



Good Practice in Housing Management Guidelines for Local Authorities

Housing Minority Ethnic Communities, Facilitating Inclusion

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Abbreviations

AHBs

Approved
Housing Bodies

CLIP

Cities for Local
Integration Policy

CSO

Central Statistics Office

CWO

Community
Welfare Officer

DEHLG

Department of the
Environment, Heritage
and Local Government

EEA

European
Economic Area

ED

Electoral Divisions

EU

European Union

GNIB

Garda National
Immigration Bureau

LA

Local Authority

MECs

Minority Ethnic
Communities

NAPinclusion

*National Action Plan
for Social Inclusion,
2007-2016*

NCCRI

National Consultative
Committee on Racism
and Interculturalism

NDP

The National
Development
Plan 2007-2013:
*Transforming Ireland:
A Better Quality of
Life for All*

NPAR

Planning for Diversity:
The National Action
Plan Against Racism,
2005-2008

PRTB

Private Residential
Tenancies Board

RAS

Rental
Accommodation
Scheme

RIA

Reception and
Integration Agency

SAPS

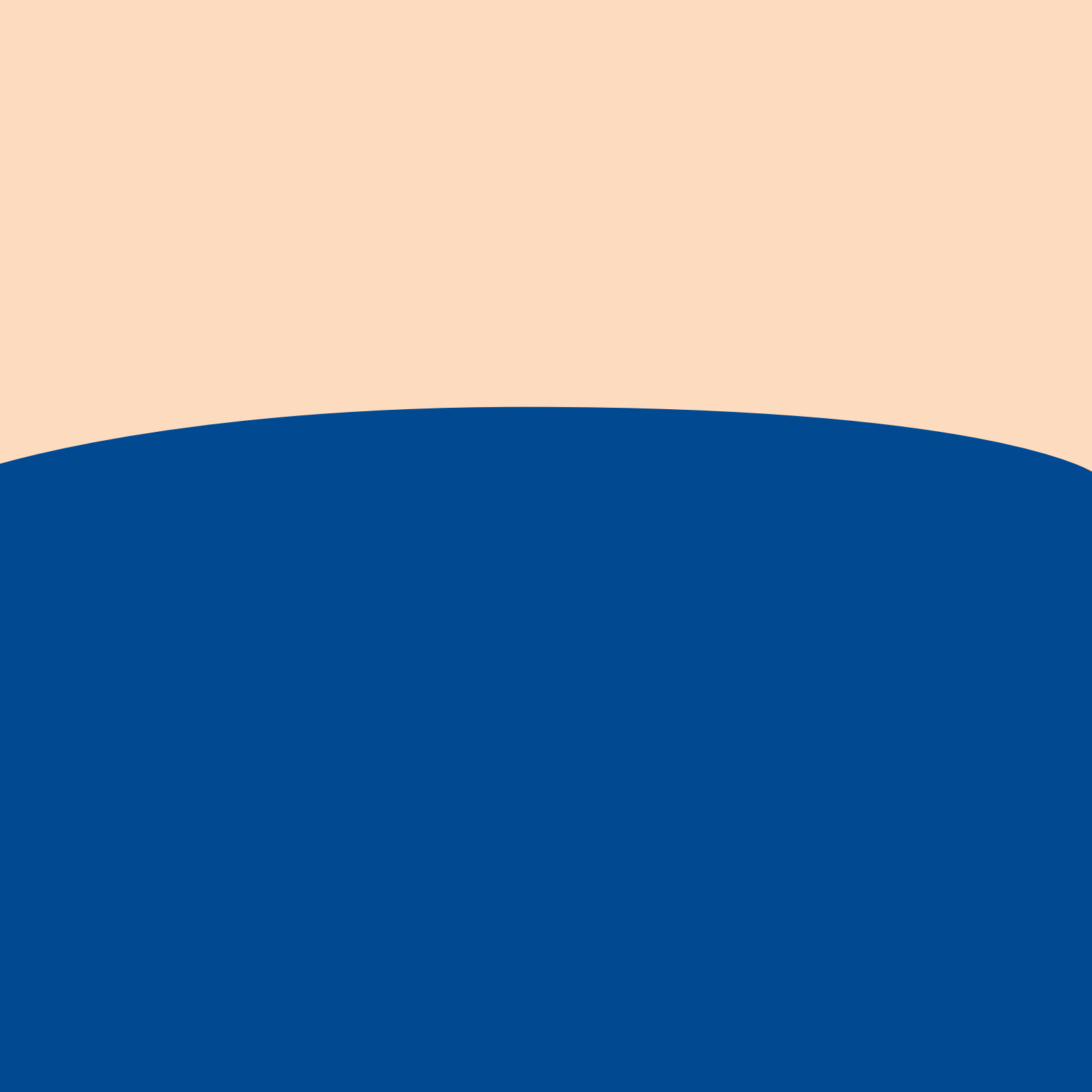
Small Area
Population Statistics

SMI

Strategic Management
Initiative

SPC

Strategic Policy
Committee



Foreword

Growing ethnic diversity has become a reality in many areas of the country. This is a relatively new issue for many local authorities. These Good Practice Guidelines follow on from a report on *Building Integrated Neighbourhoods: Towards an Intercultural Approach to Policy and Practice in Ireland* which scoped out the housing issues emerging from increased ethnic diversity. A key area identified in the report was the need for increased guidance for housing providers.

This publication is intended to be a practical working tool for local authorities. As with previous Good Practice Guidelines, it is for each local authority to decide on its own approach, having regard to relevant policy and taking account of its own situation. The Guidelines offer some practical ideas and possible approaches. In many cases, authorities are unlikely to need to devise new policies or practices from scratch. Rather, it is likely that authorities may need to:

- include information regarding minority ethnic communities (MECs) in strategic planning
- review existing material or policy to ensure that anti-racism and discrimination statements are included as standard in documents such as tenant handouts, customer charters, and are enforced;

- check for unintended consequences of current policies and practices for MECs, and address as need be
- provide staff briefings on ethnic diversity issues.

Key pointers coming from the Guidelines are:

- there is considerable diversity within and between different minority ethnic communities – the best approach for housing providers is one of consultation and reasonable accommodation of diversity and avoiding making assumptions about people’s needs and preferences
- the promotion of mixed tenure housing developments can play an important role in encouraging the integration of minority ethnic communities
- allocation policies can also play an important role in combating spatial segregation
- many members of MECs live in private rented accommodation – authorities may wish to consider the implications of this for their work enforcing standards in this sector
- proactive policies are needed to address and counteract racism
- priority should be given to staff training regarding ethnic awareness.

It is also important to highlight at the onset that the Guidelines are not intended to promote the interests of minority ethnic communities at the expense of others but to improve integration and good relations at neighbourhood level. It is clear from these Guidelines that housing policy and practice can play a key role in facilitating social inclusion and achieving more sustainable communities.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Conor Farrell and Dr Vanda Clayton for their input to these guidelines. Also H  l  ne B  guin, who prepared a case study for the Guide while on a study visit to the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency from University of Paris 12.

I would also like to thank Gerry Folan, Office for Integration, Community & Enterprise, Dublin City Council, Dr Michelle Norris, School of Applied Social Science, University College Dublin and Philip Watt, former Director of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism for very useful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of the guidelines. Their help with this work is very much appreciated.

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Summary: key issues to consider in achieving good practice

Local Authorities adopting a good practice approach to housing minority ethnic communities will need to give consideration to strategic planning, neighbourhood planning and housing design, responses to housing needs, standards in the private residential rented sector and access to home ownership. In many cases, it will be a case of amending existing policies and procedures, but in some cases it may involve a more tailored approach. The actions required are summarised below with references to the relevant sections of the guidelines.

STEP	ACTION	MORE INFORMATION
Planning and strategic management	Gather necessary data to develop a profile of the MECs in your area and use this information to inform strategic planning	See Section 2
	Actively include MECs in consultation process	
	Monitor and evaluate outcomes for MECs	
	Housing SPCs should consider housing issues for minority ethnic communities	
	Provide cultural awareness training for staff	
	Work in partnership with migrant organisations	
Neighbourhood Planning and Housing Design	Promote mix tenure developments to encourage integration of MECs	See Section 3
	Use planning and urban design to encourage social interaction within neighbourhoods	
	Consider culturally sensitive design issues when planning/sourcing dwellings	
Responses to Housing Need	Provide clear and accessible information for MECs on housing	See Section 4
	Remain up-to-date in relation to MECs housing support entitlements	
	Ensure allocations policies are clear and transparent and avoid 'ghettoisation'	
	Use social leasing to achieve mixed tenure and integration	
	Response to homelessness should be inclusive of MECs	
	Ensure pre-tenancy training is inclusive of minority ethnic communities	
	Provide all new tenants with user friendly tenant handbooks and an information welcome pack	

STEP	ACTION	MORE INFORMATION
	<p>Promote the inclusion of MECs in existing estates</p> <p>Ensure maintenance policy and practice is sensitive to the requirements of minority ethnic communities</p> <p>Develop procedures to deal with racially motivated anti-social behaviour and have a proactive policy to address racism</p> <p>Foster the integration of minority ethnic communities within neighbourhoods and celebrate diversity</p>	
<p>The Private Rented Sector and Homeownership</p>	<p>Consider possible particular needs of MECs in inspections of standards in private rented accommodation and any follow-on enforcement activity</p> <p>Use RAS to achieve mixed tenure and integration</p> <p>Ensure no unintended biases are preventing MEC households from accessing home ownership options and provide clear information</p>	<p>See Section 5</p>

SECTION ONE

**Introduction: Setting a Context for
Housing Minority Ethnic Communities**



1.1 Focus of these Guidelines

Many if not all local authorities have witnessed a substantial increase in the ethnic diversity of their populations in recent times. In the region of one in ten of those living in this country were enumerated as non-Irish nationals in Census 2006, but numbers vary by area and are also likely to be affected by the current economic climate.

