing. Even then, although one had actually applied to Manningham, most did not know how to go about applying for such accommodation:

'Most of the people don't understand'

'Many of them don't know how to approach them.'

No one actually knew a housing association tenant.

African-Caribbean groups:

Knowledge of housing associations was quite widespread among those attending the Annie Wood Day Centre, with the following being identified: Jephson, Anchor, Copec and BCA. Whilst most of the group's members had not visited a housing association scheme one had a son living in housing association property and other members of the group had visited both the BCA scheme and an Anchor scheme, both of which were seen as:

'Not bad but the rooms are small'

With regard to who housing association accommodation is for, the view was expressed that it is for:

'The Indians... it is mostly the Indians'

(a view that was also put forward, without prompting, by those attending the BCA group, although an Indian woman attending that group said that it was the "Pakistanis" who got all the housing).

Although others disagreed saying:

'That's not fair. . . it's for everybody.'

There was a feeling among some members that "Indians" are better represented and more persistent in going for what they want:

'Indians have people in high places in the Council,'

'There's more of them. . . More people to represent them.'

The African-Caribbean community, on the other hand, was seen as relying very much on self-help i.e. on its own alternative systems.

One member of the group was an Anchor tenant but was not very happy in her scheme:

'Very, quiet [in the scheme]. I want a transfer somewhere ... [as there are too many]. . . old people there.'

(N.B. this backs up the views expressed by the FBHO and the Housing Corporation in Chapter 3).

Further Anchor had something of a negative image as it was seen as provider of Old People's Homes.

Potential Tenants

With regard to the Merton group knowledge of housing associations was, once again, widespread with members naming: Wandle, Threshold and Peabody. Interestingly Anchor was only identified after prompting, which is curious as they have a scheme just up the road from the group's meeting place (although the scheme's name, Sir Arthur Bliss Court, may have something to do with that).

Housing Associations were seen as being:

'for everybody.'

While no one knew anyone living in housing association sheltered accommodation (although one member was in local authority sheltered accommodation) three members knew people in housing association general family accommodation. For example one had two daughters in such housing.

As with the BCA group, housing association properties were seen as being too small:

'Bedrooms too small'

'Black people., particularly the elderly ones, have accumulated a lot of things over the years.'

The need for extra bedrooms for children and grandchildren was also highlighted, with the view being expressed that housing associations:

'Haven't taken into consideration these facts.'

These issues are returned to under "Design Requirements" in Chapter 7.

Future housing options

White groups:

While one of those attending the Merton group was interested in the possibility of going into sheltered accommodation:

'When I get too old to live in my flat.'

Other members of the group were not really interested. On the plus side sheltered accommodation was seen as offering assistance when needed:

'Somebody there at hand if you need help.'

On the minus side entering such accommodation meant leaving your own place and having to move all of your belongings (it was felt that old people have "big furniture") into a small flat:

'I like my own house'

'Difficult for elderly to leave their home.'

If they were to move members, of the group would have been reluctant to move from the area they already lived in:

'I'd like to stay in the same area'

Potential Tenants

'Stay where your friends are'

'Can't settle down anywhere else'

feeling that this was available for:

'Anybody that's elderly.'

With the Bradford group there was a similar reluctance to leave one's own home and go into sheltered accommodation:

'Because it's your home . . . you get used to it.'

It was felt that having a place of your own:

'Keeps you going.'

Accordingly they would only consider sheltered accommodation:

'If health deteriorated . . . not otherwise'

'[If] I can't do anything for myself.'

As with the Merton group people differed as to the size of the property they would want if they were to move, with some wanting two bedrooms so that they could have someone to stay (although some of those attending knew that some sheltered schemes have a guest room). Similarly there was a strong desire to stay in the same area:

'We're used to it.'

Key factors in choosing possible future accommodation were:

'Near shops'

"You want to be near your friends"

'Near the buses.'

While the majority of those attending the Birmingham group wanted to stay in their own properties:

'I'd like to stay on long as possible'

one of those attending expressed a strong desire to move into sheltered accommodation:

'I'd like to... [as I have] no immediate family.'

This lack of an immediate family may be an important factor in determining whether or not to enter sheltered accommodation. If you have no one to look after you, where else could you go?

None of those attending had heard of Care and Repair although the view was expressed that, whereas you could formerly get help from the Council:

'You can't get things done by the Council now.'