A central objective of Government housing policy is that communities should be sustainable. This was a central element of the Government Statement on Housing Policy *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007)* which defined sustainable communities as places where people want to live and work, now and in the future; places that meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well-planned, built and run, offer equality of opportunity and good services for all. The Statement also reaffirmed the core objective of housing policy: to enable every household to have available an affordable dwelling of good quality, suitable to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice and acknowledged that the needs of new migrants and minority ethnic groups have to be reflected in the pursuit of sustainable housing and communities. It is hoped that these Good Practice Guidelines will provide some assistance to authorities in achieving this objective.

A second framework informing policy development at this time is the lifecycle approach. This policy approach is assessed from the perspective of meeting the needs of people throughout the lifecycle – young people, people of working age and older people and also those with disabilities. In this respect, authorities may find it

useful to gather profile information on the minority ethnic households at different stages of the lifecycle living in its areas - addressing the housing needs of such households at different stages of the lifecycle will be an important consideration for many authorities.

The focus of these guidelines, therefore, is on how local authority practice might best address the housing needs of minority ethnic communities keeping in mind the overall objective of achieving sustainable communities and addressing the needs of people throughout the lifecycle. In many cases this may involve the consideration of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities in overall strategic planning and service provision. In certain instances, however, it may require a more tailor-made response.

Background

These guidelines build on previous work in the area of housing minority ethnic communities such as *Good Practice in Housing Management Guidelines for Local Authorities: Housing Refugees* published by the Housing Unit in 2003 and the *Building Integrated Neighbourhoods: Towards an Intercultural Approach to Housing Policy and Practice in Ireland* report published by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) in 2008.

The Good Practice in Housing Management Guidelines for Local Authorities: Housing Refugees was the first attempt to develop housing practice around the issue of housing refugees. It was timely in that it was produced in the context of the increased number of asylum applications which peaked in the years 1999 to 2003 (Refugee Applications Commissioner, 2009). The guidelines remain relevant but this form of immigration is now a relatively small part of the overall immigration to this country.

The NCCRI report recommended the development of good practice guidelines for local authorities housing ethnic minority communities. While emphasising the experience of the numbers and origin of minority ethnic groups varied considerably by local authority area, and this may have implications for the response required, the following ways were suggested to further develop housing practices to respond to ethnic and cultural diversity:

- The local authorities should gather information on the ethnic and cultural mix in their own areas on an on-going basis, drawing on existing primary and secondary data available to them

- Where significant trends regarding the minority ethnic population in the area exist, considerations related to ethnic and cultural diversity should be included in key strategic fora and documents
- The local authorities should review existing policies and practices to ensure that they have an intercultural dimension
- Housing advice should be provided by local authorities in an accessible way

Key findings from the report are summarised in Box 1 below.

Box 1
Key findings from Building Integrated Neighbourhoods

- International experience has indicated that the accommodation experiences of minority ethnic groups can often be worse than those of the native population, particularly for those lacking legal status or who do not share similarities in language or culture with the indigenous population.
- Those most at risk in the housing system were identified as: migrants who were older on arrival in the country, those who have not integrated well into the labour market, those with cultures particularly distinctive from the general population, those in tied accommodation, those in urban areas where house prices and rents are higher, those in need of but not accessing emergency accommodation.
- In terms of neighbourhood planning it is important to reduce the incidence of low-income stigmatised areas in general to prevent the possible ghettoisation of minority ethnic groups. Encouraging mixed tenure estates will also help to achieve this aim.
- Housing design should be kept under review to ensure it is adaptable to the needs of minority ethnic communities.
- The key role played by the private rented sector was identified in the report and issues flagged included access, quality and affordability of accommodation.
- The lack of supply of social housing and issues around housing management, for example: allocation policy, language services, sharing of housing practice across local authorities, were identified as areas requiring further action.
- Ethnic minority communities were found to have low home ownership rates, which would benefit from further investigation.
- Race relation strategies to combat racism need to involve all sections of the community. Housing providers with larger ethnic mix may also need to consider the introduction of dedicated race relations officers and race relation training for all staff.

Source: National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (2008)

It is also worth noting that these set of good practice guidelines do not deal with Traveller accommodation. In 2008, the Centre for Housing Research produced guidelines for Local Authorities in this area: *Guidelines for Local Authorities - Management and Maintenance of Traveller Specific Accommodation* (Kane et al 2008) available at www.housing.ie.

1.2 Issues for Consideration

In developing good practice in housing minority ethnic communities, local authorities should take into account the following national policy issues, which have implications for this area of work:

- Launched in 1994, the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) aims to maximise the contribution of public bodies to economic and social development, to provide an excellent service to the public and to ensure the efficient use of resources by public bodies.
- The programme for the reform of management of local authorities, particularly the establishment of Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), to develop policy on each of the main functional areas within all local authorities. In most cases this process has included the establishment of a Strategic Policy Committee that focuses on the housing area and is supported by a Director of Housing Services.
- Minority ethnic communities are protected from discrimination and harassment under the *Equal Status Act, 2000*. The Act prohibits discrimination, whereby “...a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated”, on any of the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community. Discrimination on the ground of race encompasses difference in race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins (see Sections 3(1) and 3(2) of the Act for a full definition of discrimination). Discrimination in relation to the provision of local authority housing services is prohibited by Section 6(1) of the Act, which states that: “A person shall not discriminate in-
 - (a) disposing of any estate or interest in premises,
 - (b) terminating any tenancy or other interest in premises, or
 - (c) providing accommodation or any services or amenities related to accommodation or ceasing to provide accommodation or any such services or amenities”.

- Certain exemptions to these provisions mean that housing authorities and bodies are not prohibited from providing different accommodation solutions to various groups. Positive discrimination in order to cater for those with special needs or to promote equality of opportunity for those who are disadvantaged is permitted.
- Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that any person who is the proposed or actual recipient of accommodation provided by the Local Authority or any other goods or services is not harassed, either by the person providing the service or by any other person on the premises. This is under Sections 11(1) and (2) of the Equal Status Act 2000. Harassment is defined under Section 11(5) of the Act as when a person subjects the victim to “...*any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, which in respect of the victim is based on any discriminatory ground and which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her*”.
- Under the Habitual Residence Condition, individuals have to satisfy this condition to receive certain welfare payments. Five factors are taken into consideration when deciding whether a person is habitually resident i.e. have a proven close link to Ireland. These are:
 - (a) the length and continuity of residence in the State or in any other particular country;
 - (b) the length and purpose of any absence from the State;
 - (c) the nature and pattern of the person’s employment;
 - (d) the person’s main centre of interest, and
 - (e) the future intentions of the person concerned as they appear from all the circumstances.

No single factor is supposed to be decisive.

- immigrants must have worked and contributed PRSI payments in the Republic of Ireland for a period of two years before they are eligible to claim certain social welfare payments, including Jobseeker’s Allowance, Supplementary Welfare Allowance (other than once-off and exceptional need payments) and Child Benefit (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 2008).
- Ireland is not alone in facing the challenges of immigration. The EU is developing common approaches for integration and is promoting the exchange of best practices. The EU publication, *Handbook on Integration for policymakers and practitioners* provides interesting insights from other EU countries, as outlined in Box 2 box.

Box 2

Handbook on Integration for policymakers and practitioners: Conclusions

- Immigrants, like all residents, develop housing strategies based on their needs and on the opportunities offered by the environment. Policies should seek to broaden their choices by ensuring equal opportunities in the housing market, in terms of access as well as quality.
- More intensive use can be made of legislation banning discrimination in the field of service provision, including housing.
- Housing codes of conduct can explain in practical terms what housing legislation means in practice.
- Residence requirements should be assessed on their consistency with housing policies and on their impact on the position of immigrants on the housing market.
- National and local authorities should seek to identify serious problems with housing quality and base initiatives on reliable data about the housing situation of immigrants. Surveys can be used for that purpose. These surveys could be designed in such a way that they allow European comparison and enable European standard setting to take place.
- Housing bodies that proactively seek to improve service to immigrant clients will be more successful in meeting their needs and preferences. Housing bodies can provide training to their employees for this purpose or employ staff with an immigrant background.
- Policies and practices seek to counteract the social exclusion and segregation that is a feature of deprived areas. At the same time, they can reinforce the positive aspects felt by many immigrant residents: support through social, family and ethnic networks, the possibilities provided by the ethnic labour market, quick help for new arrivals, and the presence of ethnic associations.
- Policy targets for deprived areas should be compatible with citywide planning, and urban concepts should privilege the building of 'bridges' between city districts. Any inequality in service provision across different areas should be addressed as a priority.
- Because housing issues directly affect the personal lives of individuals and families, interventions in this field must be particularly careful to respect privacy, to consult with those affected and to avoid discrimination.
- Neighbourhood schools can be used as integration sites and education venues for the district as a whole – adults included.
- Experiences suggest that immigrants are more likely to get involved as members of a group (e.g. parents) than as individuals. Groups based on ethnic background can also facilitate involvement, raising individuals' self-confidence by giving them the opportunity to discuss issues with peers and come to a consensus.
- Because so many practices on housing and integration in cities are local, it is particularly important to establish good mechanisms for the exchange of local experiences and ideas.