Potential Tenants

As with the other white groups members did not (with one exception) want to move out of their immediate area:

'Like up-rooting an old tree.'

If they were to move, however, important factors would be proximity to bus-stops, shops, Doctors and hospitals.

Asian groups:

The Bradford Muslim group saw their future as, very much, continuing to live in extended families. They felt that the majority of their children wanted this too (although a younger volunteer worker at the Day Centre felt that the extended family system would break up in the future: "hopefully" - "our elderly people's thinking is different to our children - completely different idea"). Accordingly they did not see sheltered accommodation as a viable option for them feeling that:

'It would be better if they built houses to our requirements'

(i.e. large family houses).

Members of the group had lived in the area for a long time. A move away from their immediate area was not seen as either feasible nor desirable due to:

(a) financial reasons:

'Couldn't get a mortgage at our age'

(b) community support reasons: They did not want to live in more racially mixed areas as they thought they would encounter racial problems, preferring to live with other Pakistani Muslims:

'We want to live in Bradford City... so that we can get whole amenities all around'

'My community, no trouble'

'A bird sits with their own birds.'

While the Day Centre's Co-ordinator felt that:

'Most of the people . . . would like to go back [to Pakistan].'

This theoretical option of return to Pakistan was seen as no more than theoretical:

'My children can't go, born here.'

Some families had, reportedly, tried to return but:

'After a few years they have to go back [to Bradford].'

As with the Muslim group the Bradford Sikh group did not see sheltered accommodation as an appropriate option for them. This was partly due to the traditional idea that children should look after their parents, with the result that:

'It will bring shame on them'

Potential Tenants

if the parents were to move out - thus the children would get a bad image if their parents were to move into sheltered accommodation. It was also partly due to a desire to live in your own (owner-occupied) property:

'To have a property is to be respectable'

'If you live in rented accommodation that means you are not acceptable in society'

(interestingly while the Sikh group were anti-renting per se, wanting owner-occupation only, the Muslim group were not anti-renting per se, they just wanted larger houses).

Accordingly they had not really thought about sheltered accommodation except (as mentioned earlier) as a last resort. Additionally knowledge of people who were living in such accommodation had given them the impression that they would not be able to afford it.

While they would prefer to carry on living in the same area in:

'The accommodation presently they're living in, they're very much happy there'

if they were to move into more of a sheltered environment they:

'Would like to live where they can express their ideas in their own language'

(regardless of who exactly was providing this accommodation). The most important factor for them would be staff who can speak Punjabi.

Those attending the group wanted to live in a quiet, safe area, but the most important factor for them was community:

'Want to live with their own community and have facilities nearby.'

While both of the Asian groups in Bradford expressed the opinion that sheltered housing was not for them (which is, perhaps, exemplified by the difficulties Manningham Housing Association have had in attracting Asians to their sheltered scheme) this is not to say that this situation holds in the rest of the country (the experience of ASRA would seem to show that), nor indeed that, even in Bradford, housing associations do not need to consider the particular needs of these groups. While the Asian occupant of sheltered housing may be somewhat atypical in Bradford, the situation may be changing as the younger generation becomes more "Westernised":

'Cultural gap and generation gap'

'Sometimes two cultures cannot live under one roof'

'There are quite a few families whose children have grown up and moved out.'

While demand from Asian elders may be low for sheltered accommodation at present, in Bradford at least, this does not mean that this will inevitably continue. Societies are not static.

African-Caribbean groups:

Members of the African-Caribbean groups seemed, in general, to be more willing to consider sheltered housing as an option. Members of the Merton group stated that they would consider such a move:

Potential Tenants

'Yes, if we have to'

'I would . . . if the time comes, for protection and help.'

Such a move was seen as being particularly likely if someone no longer had a family to support/ look after them.

It was, however, stressed that:

'You have to be desperate . . . [as]. . . black people are proud people . . . They like their independence'.

The main attraction of sheltered accommodation was seen as the security it offers. Members of the group would, however, have preferred to stay in their own accommodation (the vast majority of those attending were owner-occupiers) and to have somebody look after them. None of them had, however, heard of "Staying Put" or Care and Repair (although the London Borough of Merton/Hanover run such a scheme in the area - indeed this was advertised on a poster in the building where the Luncheon Club meets), although they expressed great interest in finding out more about this. The findings were largely the same for the BCA group although one member of that group did say:

'I heard about it but I don't know about it.'

Members of the Merton group expressed mixed views about moving from their immediate area, ranging from:

'No good moving somewhere when you're old'

to:

'I don't mind going where the accommodation is as long as it's suitable'

'I would live anywhere as long as I'm comfortable.'

With regard to a possible return to the West Indies the view was expressed that:

'Most black people if it was possible to move back home they would'

but:

'I've got all my relations here, all my family'

'Who's going to look after you?. . . It doesn't make any sense [to move back]'

'Lots of people pack up and go home and they find they know no one there so they come back.'

Similar views were expressed by those attending the Annie Wood Day Centre:

'I'm not going back . . . my children are here.'

Members of this group were, in general, keen to stay living at least fairly close to their immediate area:

'Don't want to leave your friends.'

Potential Tenants

While most of those attending (the majority of whom were owner-occupiers) would have preferred to stay living in their own homes no one had heard of "Staying Put" or Care and Repair (although one had heard of local authority grants - she felt that they had tried to impose what they wanted on her rather than listening to what she wanted). They were, however, able to identify a number of factors that might encourage them to move into sheltered accommodation:

- their own physical condition - lack of mobility
- financial reasons i.e. if they couldn't afford to run their own home
- a "clean and tidy place"
- somewhere that was "comfortable . . . and you have a garden"
- a place where you could get a meal if you didn't want to cook.

Key factors in choosing accommodation for the future were identified as:

'The area. . . good neighbours'

'Transport. . . Near to the bus stops'

'Nice building'

'Shopping areas'

'Church'

'Plenty [of] space'

'My family can come around me.'

'Because sometimes your grandkids come and visit you.'

It is clear that these are very similar to the factors identified by those attending the white groups but with more of an emphasis on having somewhere for the family to visit/stay. This was backed up by the desire of most of those attending (but not all) to have a two-bed property:

Again though, as for the white groups, there was no hard and fast rule on this. Some preferred a two-bed property, some a one-bed.

Ethnically mixed or ethnic-specific schemes?

Given that some of the black and minority ethnic potential tenants spoken to were at least willing to consider sheltered housing as a possible option (even if it was only as a last resort), what type of sheltered accommodation would they prefer: Ethnically-specific schemes (where they would be housed either predominantly or exclusively with others of their particular ethnic group) or ethnically mixed schemes?

Asian groups:

The Muslim group (as shown above) rejected sheltered housing out of hand. The Sikh group, while not thinking that sheltered housing would be of any relevance to them, except in 'emergency' situations stated that:

'They don't mind to live in [a] mixed scheme'

Potential Tenants

as long as they were not the only Sikhs in it and as long as there were staff who could speak Punjabi. While they felt that:

'Muslim, Sikh and white is all right'

they were not in favour of Sikh/Muslim or Sikh/African-Caribbean mixed schemes.

African-Caribbean groups:

Members of all the African-Caribbean groups visited tended to be **strongly** in favour of mixed schemes. All members of the Merton group stated that they would prefer to live in a racially mixed scheme or, at the very least (and this only for a very few respondents), that it did not bother them either way:

'Doesn't matter'

'We want a mix'

'We would rather to live in a mixed community.'

All those attending the BCA group who expressed a preference were in favour of mixed schemes:

'Mixed, mixed, mixed.'

Despite their comments with regard to Indians (see above) they expressed willingness to live in a mixed scheme with Asians. No preference was declared as to who should provide this accommodation: a mainstream association or a black association.

At the Annie Wood Day Centre, one of those attending stated that she would prefer to live in an all African-Caribbean scheme:

'Because of the culture.'

The rest, however, did not mind a mix:

'Don't make no difference'

'I like a mixed scheme.'

With some expressing their opposition to what they saw as "segregation":

'I would never like to separate'

'Is this South Africa?'

One of those attending stated that she:

'Wouldn't want to live with Indians. . . I just don't [want to].'

Others did not share this view, pointing out that even if she was in a mixed scheme with Asians:

'You're not living with them. . . you've got your own apartment.'