Source: European Commission (2007)

- The National Development Plan 2007-2013: *Transforming Ireland: A Better Quality of Life for All* (NDP), addresses both the development of a set of new economic migration policy instruments within the framework of the Employment Permits Act, 2006 and the introduction of measures to promote the integration of migrants into Irish society. The Immigrants Integration Sub-Programme aims to promote the integration of immigrants into Ireland.
- *Planning for Diversity: The National Action Plan Against Racism, 2005-2008* (NPAR) aimed to combat racism and to develop a more inclusive, intercultural society. Emphasising a ‘whole of system’ approach, which seeks to mainstream intercultural issues into the formulation of public policy.
- *The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007-2016* (NAPinclusion) highlighted the role of local authorities in tackling poverty and county/city development boards were affirmed as the key co-ordinating mechanism for public service delivery at local level, including joined-up delivery of social inclusion programmes.
- Under the NAPinclusion, local authorities are also required “...to assess policies and programmes at design, implementation and review stages in relation to the likely impact that they will have or have had on poverty and on inequalities which are likely to lead to poverty, with a view to poverty reduction”.
- The housing policy statement, *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities*, recognised the integration of minority ethnic communities as an essential element of building sustainable communities. The need for the evolution of housing policy to reflect the diversity of communities, including new migrants and ethnic groups, was recognised and the adaptation of housing design to cater for cultural preferences is cited as an example.
- The Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, 2010 is currently before the Dail. This Bill sets out a legislative framework for the management of inward migration of non-EU citizens to Ireland. It lays down a number of important principles governing the presence in the State of foreign nationals, including the obligation on a foreign national who is unlawfully in the State to leave. It sets out statutory processes for applying for a visa, for entry to the State, for residence in the State and for being required, when necessary, to leave.
- The Government Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management Migration Nation notes that “In clarifying the respective roles of the host population and the new communities, this policy statement seeks to emphasise the concept that integration is a two-way process requiring mutual adaptation” (Office for the Minister for Integration, 2008 p17).

The key principles which will inform and underpin national integration policy are as follows:

- » A partnership approach between the Government and non-governmental organisations, as well as civil society bodies, to deepen and enhance the opportunities for integration.
- » A strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives.
- » A clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos, i.e. a mainstream approach to service delivery to migrants.
- » A commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities.

Migration Nation emphasises local delivery. It notes that anti-racism, diversity and intercultural plans have emerged for some of our urban centres. It advocates the formulating research into integration plans for major urban centres in line with developments abroad. It points out that a number of local studies have surveyed minority ethnic communities and goes on to state that effective local delivery requires the following:

- » Current reviews of local structures must reflect integration objectives.
- » Co-ordination at local level presents even greater challenges than at central level given the huge range of organizations and agencies involved.
- » The integration principles themselves, particularly those relating to mainstreaming and social inclusion, should be incorporated into any such plans so that issues of fragmentation of service and strategy are not repeated at local level.
- » A particular emphasis on urban planning as a significant tool for community integration.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of these good practice guidelines is to assist local authorities in building sustainable inter-cultural communities, through the provision of appropriate and comprehensive housing services that meet the accommodation needs of minority ethnic groups. These guidelines are intended to help local authorities to develop practices and strategies for housing minority ethnic communities in housing need, which will achieve the following objectives:

- Develop, implement and monitor a policy for housing minority ethnic communities where appropriate.
- Provide minority ethnic communities with every opportunity to access the full spectrum of local authority housing services.
- Ensure access to good quality accommodation in locations that are safe and supportive of minority ethnic communities.
- Achieve high standards and sensitivity to the diverse needs of minority ethnic communities within local authority housing services.
- Ensure equality of outcomes for minority ethnic communities in the provision of local authority housing services.
- Assist the integration of minority ethnic communities.
- Celebrate diversity and promote inter-culturalism within local authority estates and wider local communities.
- Facilitate and encourage the involvement of organisations representing minority ethnic communities in consultation regarding the development of local housing policies.
- Maximise co-operation between local authorities and other organisations and agencies in order to develop a comprehensive local response to the needs of minority ethnic communities.
- Achieve value for money on all expenditure on the provision of local authority housing services to minority ethnic communities.

1.4 Achieving Good Practice in Housing Minority Ethnic Communities

These guidelines are not a definitive interpretation but provide guidance designed to help address the issues surrounding the housing of minority ethnic communities. They are intended to provide local authorities with suggestions of ‘best practice’ and illustrate cases of successful approaches. They also highlight issues that may be relatively new to local authorities, but which are likely to become more significant as the ethnic profile changes over time. Taking these guidelines as a base, it is up to each local authority to develop their own particular response to the issues raised.

Housing plays an important part in achieving the integration of minority ethnic communities. Local authorities can play an important role in facilitating this integration through its housing service.

1.5 Outline of Guidelines

The guidelines are presented in five sections, as follows:

- Section One introduces the topic and sets the context
- Section Two examines good practice in the planning and strategic management of housing provision for minority ethnic communities
- Section Three highlights the importance of neighbourhood planning and housing design that encourages ethnic inclusion
- Section Four examines issues of particular relevance to social housing provision and management
- Section Five focuses on the private rented sector and home ownership.

Appendix 1 provides a list of references and useful publications.

Appendix 2 provides information on terminology and definitions.

Appendix 3 provides background information on some of the minority ethnic communities living in Ireland.

Appendix 4 is a copy of the Towards Integration: Dublin City Council Charter

Appendix 5 is a copy of the DEHLG Circular SHIP 2010/19 Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals.

SECTION TWO

Planning and Strategic Management



2.1 Introduction

A strategic approach to addressing housing need is required by all local authorities, but this is particularly so for authorities with large or expanding minority ethnic populations.

The first stage in this process is to build a profile of the MECs living in the local authority area, followed by a needs assessment (where necessary) and then the integration of this information into strategic documents such as the housing services plan and housing action programme. These strategic planning instruments may need to give special mention to minority ethnic communities, as is currently the case with older people and those with a disability.

2.2 Role of the Local Authority

The past twenty years have seen the emergence and deepening of an enabling and strategic role for the local authorities, which has had important implications for housing minority ethnic communities. The local authorities are now expected to become enabling bodies, promoting a range of housing options, in addition to managing their own social housing programmes. There are now a number of housing supports available, which provide responses to different housing needs, such as shared ownership, affordable housing, incremental purchase and voluntary and co-operative housing schemes along with the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and social leasing. This enabling role was developed during the 1990s, and it was facilitated by the upgrading of local authority housing offices to provide local housing advice centres, which aimed to make comprehensive information on housing matters available to the public. The latest Government housing policy statement, *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*,

reasserts the local authorities' role in providing these different forms of housing support as well as advice through housing advice centres.

The emergence of an enabling role for local authorities has been accompanied by the evolution of an equally important strategic role in relation to the provision and management of housing stocks and the provision of housing by others to meet future housing needs. This reflected a broader move towards enhancing the local authorities' capacity to engage in strategic planning and this role has evolved with the development of housing services plans, housing action programmes and Homeless Action Plans now produced by each local authority (Department of the Environment, 1991; Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1995).

2.3 Building and Monitoring a Profile of Minority Ethnic Groups

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No.1

Build a profile of the minority ethnic communities in your local authority area.

Introduction

Gathering information on the characteristics of minority ethnic communities living in your local authority area is an important starting point in developing good practice guidelines on minority ethnic communities. This information will enable the creation of housing profiles of the minority ethnic communities living in your area.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Standards and the Council of Europe in 2007 published a report on *Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*. This report brings together the experiences of a group of cities from around Europe called CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policy). It noted that accurate information is vital for planning and implementing local integration policies, such as the number and age profile of migrants, household size and national and ethnic background as well as legal status of migrants.

It can be difficult to obtain up-to-date information but a number of sources are available to local authorities, which will assist with planning housing services for minority ethnic communities, as outlined below in Box 3. Data must be treated with caution, as the situation of minority ethnic communities can change considerably between the dates of publication of different datasets. This is particularly true of Census data, as there is a five-year interval between each Census of Population.

Box 3 Building a Profile of Minority Ethnic Communities

To set the context for the profile of minority ethnic communities:

1. Review national trends by reviewing the published Census of Population data on minority ethnic communities available for the State. A useful overview is provided by the Central Statistics Office's special report, Profile of Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland, which is based on Census 2006 data. This will enable comparison of the characteristics of minority ethnic communities at the national and local levels.

To build a profile of minority ethnic communities living within the local authority area:

2. Review the published Census of Population data on minority ethnic communities available for the County or City in question. Published volumes may be downloaded from the Central Statistics Office's website at www.cso.ie/census/. Volumes of particular interest include Household Composition, Family Units and Fertility (Vol.3), Usual Residence, Migration, Birthplaces and Nationalities (Vol.4), Ethnic or Cultural Background (Vol.5) and Housing (Vol.6). Please note that volume numbers may change over time and may not be consistent from one Census to the next.
3. Identify any gaps in the data available from the published volumes on the County or City in question. If data is available for the State but is not broken down further to give information on counties, cities and towns, it may be possible to commission the Central Statistics Office to produce additional tables, subject to maintaining confidentiality (a charge may apply). For further information, contact census@cso.ie.
4. Assess whether any minority ethnic communities are concentrated in particular towns within the local authority area in question. The Small Area Population Statistics provide detailed statistical breakdowns of Census data for smaller geographical areas than those available in the published Census volumes.

To gain a more detailed understanding of households belonging to minority ethnic communities which are in housing need or are living in social and affordable housing:

5. Review the data on housing-related issues collected by the local authority in question, in order to assess whether any information on minority ethnic communities is collected. Potential sources of information include the tri-annual Housing Needs Assessment, applications for social and affordable housing and waiting list data, allocations data, tenancy records and rents data, the electoral register and homeless surveys.
6. Assess whether any additional information on minority ethnic communities should be collected by the local authorities, as part of the collection of the above datasets, e.g. on the application form for social housing.
7. Set a timeframe for reviewing the profile of minority ethnic communities within the local authority area.

Census

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) provides the most detailed statistical information available on minority ethnic communities in the State. The Census of Population is the most up-to-date resource and the published volumes are available from the CSO website at <http://www.cso.ie/census/>. This provides an indication of general trends on a national basis with some information broken down on a county basis. In cases where the published volumes do not include a breakdown of the information by county, it may be possible to commission the CSO to produce additional tables for your individual local authority areas, subject to maintaining confidentiality (a charge may apply). For further information, contact census@cso.ie. Several volumes will be particularly helpful in building an overall profile of the minority ethnic communities living within your local authority area, which are examined below. Please note the table numbers are subject to change and may not be consistent from one Census to the next.

Usual Residence, Migration, Birthplaces and Nationalities (Vol. 4)

Tables 28 and 35 of Volume 4 of Census 2006 provide a good starting point in identifying the total size and broad composition of minority ethnic communities living within your local authority area. A breakdown of the population usually resident within each county by country of birth is provided by Table 28, while a breakdown by nationality is provided by Table 35. Nationality is categorised as 'Irish', 'Irish - Other', 'UK', 'EU15 excluding Ireland and UK', 'EU15 to EU25 accession states', 'Other European Nationality', 'America (United States)', 'Africa', 'Asia', 'Other Nationality', 'Multi Nationality', 'No Nationality'.

Further information on the geographical distribution of minority ethnic communities within your local authority area may be obtained from Tables 33 and 39 of Census 2006, which provide breakdowns of the population usually resident in each town of 1,500 population and over, classified by country of birth and nationality. This will help to identify any concentrations of minority ethnic communities in particular towns and cities within your local authority area, which is an important step towards planning housing services that can avoid ghettoisation.

Volume 4 of Census 2006 also includes breakdowns of the population of the State classified by nationality, together with sex, age group, marital status, household composition and type of family unit. Although this information is not provided on a county basis, it can provide an indication of the overall characteristics of households belonging to minority ethnic communities. At the different stages of life, different housing options are required, amongst the Irish born population younger people tending to rent, while those of family forming age and older mainly consider owner occupier as the most suitable form of tenure. It would be interesting to see whether this is also the case amongst the established Non-Irish communities.

Ethnic or Cultural Background (Vol. 5)

In addition to the information on country of birth and nationality discussed above, information on ethnic or cultural background is available in Volume 5 of Census 2006. A breakdown of the population usually resident within each county classified by ethnicity is provided by Table 1, while a breakdown of the population usually resident in each town of 1,500 population and over classified by ethnicity is provided by Table 4. Ethnic or cultural background is broken down into the categories of 'Irish', 'Irish traveller', 'any other white background', 'African', 'any other African background', 'Chinese', 'any other Asian background' and 'other including mixed background'.

Volume 5 also includes breakdowns of the population of the State classified by ethnic or cultural background, together with sex, age group, marital status, country of birth, religion, highest level of education completed, voluntary activity and ability to speak Irish. Again, this information is not provided on a county basis but it can provide an indication of the overall characteristics of persons belonging to minority ethnic communities. This information can be helpful in terms of getting a general picture of the distinct characteristics of ethnic groups.

Household Composition, Family Units and Fertility (Vol. 3)

The information on the overall characteristics of households belonging to minority ethnic communities provided by Volume 4 can be supplemented by the fertility information provided by Tables 44 and 45 of Volume 3 of Census 2006. Table 44 gives information on the fertility of women classified by nationality, which is broken into the categories of 'Irish', 'UK', 'Rest of EU', 'Africa', 'Asia', 'America' and 'other nationalities'. Table 45 gives the same information classified by ethnic or cultural background, which is broken down into the categories of 'Irish', 'Irish traveller', 'any other white background', 'African', 'any other black background', 'Chinese', 'any other Asian background' and 'other including mixed background'.

Comparison of fertility rates can be useful in making projections for changes in the composition of the population of your local authority area over the coming years. Local authorities need to be aware of the lifecycle changes over time and that family formation leads to greater demand for bedroom and living space. Fertility rates also provide a useful indicator of average household size amongst minority ethnic communities, which can be helpful in terms of planning for housing need. For instance, there is a considerably higher fertility rate among some MECs, suggesting a need for larger housing units, which may need to be taken into account in terms of preventing overcrowding and the requirement for larger properties.

Housing (Vol. 6)

Some basic information on the housing occupied by MEC households is provided by Volume 6 of Census 2006, although it is not broken down on a county basis. Table

39 provides quite limited information on housing conditions, classified by birthplace of the reference person, including the period in which the dwelling was built, tenure type, number of rooms occupied, availability of central heating, type of water supply and type of sewerage facility. This can give an indication of the basic condition of housing which may be helpful in terms of organising inspections of substandard accommodation which is discussed later in Section Five.

Tables 40 and 41 provide information on private households by accommodation type, classified by nationality and birthplace. Accommodation types include detached house, semi-detached house, terraced house, flat or apartment in a purpose-built block, flat or apartment in a converted house or commercial building, bed-sit and caravan, mobile or other temporary structure. This will give an idea for the preferences of different minor ethnic communities in terms of housing type.

Profile of Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland

In the case of Census 2006, a special report was undertaken on non-Irish nationals living in Ireland. While this may not be the case with subsequent Censuses, it does provide a good snapshot in time of the MECs in Ireland. The report comprises two parts, firstly an overview of the total non-Irish population comparing their characteristics with those of the resident Irish population, and secondly an in-depth profile of the ten largest MECs. These profiles illustrate the diversity that existed among Ireland's MECs and highlights the differences among the various groups in their location of residence, their living arrangements, educational attainment and choice of occupation.

Small Area Population Statistics

The Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) provide detailed statistical breakdowns of the Census data for smaller geographical areas than those available in the published Census volumes. These are available for electoral divisions (EDs) in rural areas and both EDs and smaller enumerator areas in cities. There are a number of Census themes that can be browsed under electoral division by street or townland and also by county and province. The themes can be broken down by towns with a population over 1,000, which is relevant as minority ethnic communities predominately reside in urban settings. The information relevant to minority ethnic communities is not as broad for the SAPS as it is for the Census more generally. Theme 2, Migration, Ethnicity and Religion, gives information on place of birth, nationality, ethnic/cultural background and religion. The information is not as detailed giving information only on UK, Polish and Lithuanian MECs. Unfortunately, the housing theme is not broken down by nationality but it does give localised information on the housing stock, which can be useful to find out if a high proportion of minority ethnic communities are residing in particular areas.

2.4 Existing Local Authority

While Census data enables the creation of an overall profile of the minority ethnic communities living within a particular local authority area, local authority data helps to build a more detailed profile in relation to households in housing need and those living in social and affordable housing. There are four important data sources, which should be easily accessible as they are collected by local authorities:

Housing Needs Assessment

The tri-annual Housing Needs Assessment captures social housing need within each local authority area. Information on the nationality of households in housing need has been limited to the three categories of 'Irish citizen', 'EU citizen' and 'non-EU citizen'. Non-EU citizens are further broken down into the two categories of 'refugee' and 'permission to remain in the State'. Despite the lack of more detailed information, the Housing Needs Assessment remains an important starting point for assessing the number of households belonging to minority ethnic communities in housing need.

Table 1 below reports the results for the 2008 assessment.

Table 1
Housing Needs Assessment 2008

Citizenship	Households	% of Housing Need
Irish	43,112	77
EU Citizen	6,821	12
Non EU Citizen	6,316	11

Source: DEHLG (2009) Annual Housing Statistics Bulletin 2008

Waiting List Data

Applications and waiting list data can give an indication of current and future demand for social and affordable housing options in local areas. Application forms currently do not record the birthplace or ethnic origin of applicants. The recording of this information would be invaluable in terms of monitoring the outcomes for applicants belonging to MECs and would be useful particularly in areas with large concentrations of MECs.