Potential Tenants

Clearly, however, (as stated in Chapter 5) there are mixed schemes and there are mixed schemes. It may be very different being one black tenant in an otherwise all white scheme to being one of, for example, six or more black tenants in such a scheme. In light of this those attending the African-Caribbean groups were asked if they would mind being the only black tenant in an otherwise all white scheme. Reactions to this varied. In the Merton scheme some of those attending said that there would be problems:

'Nobody... to communicate with'

'People like to talk with their own people'

'Important that you can communicate with your own people as and when you want to.'

On the other hand:

'It wouldn't bother me as I talk with everybody.'

Members of this group felt that there would not be a problem if there was a white tenant in a predominantly black scheme, whereas they felt that there might be problems for a black tenant in a predominantly white scheme.

Similarly with the BCA group the reaction to this question was mixed, although some of those attending were quite adamant that they would not mind. Again with the Annie Wood group there was a mixed reaction, with one member saying that:

'You wouldn't feel comfortable'

and others saying that:

'[It] doesn't bother me'

'For me it's no problem.'

One should not look at the above and say that ethnic-specific schemes are not needed. While the bulk of those black and minority ethnic elders attending the particular groups visited who saw sheltered accommodation as being of any relevance to them may have been in favour of mixed schemes, this was not the case for everyone. If, therefore, someone is considering building a sheltered scheme targeted at any particular group of black and minority ethnic elders then they should first ask those elders:

1. Do they want sheltered housing?
2. Do they want a mixed or an ethnic-specific scheme?
3. Who do they want to provide it?

Decent research at any early stage can save a lot of problems later on.

Chapter 7 Other Issues

Design requirements

It is not the purpose of this report to provide a detailed summary of the design requirements of specific ethnic groups - for that one should refer to the NFHA/North Housing publication "Accommodating Diversity". Design issues were, however, raised during both the interviews with black housing associations and potential tenants.

Millat Asian Housing Association noted that there were certain key differences in design requirements for Asian elders, as opposed to white elders (indeed these factors were taken on board in developing the scheme with Hanover). These were listed as: type of bathroom (need for a shower rather than a bath); the arrangement of the kitchen (+ having gas rather than an electric cooker); type of w.c. (non-splashing i.e. siphonic) and the direction that the w.c. faces (which is important for Muslims).

Manningham Housing Association felt that there was no need to provide squat toilets, feeling that the supposed needs for such toilets was a "myth" (see also ASHIA's comments under "Previous Research" in the Introduction). The main design needs identified were:

- Cooking facilities (which would need to be segregated between religions — n.b. this would obviously not be a problem if facilities were located in individual flats);
- Space — both in terms of space standards within individual flats and in terms of having space so that friends and relatives could visit (more guest rooms may be needed);
- Storage facilities for food (which may be bought in bulk);
- Washing facilities - a flexible approach is needed with both baths and showers.

The issue of space was also raised with reference to elders of African-Caribbean origin. Birmingham Community Association's Housing Officer felt that a lot of African-Caribbean elders would not let go of the personal possessions they had accumulated and were thus reluctant to move into accommodation that they thought would be too small (although this may well, of course, also be the case with white elders):

'A lot of them have complained about the size but they've made do with it.'

It was also her experience that people would turn down one bed flats as they wanted two bed accommodation so that grandchildren and relatives could come to stay.

This view of sheltered accommodation as being too small was backed up by the interviewees at the Merton African-Caribbean Organisation Luncheon Club (see Chapter 6) and by a number of the tenant (both white and black and minority ethnic) interviewees.

Staffing

The need to recruit staff with an appropriate ethnic or cultural background (or, at the very least, with knowledge of/sensitivity to the relevant culture) has been identified by several of the researchers into this field (see "Previous Research" in the Introduction).

Of the four participating associations only Servite had significant numbers of black and minority ethnic staff although all four associations were taking steps to attempt to remedy this situation. Anchor and Housing 21 have now introduced employment targets while Hanover are currently reviewing their recruitment procedures and practices. It is noticeable, however,

Other Issues



that all four associations have performed particularly poorly in relation to the recruitment of wardens and "front-line" housing staff.

The BCA scheme in Small Heath had a white warden, although she had a black partner and mixed race children. According to BCA, in recruiting to this scheme Servite informed them that they:

'Had to get someone 'who would understand black people'

having recognised that they (Servite)

'Wouldn't understand black people as well as a black person could.'

Given this having a white warden was, in this case i.e. in a scheme the majority of whose tenants were African-Caribbean, not seen as a problem as:

'Understanding of the culture is the most important thing. . . Colour's got nothing to do with it. It's how the person does their job.'

Similarly the African-Caribbean tenants in the scheme interviewed spoke highly of their warden:

'Lovely, beautiful, she's my good friend'

"Very nice"

'Fantastic warden.'

Attendees at the BCA Lunch Club felt that the ethnic origin of a warden did not matter, as long as that warden could meet their needs. A similar response came from those attending the Annie Wood Day Centre. In meeting their needs knowledge of what those needs were was seen as the most important thing. While such knowledge may be more likely to be found in someone of the same ethnic origin this may not necessarily be the case.

Other Issues

With Asian tenants there are clear linguistic (as well as religious and cultural) needs. As mentioned in Chapter 6 the most important factor for the Sikh non-tenant group interviewed in Bradford would be to have staff who could speak their language.

The possibility of black and minority ethnic tenants entering predominantly white schemes being the subject of racial prejudice was raised in Chapter 5. It should not be automatically assumed that white wardens will be free of such prejudice. While the vast majority did display a generally positive (or at least not overtly negative) attitude one stated, with reference to her scheme becoming mixed that:

[I] don't think I'd like it a lot... reeking of curry 24 hours a day.'

The same warden also said that she would not have come to the scheme:

'If it had been full of Pakis.'

Thankfully this was very much a minority viewpoint, but such attitudes need to be challenged by the employing associations both through warden training and through letting wardens know what behaviour is expected of them.

What of the schemes run by the four participating associations that already have black or minority ethnic wardens? How important do the black and minority ethnic tenants of these schemes think this is? What is the reaction of white tenants to having a black or minority ethnic warden?

Of 31 schemes visited four had black or minority ethnic wardens. All of these wardens were in mixed schemes with significant (six or more) black or minority ethnic populations.

Schemes with black wardens:

The ethnic origin of the warden did not seem to be much of an issue among the tenants interviewed. In one mixed scheme (with Asian, African-Caribbean, African and white tenants) one of the black interviewees stated that he did not mind if the warden was black or white but was very opposed to the idea of having an "Indian" warden:

'I don't want [an Indian warden]... [because] they [Indians] are extraordinarily prejudiced against black people.'

While some of the Asian interviewees were happy to have an African-Caribbean warden some of the female Asian tenants wanted to have a Punjabi-speaking warden (c.f. the Sikh non-tenant male group in Bradford). This shows that just having a "black" warden will not in itself meet particular client needs. In the same way just having an "Asian" warden will not necessarily result in the linguistic needs of tenants being met e.g. if the warden speaks a different Asian language to the tenants.

With regard to the reaction of white tenants to a black or minority ethnic warden, reaction tended to be positive (or, at worst, neutral):

'I think he's lovely.'

'Very caring and she does never try to force her opinions on you.'

'We're very happy with the warden. I don't know what we'd do without her.'

'A nice girl'

Other Issues

Even tenants who made quite racist remarks about black and minority ethnic people in general (see Chapter 5) were positive about their black wardens:

[He's] all right... he puts up with a lot. . . He's quite a decent bloke.'

'No complaints about the warden.'

'The warden is wonderful'

The black warden of one scheme stated that she had never had comments made to her face re. her colour but that she had heard that this had occurred in other schemes. She felt that due to the age of the tenants:

'You can't change their attitudes and opinions . . . Sometimes they don't realise what they say - "oh the blacks and the coloureds, but you're all right"... It doesn't bother me.'

A tenant in another scheme felt that there had been some negative reaction from the white tenants when a black warden was appointed but he personally was pleased with her:

'She gets things done'

noting that:

'There's just the odd few that are a bit bigoted against black people.'

With regard to black and minority ethnic tenants living in schemes with a white warden, no particular preference was expressed re. the ideal ethnicity of the warden. Where an opinion was expressed re. the existing white wardens tended to be positive:

'All right... no complaints.'

'Very sociable.'

In one scheme which included several Asian tenants and had no warden at the time the research was carried out, although it had previously had a white warden, some desire was expressed for staff with relevant language skills. Indeed it was stated that a warden able to speak the relevant languages would be:

'Very helpful.'