One approach to collect this information and remain in compliance with the data protection acts would be to ask ethnicity questions in a self-contained section separate from the remainder of the application form on a detachable page. Completion of this section would be on a voluntary and ammonised basis, and the data collected would be used for planning purposes only. The use of this data in terms of monitoring equality of opportunity and ethnic monitoring of the local authority housing services are outlined in Good Practice Guidelines 5 and 6 below.

Allocations Data

Allocations data provide geographical information on the areas where local authority tenants from MECs are living. Building profiles of the ethnic composition of estates or neighbourhoods can inform the future allocation process which can help in terms of achieving a better social mix and avoiding the creation of ghettos.

Tenancy Records and Rents Data

The tenancy records will help to get an idea of the history of the tenancies of MECs and issues that may have arisen in the past. This will enable action to be taken to address any recurring issues affecting access. The rents paid by local authority tenants from MECs may provide an indication of their socio-economic status vis-à-vis other tenants and the wider community.

Electoral Register

The electoral register may give an indication of the presence of MECs living in local authority areas. The register is compiled with different levels of voting rights based on citizenship and time spent in Ireland. This may give an indication of the background of those on the electoral register.

Homeless Surveys

Some local authorities conduct a survey of the homeless population, which should provide an indication of the acute housing needs of MECs. In the case of the Dublin area, the Counted In study provides information on the homeless people in the greater Dublin area, including the ethnic background of those who are homeless.

2.5 Gathering more detailed information on your local authority area

The Housing and Integration of Migrants Report

The *Housing and Integration of Migrants* report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Standards and the Council of Europe (2007) made the following recommendations about information that would be helpful to local authorities in terms of their planning for migrants' housing need. It suggested that a number of indicators be put in place to measure the housing conditions and spatial distribution of minority ethnic communities. These include:

- indicators to evaluate the housing situation such as floor space per person, quality of building, provision of central heating, etc
- indicators for access, which could include the waiting period for migrants on the social housing list compared to the waiting period for the indigenous population
- indicators to evaluate the spatial distribution of migrants
- collection of data at street level to monitor the dynamics of migrants' movements within the city area
- include the monitoring of housing conditions into an overall monitoring of the quality of life of migrants in their local community
- establish a specialist unit in the statistical office to compile migrants' housing data.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Standards and the Council of Europe (2007 page 87)

The report recognised that, within the current framework, information may not be available and it suggested data collection with the assistance and co-operation of NGOs, churches, local research groups and volunteers. It examined the case study of the city of Luxembourg and their 'social plan' project, which aimed to create a kind of social atlas of the city. It did this by mapping the situation of MEC inhabitants, particularly families, and identify the issues they face with regard to housing.

2.6 Housing Needs Assessment of MECs

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 2

Undertake a housing needs assessment of MECs in your local authority area.

In addition to the existing sources of information outlined above, some local authorities may also find it useful to undertake a survey of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities to get more comprehensive localised data. Those considering undertaking such a survey may find it useful to refer to a Communities Scotland report, *Developing Good Practice for Effective Community Engagement and Housing Needs Assessment for Minority Ethnic Communities* (2006). This report provides practical information on assessing the housing needs of MECs and how to include them and plan for them in local housing strategies, the equivalent to our housing action programmes.

The methodology recommended by the Scottish Communities report is outlined below in Box 4.

Box 4

Case Study: Scottish Communities housing needs assessments for minority ethnic communities

A wide range of different approaches to exploring the housing needs of minority ethnic communities may be adopted. The extent of the exercise can range from listening to the experiences of a small number of service-users in a particular neighbourhood, to undertaking a comprehensive housing needs assessment at local authority level.

It is important that the approach to housing needs assessment fits with what the local authority aims to achieve. For example, a small local authority with a low proportion of its population belonging to a minority ethnic community may aim to ensure that its services are meeting the needs of local minority ethnic communities. In this case, it may be appropriate to monitor information on applications and review allocations to minority ethnic communities, gather information from the Census about the size of the population and hold a small number of discussion groups with service users and potential service users belonging to minority ethnic communities. On the other hand, a local authority aiming to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities across its area of operation, to inform its strategic planning, is likely to undertake a larger scale operation.

Regardless of its objectives, the process of assessing housing needs is likely to involve six key stages, as follows:

1. gathering existing information,
2. gathering new information,
3. interpreting the information gathered,

4. taking action,
5. linking findings to the strategic context,
6. updating and reviewing.

Each of the six key stages involved in assessing the housing needs of minority ethnic communities are discussed below.

Stage 1: Gathering existing information

The primary source of existing information on minority ethnic communities within a particular local area is likely to be the Census of Population. The Census can provide a considerable amount of information (as outlined in section 2.3 above).

Stage 2: Gathering new information

To gain a good understanding of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities within a particular area, it will generally be essential to supplement existing information, which is likely to be predominantly quantitative, with new information. There are two main ways of gathering new information. First, a household survey can be a useful way of gathering a mix of quantitative and qualitative information which can greatly enhance understanding of housing needs. Second, face-to-face consultation through focus groups and events can provide an opportunity to explore particular issues in more depth and to gain an understanding of individual experiences. Consultation with MEC representative groups would be worthwhile, to help find participants for the household survey and focus groups.

Stage 3: Interpreting the information gathered

The most important stage in undertaking a

housing needs assessment is translating all of the information gathered into a meaningful profile, setting out a clear understanding of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities in the area.

Stage 4: Taking action

By this stage, the local authority will have a clear understanding of the housing needs of minority ethnic communities in its area. However, there is no value in undertaking this type of assessment if it does not inform service planning or delivery in some way. The first stage in ensuring that action is taken is identifying the key findings of the research. This involves analysis of the information gathered and identification of areas where particular needs are identified. Clearly, this will vary in each area, but some of the issues to look out for are: overcrowding, substandard accommodation, waiting time and lack of understanding of the application process.

Stage 5: Linking findings to the strategic context

In addition to building linkages with minority ethnic communities, it will also be crucial to ensure that the findings of the housing needs assessment and the actions identified are linked to the strategic context such as the housing services plan.

Stage 6: Updating and reviewing

The final stage of a housing needs assessment is to ensure that the

information on which the local authority is acting is accurate and up-to-date and that any changes in the housing needs and circumstances of minority ethnic communities are reflected in the actions taken to address these needs. Therefore, it is important to ensure that there are clear procedures in place to update and review the housing needs assessment on a regular basis.

The following information checklist may be helpful to local authorities when developing a housing needs assessment of the minority ethnic communities within its area:

- size of communities,
- geographical spread,
- age profile and family composition,
- socio-economic profile,
- patterns of housing tenure / housing aspirations of different minority ethnic communities,
- experience accessing housing,
- homelessness,
- awareness of the provision of housing services,
- experience of local authority housing services such as maintenance of local authority social housing,
- racist incidents in the local authority areas.

Source: (Communities Scotland, 2006)

Some local authorities have already undertaken general needs assessments of MECs in their areas, for examples see:

Fingal: *Towards an Integrated Community ... A Survey of Minority Ethnic Communities in Fingal*

Clare: *Getting to Know You: A Survey of the Needs of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in County Clare*

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

Use the information obtained in the minority ethnic communities profile and housing needs assessment to inform strategic planning, including the Housing Services Plan, the corresponding Housing Action Plan and other strategic planning documents.

Compiling a profile of MECs and their housing needs will assist local authorities in establishing the level of response required to meet the housing needs of minority ethnic communities. In areas with large or increasing numbers of minority ethnic groups, consideration should be given to including minority ethnic communities in strategic planning and service provision documents. It is also important to consult with organisations representing or providing services for MEC on the development of these strategic policy responses.

The Housing Services Plan

The Housing Services Plan forecasts the demand for social and affordable housing over the five years of the strategy. It provides a general overview of the projected demand for all forms of housing tenure in the local authority area and includes information on the zoning of development land. It forms part of the development plan and tries to integrate housing supply with land use planning. The plan projects population and housing data, the natural rate of increase in the county/ city population. This needs to include minority ethnic communities. It also must take account of the migration within the area, particularly fast growing groups of minority ethnic communities that may be moving to the area.

The measurement of the average household size and growth in household size needs amongst minority ethnic communities should be given particular attention given that this can be notably different from the Irish population, such as higher fertility and larger households due to extended families living together. The tendency for MEC to be younger on average compared to the indigenous population may also be of relevance to local authorities in strategic planning.

Housing Action Programme

The multi-annual Housing Action Programme covers the provision of all social and affordable housing supports at local authority level. These supports are delivered through Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2006, the Rental Accommodation Scheme, Public Private Partnership, Social Leasing, etc. The housing action programme builds on the housing services plan and needs to take account of demand for social and affordable housing from all sections in the community including minority ethnic groups. Special housing needs, particularly those of MECs may be highlighted in the housing action plans. The housing action programme would ideally be informed by a minority ethnic communities housing needs assessment. This would provide the local authority with information and the precise housing need of minority ethnic communities, which could be private, rented, affordable or social. This can also include taking account of certain cultural needs as appropriate.

Homeless Action Plan

Under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009 each local authority is obliged to create a response to homelessness in their local authority area. This response needs to take account of homeless people from MECs. Research by the Homeless Agency has shown that increasing numbers of homeless people are from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly those from EU accession countries. This was illustrated in their *Counted In* surveys (see Homeless Agency, 2008). Minority ethnic communities need to be given specific consideration when planning homeless services into the future. There should be consultation with agencies undertaking data collection on homeless people, to ensure that place of birth is captured. As many migrants do not have a formal network of family and friends in Ireland, the local authorities' cold weather response may need to plan for disproportionate numbers of MECs people sleeping rough.

2.7 Consultation

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 4

Local authority consultations with tenants and those in housing need should be actively inclusive of MECs.

The Scottish Executive in a good practice guide gave the following definition:

Consultation is a time-limited exercise when we provide specific opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on an area of our work (such as identifying issues, developing or changing policies, testing proposals or evaluating provision) to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.' (2008: 2)

The consultative process has a number of benefits for both local authority customers and the local authority. These include:

- empowering the community by actively involving them in designing responses to their own needs;
- building the capacity of different groups to interact with other communities and state agencies; and
- developing trust and rapport between the local authority and customers.

There are a number of consultation options, for example:

- surveys
- representative groups
- focus groups
- public meetings
- written submissions.

The consultation options chosen will depend on the size of group(s) with which the local authority wants to consult and the level of feedback or information it wishes to obtain. A number of mechanisms may be utilised to gain a comprehensive picture.

In any case, the consultation process should be kept under review and revised as necessary on an on-going basis to ensure it is meeting the objectives set for it.

Local authorities should aim to consult as representatively as possible, from different ethnic groups within the community, different ages and genders. Consultation with representative groups is often the easiest and most cost effective way of ascertaining the view of the community, but this may not always be possible and should not be assumed to be comprehensive – there will be divergence even within groups. Assumptions about groups’ or individuals’ housing needs or preferences should be avoided.

Each consultation exercise should begin with consideration of the target audience and how groups might best be included. Box 5 below provides a good consultation checklist.

Box 5 Consulting Guidelines

- ✓ Build consultation into your regular planning cycle and consult early. Don't wait until it is too late to change your plans
- ✓ Be clear about the purpose and objectives of your consultation - don't ask for views if you can't or won't do anything with them.
- ✓ Identify all stakeholder groups and individuals to be consulted
- ✓ Don't just consult your users – ask others, too, including your front-line staff
- ✓ Consider most appropriate and inclusive consultation methods
- ✓ Learn from others – use experts if necessary, but don't just do something because 'everyone else does'. Work out what's right for your own situation
- ✓ Consider different cultural preferences for how consultation is undertaken
- ✓ Allow for sufficient resources
- ✓ Consider any legal obligations
- ✓ Allow sufficient time for stakeholders to consider issues raised
- ✓ Consider from the outset how you will analyze submissions received
- ✓ Publicise your consultation so that all who want to can feed in views, and so that people realise you are committed to listening to them
- ✓ Report back on what views you received and what you have done as a result
- ✓ Evaluate consultation process and incorporate lessons learned in future consultations

Source: adapted from Department of the Taoiseach *Reaching Out: Guidelines on Consultation for Public Sector Bodies* and Cabinet Office (UK) *Consultation Top 10 Tips*, <http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk>.

2.8 Monitoring Outcomes

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 5

Consider how best to collect information on the ethnic and cultural background of tenants and those on waiting lists and use this information to monitor outcomes for minority ethnic communities (for example allocations, tenant satisfaction, rent levels)

The local authority's policies, strategies and procedures are only as effective as the outcomes that they achieve. Monitoring outcomes is an important element in assessing the effectiveness of any policy, strategy or procedure.

Local authorities may wish to consider how best to collect information on the ethnic and cultural background of tenants to measure outcomes and to check that there are no unintended consequences from existing policies or practices for minority ethnic communities. It may not be appropriate to include questions regarding ethnic background on application forms as a key data protection principle is that requests for personal data should be relevant and not excessive which means that an organisation needs to have an acceptable justification for each piece of information it requests from individuals. Local authorities may wish to consider alternative ways of collecting this information, for example by providing all applicants with a separate sheet that is detachable from the main application in which they can give details of their ethnic background/nationality on a voluntary basis. Alternatively, authorities may wish to include questions regarding ethnic and cultural background in tenant surveys (for example post-occupancy surveys for those taking up new tenancies).

In areas where voluntary housing associations and housing co-operatives are significant providers of social housing they should also be involved in the collation of these data. This will ensure that the available information paints a comprehensive picture of the housing situation of minority ethnic groups. The reason why this information is required should be explained to staff, tenants and other clients of the local authority housing service.

Local authorities with higher levels of ethnic mix in their areas may also wish to consider formally evaluating their housing policies, strategies and procedures from an ethnic equality perspective. This might be best undertaken by an external agency or individual with evaluation skills and experience in this area.

Undertake Ethnic Monitoring

The Commission for Racial Equality (now merged into the Equality and Human Rights Commission) in the United Kingdom recommended that ethnic records should be used to monitor ethnic trends in access to the housing service and in the quality of service received. In order to do this, housing practitioners should try to answer the following questions:

- Is the number of persons from MECs who have applied for local authority housing proportionate to the numbers living in the local authority's operational area?
- Is the number of persons from different MECs who have been allocated local authority dwellings proportionate to the number on the housing list?
- Does the time spent waiting to be allocated a dwelling vary by ethnic background?
- Does the location in which tenants live vary by ethnic background?
- Are certain MECs concentrated in difficult-to-let estates?
- Are certain MECs concentrated in dwellings of poor quality or unpopular design?

The Commission also suggested that local authorities should assess ethnic trends in satisfaction with different aspects of housing service delivery such as the information supplied by the local authority to tenants, the quality of the maintenance service, etc. (see Housing Unit, 2003)

Housing Strategic Policy Committees

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 7

Housing Strategic Policy Committees should consider housing issues for minority ethnic communities on a periodic basis

The strategic policy committees were set up to assist local authorities with the formulation, development and review of policy. Membership includes representatives from social partners including the social and voluntary pillar which may include groups representing MECs. As housing is a major function in all local authorities, the majority of authorities have a stand-alone housing SPC. Authorities with large or growing MECs in their area may wish to put consideration of relevant housing issues regarding ethnic and cultural diversity and integration on the agenda of the relevant SPC on a periodic basis.

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 8

Provide cultural awareness training to housing practitioners and managers

Cultural awareness training for local authority staff who interact with or provide a service to MECs at all levels should be arranged where possible, to include: managers, receptionists and counter staff in local authorities, housing department staff, estate management and tenant participation staff, social work and housing welfare staff, revenue collectors and housing maintenance staff and managers.

Box 6 below provides a check list of possible topics for inclusion in such training, but in any case staff should be consulted on the main issues that have arisen for them and which they would like covered on the training course when courses are being prepared. Where authorities use contractors to carry out work on their behalf (e.g. maintenance work) consideration should be given to ensuring that contractors' staff are also suitably trained on cultural awareness issues.

Box 6 Cultural Awareness Training Checklist

- ✓ the local authority's policy statements and procedures that make reference to or have implications for MECs and the implications of these policy statements and procedures for the day-to-day work of housing-department staff
- ✓ the different levels of legal status granted to MECs
- ✓ other relevant legislation – national and international
- ✓ national migration policy
- ✓ the diversity of MECs needs and experiences
- ✓ an awareness of the cultures of different MECs
- ✓ responses to MECs housing needs
- ✓ racist discrimination and harassment and how to respond to it
- ✓ communication skills

Source: (adapted from Housing Unit, 2003: 45)

Raising Awareness among Staff who Work with MECs

Housing practitioners should ensure that staff who meet members of MECs in their work have an insight into the experience of being from a MEC and of the cultural background of the main MECs in the area (See Appendix 2 for further information on terminology and definitions and Appendix 3 for background information on some of the MECs living in this country).

In some circumstances, authorities may find it useful to invite representatives of different minority ethnic community groups living in the area to meet with staff to outline the cultural context and their experiences of accessing housing services. This insight should help understanding and in turn facilitate the provision of a better service.

2.9 Wider Context of Integration

City/County Development Plans

The drafting of the local authorities' development plans are an ideal opportunity to put issues of housing and integration on to the agenda and develop a shared vision of how services should develop in the medium term. The drafting and consultation stage of the development plan is an ideal opportunity to gain some feedback from MEC individuals and interest groups on how they would like to see the policies and objectives develop over the next 5/6 year period.

The development plan process can be a key driver of creating sustainable communities. As a statutory plan, the Development Plan can be used to give greater prominence to local authority integration/diversity plans. For example Dublin City Council included a reference (NC22) to its integration plan in its draft development plan and consulted widely with the MECs as part of the development plan process (Dublin City Council, 2010: 144).