It should be noted, however, that these tenants may be atypical given that they are already living in what has traditionally been seen as a white form of accommodation. It may be that the fact that the existing warden was white might have dissuaded some black and minority ethnic elders (particularly Asians) from applying in the first place.

Appendices

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Appendix 2: Suggested further reading

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Appendix 3: Methodology

The research was carried out in five (over-lapping) phases:

Stage 1: The Four Participating Associations

This consisted of a documentation and policy review alongside 59 semi-structured interviews (using a topic guide) with staff at all levels, both centrally and in the regional offices. Following this stage the decision was made to focus the other stages of the research on three areas: Bradford, London and the West Midlands, with additional interviews being carried out on Merseyside.

Stage 2: Interviews With Existing Tenants

A cross-section of schemes was selected to give good coverage of:

Scheme type - Cat. 1, Cat.2 and Cat. 2 1/2.

Scheme location - areas with significant black and minority ethnic populations and areas with smaller populations.

Ethnic make-up of the scheme - schemes with significant numbers of black and minority ethnic tenants (for the purposes of this study six or more) and schemes with smaller numbers.

With regard to location, a total of 32 schemes were selected for the tenant interviews from all four participating associations and across the key study areas (identified above).

As the focus of the research was on black and minority ethnic elders, with white tenants being used as a control sample (to see if there were any key differences between the two groups), it had been intended to visit only those schemes where there was at least one black or minority ethnic tenant. Given that Housing 21 houses so few black and minority ethnic elders this proved not to be possible. Accordingly in order to cover a range of Housing 21 schemes, schemes with no black or minority ethnic tenants, but in the key study areas, were included.

In addition to ethnic mix and locational spread the research also included schemes with wardens of black or minority ethnic origin. This was the case with four out of 27 wardens in the study. This does not necessarily mean that no other black or minority ethnic wardens were employed by the participating associations. The situation described is simply that found in the selected schemes in the key areas.

In total some 155 tenants were interviewed, some individually and others in group situations. Of these 92 were white and 63 were of black or minority ethnic origin (split almost equally between African-Caribbeans and Asians). Given the nature of the research topic (particularly attitudes towards ethnically-mixed schemes) and of the interviewees (elderly people) a topic guide, rather than a formal structured questionnaire, was used. This allows for a more flexible approach to interviewing.

Where notification was received in advance of non-English-speaking tenants, interpreters were arranged through Race Equality Councils and family. It was noticeable, however, that in several cases tenants who were said to be English-speaking proved not to be.

Stage 3: Survey of Other Housing Associations

In order to gain a wider perspective of the issue of mainstream housing associations and the provision/ take-up of accommodation for black and minority ethnic elders a small postal survey was carried out. This used a short structured questionnaire, but with several open-ended questions. A sample of 11 associations was selected, all of whom were known to provide sheltered accommodation for elderly persons. Six responses were received, a response rate of 54.5%.

Appendices

Stage 4: Study of Black Housing Associations:

A key method utilised by the participating associations (and by the associations responding to the postal questionnaire) in meeting the housing needs of black and minority ethnic elders had been to provide accommodation in tandem with (predominantly local) black housing associations. In order to see how these relationships worked and how they were perceived by the black associations involved, interviews were held with staff from seven black associations, six of whom provided at least some sheltered accommodation. These interviews were based on a topic guide.

Stage 5: Local Authority Study

In order to investigate why local authorities were failing to nominate black and minority ethnic applicants to the participating associations, and the possible underlying reasons for this failure, an attempt was made to interview staff responsible for nominations in a number of local authorities in the research project's key areas. Approaches were made to the following boroughs:

Birmingham City Council
Bradford City Council
Liverpool City Council
London Borough of Haringey
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Merton
London Borough of Newham

Of these, interviews were only obtained with key staff from Bradford, Haringey and Merton.

Stage 6: Interviews with Potential Tenants

In order to get a fuller view of the research topic, interviews were held with elders (from both the black and minority ethnic communities and, as a control sample, the white population) who were in the right age-range but were not living in sheltered accommodation i.e. with "potential tenants".

Interviews (on a group basis) were held in Birmingham (African-Caribbean and white mixed gender groups), Bradford (Asian male and white mixed gender groups) and London (African-Caribbean and white mixed gender groups).

Groups interviewed were existing community organisations. Interviews were fairly informal and based on a topic guide. For the Asian groups interpreters were provided by the community organisations.