Local Anti-Racism and Diversity Plans

Housing issues should take account and feed into the local authority Anti-Racism and Diversity Plans. Dublin City Council included a Charter in its report *Towards Integration - A City Framework* (see Appendix 4) describing the integration and diversity framework which will be incorporated in to the city council's work, by the development of integration measures and the promotion of social inclusion. The Council's approach has been comprehensive in terms of its commitment to integration through a Charter and consultation with MECs stakeholders. Preparation of the plan involved liaison within the authority and was co-ordinated by the Council's Integration Office.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has also published a similar report *Moving Forward Together* which is the Anti-Racism and Diversity Plan for the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown 2007-2010. Under the theme of accommodation, it emphasises the provision of information to provide greater understanding of the local authority housing schemes and the private rented sector and commits to the development of a training module on encouraging anti-racist and inclusive practices.

The following are common commitments in diversity plans:

- provision of awareness training;
- encourage anti-racist and inclusive practices;
- provide clear accessible information on housing options, to make schemes easier to understand;

- provide information on the private rented sector; and
- undertake equality-proofing of policies and procedures.

Customer Service Statements

A commitment to recognising increased cultural diversity should be included in customer service statements. This can take the form of endeavouring to use other languages in information resources or an interpreter service where appropriate and feasible, particularly if there is a large minority ethnic community in the local authority area accessing housing services. It is also important that MECs are aware of the local authorities' customer feedback, complaints and appeals processes as part of a commitment to good customer services.

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 9

Develop and utilise contacts with local voluntary and non-governmental migrant organisations in your area

Local authorities should consider the potential benefits of working in partnership with voluntary organisations to bring about mutually beneficial outcomes. It is important that both the statutory and non-statutory organisations are aware of each other's work to prevent any duplication of service, for instance the production of information resources in different languages. This might result in savings and greater efficiencies for both the local authorities and voluntary organisation in terms of responding to queries and increasing awareness of the authority's role in housing provision.

SECTION THREE

Neighbourhood Planning and Housing Design



3.1 Introduction

Neighbourhood planning and housing design can play an important role in the successful integration of MEC. In 2007, the DEHLG published Development Plan Guidelines that included a requirement that planning authorities address issues relating to cultural and ethnic diversity. The guidelines state that the planning process should be responsive to the planning issues arising from cultural diversity and should seek where possible to actively affirm and support the needs of the new local communities which are emerging. The Guidelines pointed out that the settlement of immigrants could potentially help to revitalise areas, support urban regeneration and stimulate new local economic activity and also emphasised the importance of consultation with migrant communities in drawing up development plans.

This section of the Good Practice Guidelines outlines planning and design issues for consideration.

3.2 Planning and Design of Social Housing

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 10

Promote mixed-tenure housing developments, to encourage the integration of minority ethnic communities.

Local authorities should take steps to avoid the development of overly segregated neighbourhoods, in terms of socio-economic group or ethnicity. Segregation can lead to concentrations of disadvantage, inadequate local facilities such as shops and services and increased social problems. Norris (2005) found that, although tenure mixing is not a panacea for all of the problems of low-income areas:

...mixed-tenure developments have some significant social, economic and community development advantages over single-tenure social housing estates. Tenure mixing can help to address or prevent large concentrations of low-income households which may be caused by large-scale social housing estates and the attendant negative consequences for the local economy. It can also mitigate the stigma sometimes associated with social housing estates and social needs and thus reduce the strain on local social and community services (Norris, 2005: 28).

Any trends towards the concentration of minority ethnic communities in particular areas should be identified and ways to limit the potential segregation and ghettoisation of these areas examined. In accordance with the national policy statement, Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities, encouraging the integration of minority ethnic communities can be achieved through the development of mixed-tenure housing developments, the planning process, public-private partnerships and the social leasing scheme. The mixed tenure approach, supplemented by the allocation policies discussed above, will reduce the risk that MECs are ghettoised.

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No 11

Promote social interaction within the neighbourhood with well-designed and well-managed open spaces, commercial and community infrastructure, as part of mixed-tenure housing developments, on a scale appropriate to the development.

The provision of public spaces in a settlement can help to improve interactions between communities. This 'soft infrastructure' includes courtyards, parks, playgrounds, community centres, leisure centres, allotments, museums and galleries, youth centres, restaurants and bars. Public spaces enable people to interact with each other and to develop local ties. Research has highlighted the role that public space can play in promoting meaningful contact between different groups of people, thereby promoting better relations between communities (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2009).

3.3 Awareness of Culturally Sensitive Housing Design and Provision

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 12

Consider culturally-sensitive design issues when planning/sourcing dwellings for social housing or social leasing, if substantial local need exists within particular MECs.

The growth of MECs in Ireland in recent years has necessitated a re-consideration of standard housing design, in order to allow for and facilitate cultural preferences, practices and obligations. Specific housing requirements which may not be met by standard housing design can arise from cultural preference, such as several generations of one family living together, spiritual beliefs, respect for a holy place, or religious obligations, such as washing before prayers.

Designing accommodation which meets the housing requirements of particular minority ethnic communities, in addition to the wider population, may be described as 'culturally sensitive design' and it is important that local authorities are aware of and sensitive to the issues involved.

Culturally sensitive design is a relatively new concept for many western countries which now have large minority ethnic communities originating from outside Europe. In the UK, the debate in this area has focused on how minority housing needs may not be met by mainstream social housing. Some housing associations have been innovative, in terms of providing housing for minority ethnic groups, often incorporating culturally appropriate designs. These housing associations work with the relevant local authorities to assess housing needs and provide suitable accommodation for those in housing need within their communities. Muslim housing associations are quite common, due to the relatively high levels of occupancy of social housing of Muslims relative to other groups.

In considering culturally sensitive design issues, it is important to note that experience from minority ethnic housing strategies in the UK has shown that culturally sensitive design issues do not remain static. The needs, preferences and aspirations of new minority ethnic communities are not always different from the mainstream and are subject to change. There may be differences in housing preferences between men and women, first and second generations, urban and rural settings, occupations and cultural backgrounds.

A report by the UK based National Housing Federation *Accommodating Diversity: Housing Design for a Multicultural Society* (1998), provides a comprehensive discussion of the different aspects of culturally sensitive design needs of different minority ethnic communities. It is aimed at housing practitioners, local authorities, planners and architects and provides practical recommendations about how design can be better suited to the ways of living of minority ethnic communities and also gives common sense ways of slightly altering design to suit specific needs in the following settings:

- neighbourhood – the need for secure and safe neighbourhoods, free of racist abuse
- dwelling size – for example to accommodate multi-generational and / or extended families in one home
- internal layout – to allow for cultural or religious practices
- orientation – for religious preferences
- kitchen facilities and food storage – to accommodate particular cooking and eating practices

- bathroom facilities – preferences for certain ways of cleaning – showers, bidets, baths
- outdoor space – for cooking and / or recreation / socialising.

Local authorities should have some understanding of how cultural and religious practices govern people's daily lives (see also Appendix 3). Where possible, tenants' ways of living need to be taken into consideration in housing design and allocations policies and practices.

It is important that local authorities do not base their design of new housing or their allocations policies and practices on assumptions about different minority ethnic communities' housing preferences. Consultation with tenants, prospective tenants and/or representative organisations is preferable to being prescriptive (see Section 2 above).

In the French case study in Box 7 below, a social housing provider interviewed tenants, in order to gain an understanding of why their housing units tended to fall into disrepair. This research highlights the importance of effective communication and consultation with tenants belonging to minority ethnic communities, in order to prevent unnecessary damage to dwellings. It shows that the preferences of minority ethnic communities should not be assumed but ascertained through consultation.

Box 7
French case study: the importance of consultation

French Case Study

In France, some social housing providers have become aware of the issue of culturally-sensitive design because of the practical reason of maintenance. The difference between the assigned uses of social housing units and the ways certain households actually use them can lead to the deterioration of the dwellings and to maintenance problems. This is particularly the case with households coming from Western African countries, which are likely to be large households and may have very different cooking practices from Europeans. Due to the French assimilation model of immigration policies and universal model of social housing, there has been very little experimentation with culturally-sensitive design in social housing in France. Moreover, designing different dwellings for minority ethnic communities seems counterproductive, as it may reinforce stereotypes about immigrants, confining them within stereotypes.

A French social housing provider called ‘Logement Français’ (<http://www.logementfrancais.fr/>) tried to address this issue in an interesting way, which corresponds with the assimilation approach of immigration policies. Some of its dwellings had been particularly damaged and needed refurbishment. To gain an understanding of whether this damage was due to a mismatch between the design of the dwellings and the uses by the tenants, the social housing provider commissioned an anthropological research project, to look at the way the tenants lived in the dwellings. The aim of the social housing provider was not to refurbish the dwellings with a specific design adapted to the uses of these households, it was to better understand the way these tenants lived in order to provide them with support or training before they moved into the refurbished dwellings.

Twenty households were interviewed in their apartments, so that the researchers could visit the apartments with the tenants. The households were mainly large-size families coming from western African countries. The research showed that the deterioration of the dwellings was mainly due to three factors:

- overcrowding: since there are very few dwellings appropriate for very large households in the social rented sector in France, these families do not have a choice other than living in inappropriate dwellings;
- tenants' lack of awareness of maintenance problems;
- lack of communication between the social housing provider and the tenants.

The research made several recommendations to the social housing provider:

- Improve communication between the social housing provider and its tenants;
- Design appropriate dwellings for households belonging to minority ethnic communities, taking into account their size, their way of life and especially their cooking practices;
- Organise culturally sensitive pre-tenancy training for these households, before they move into their new dwellings;
- Build an 'educational dwelling', where the pre-tenancy training would be organised.

On the basis of the findings and recommendations of this research, the social housing provider used a refurbished dwelling as an 'educational dwelling'. It opened in November 2009 and is used to hold workshops on different topics: ventilation and maintenance of the apartments, energy savings, sorting household waste for the purpose of recycling, tenant's rights and duties and so on.

Source: Case study prepared by H  l  ne B  guin, on study visit to the Housing and Sustainable Community Agency from University of Paris 12.

SECTION FOUR

Responses to Housing Need



4.1 Introduction

It is important that MEC households are informed about the full range of housing options available to them. This section covers issues relating to social housing, including housing information and advice, social housing eligibility and allocation, homelessness, social leasing and estate management. Section 5 will focus on the private rented sector and home ownership.

4.2 Provision of Housing Information and Advice

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 13

Provide clear and accessible information for MECs on the range of housing services provided and tenure options including social housing, private rented accommodation and low-income home ownership options.

The provision of information in clear and accessible formats is an important feature of good customer services, but particularly so for services of relevance to minority ethnic communities. Such information is required on a range of topics such as accommodation options in particular areas, the application process and tenancy issues. Information is also required about other sources of information and advice such as local letting agents, relevant websites and newspapers and other voluntary or statutory bodies.

4.3 Eligibility Criteria for Housing Supports

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 14

Be up-to-date on eligibility criteria for MECs to access housing supports and regularly check for updates.

Minority ethnic communities have different forms of entitlement to housing services based on their citizenship. Local authority housing practitioners need to be familiar with these entitlement criteria, in order to advise on the housing options available in individual cases.

A circular from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2010 clarified the entitlement to social and affordable housing supports for non-Irish nationals. It must be remembered that members of minority ethnic communities still need to meet the other requirements for housing supports prescribed by the State. The entitlements for migrants of different nationalities are summarised in Box 8 below, followed by more detailed explanations.

Box 8**Entitlement to Social and Affordable Housing for Migrants of Different Nationalities based on DEHLG Circular SHIP 2010/19 Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals**

Nationality	Entitlement to Social and Affordable Housing
Common Travel Area of Ireland and UK	The same entitlement as Irish nationals, once criteria below are satisfied.
EU 25 Nationals plus EEA and Swiss)	The same entitlement as Irish nationals, once criteria below are satisfied.
Romanian and Bulgarians	Yes. Those who have had an employment permit for a continuous 12 months period are now free to work in Ireland without a permit after this 12 month period, they will be entitled to apply for social housing support from housing authorities in the same way as any other EEA, once criteria below are satisfied.
Non EEA	No entitlement unless granted Refugee Status or Leave to Remain. For example, students and Non-EU work permit holders are not entitled to access social and affordable housing.
Asylum seeker	No entitlement. Accommodation provided by Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) - direct provision.
Leave to Remain (Stamp 4 and Stamp 3)	No. Stamp 4 and Stamp 3 (dependants of eligible non EEA national applicant are usually given this) must have endorsement for five years in order to be eligible for consideration for social housing support.
Leave to Remain (Stamp 4 and Stamp 3) after 5 years	Yes.
Refugee status	Yes. Those that have been granted status as refugees in the State are entitled to the same access to social housing support as an Irish citizen as per the terms of Section 3 of the Refugee Act 1996.
Work Permit Holder (exception for EEA)	No.
Subsidiary protection status	Yes. Where it is determined that an applicant is to be given subsidiary protection status, the Minister for Justice and Law Reform will give the applicant leave to remain in the State.
Programme Refugee	Yes. These are a particular subset of refugees who are sometimes called resettlement refugees and who are given permission to enter and remain in the State.

Source: DEHLG Circular SHIP 2010/19 Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals Disclaimer: Information correct at time of going to press but local authorities should regularly check for updates/changes in conditions.

Criteria that apply to EEA-national social housing support applicant

Any EEA-national is entitled to apply for social housing support from housing authorities in accordance with the following criteria;

- 1) they are in employment/self-employed in the State; or
- 2) where they are not currently working/employed it is because –
 - » they are temporarily unable to work because of illness/accident;
 - » they are recorded as involuntarily unemployed after having been employed for longer than a year, and they have been registered as a job-seeker with Department of Social and Family Affairs and FAS.

After 5 years legal residence in the State an EEA citizen is entitled to seek permanent residency.

Please see Appendix 5 for copies of the relevant Circulars.

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 15

Be aware of the different immigration stamps and their significance and regularly check for updates.

In addition to providing evidence of identity, typically a passport, persons seeking housing support should be asked to supply evidence of their immigration status or legal right to remain in the State in conjunction with their application. This can be ascertained by examining Stamp designations, which should be found on passports or Garda Registration Cards. There are currently six stamps, covering the various forms of residence granted, as outlined in Box 9 below.

Box 9

Main Immigration Stamps and Categories of Persons Permitted to be in the State

Main Immigration Stamps*	Main categories of Persons issued this Stamp**
<p>Stamp 1 This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment unless the employer has obtained a permit, does not engage in any business or profession without the permission of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and does not remain later than a specified date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Non-EEA national issued with a work permit;■ Non-EEA national issued a Green Card Permit;■ Non-EEA national who have been granted permission to operate a business in the State;■ Working Holiday Authorisation holder.
<p>Stamp 1A This person is permitted to remain in Ireland for the purpose of full-time training with a named body until a specified date. Other employment is not allowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Non-EEA national studying accountancy.
<p>Stamp 2 This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not engage in any business or profession other than casual employment (defined as 20 hours per week during school term and up to 40 hours per week during school holidays) and does not remain later than a specified date. Also, the person has no recourse to public funds unless otherwise provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Non-EEA national attending a full-time course of study recognised by Department of Education and Science.
<p>Stamp 2A This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession, has no recourse to public funds and does not remain later than a specified date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Non-EEA national attending course of study not recognised by the Department of Education and Science.

Main Immigration Stamps*	Main categories of Persons issued this Stamp**
<p>Stamp 3 This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession and does not remain later than a specified date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-EEA visitor; ■ Non-EEA retired person of independent means; ■ Non-EEA Minister of Religion and Member of Religious Order; ■ Non-EEA spouse/dependant of employment permit holder.
<p>Stamp 4 This person is permitted to remain in Ireland until a specified date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-EEA family member of EEA citizen; ■ Non-EEA spouse of Irish citizen; ■ Refugee; ■ Non-EEA person granted family reunification under the Refugee Act 1996; ■ Programme refugee; ■ Non-EEA parent of Irish citizen child where parent was granted permission to remain in the State; ■ Non-EEA family member of EU citizen where family member qualifies under the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 (S.I 656 of 2006).

Source: Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/Stamps> and Department of Social Protection <http://www.welfare.ie/EN/OperationalGuidelines/Pages/habres.aspx>

* This is an outline of the main immigration stamps as currently used by the immigration authorities. The immigration stamps, in conjunction with the Certificate of Registration issued by GNIB, are evidence of permission to be in the State. They are not an indicator of, nor an interpretation of, legal entitlements other than those explicitly set out in the stamps. The immigration authorities have the right to assign or refuse immigration stamps to the various categories of persons as appropriate. Please note that the stamps are kept under on-going review and may be updated from time to time.

** This is an indicative list of categories of persons who may be granted permission to remain in the State. This table does not give any assurance that a person in one of the categories will obtain the immigration stamp indicated. The immigration authorities have the right to grant or refuse permission to remain on a case-by-case basis.

Disclaimer: Information correct at time of going to press but local authorities should regularly check for updates/changes in conditions.

No one stamp designation confers a right to access social and affordable housing supports. For example, many non-EEA nationals who are entitled to access housing supports, including those who have been granted Refugee Status, Leave to Remain etc., would have a Stamp 4 designation. However, others with a Stamp 4 designation, such as holders of work/employment permits like Green Card Permits or work visas, are not entitled to access housing supports. Thus, the criteria involved in establishing entitlement to social and affordable housing are not straightforward. Applicants should be asked for an official letter to confirm their status, and a copy of their residency permit (Garda National Immigration Bureau card) so that they can be given the appropriate information and advice to reflect their situation, in as clear and jargon-free a manner as possible.

4.4 Allocation of Social Housing

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 16

Allocation policies should be clear and transparent and regularly reviewed to avoid unintended MEC discrimination.

Local authority allocation policies should take into consideration the growing numbers of households from minority ethnic communities on their housing waiting lists. It is important that local authorities are aware of any unintended consequences of their allocation policies, which may lead to discrimination or indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice applied to all would disadvantage or have a disproportionate impact on people belonging to a specific group, unless this can be objectively justified by a legitimate aim. An example of this could be not providing housing units capable of meeting the specific needs of certain individuals, such as larger families or those with a disability.

The scheme of letting priorities is a mechanism for allocating dwellings, usually through a system of priorities, with points for household size, length of time on the waiting list, etc. It is also important that the allocation policy be clearly stated, transparent and easily accessible. Authorities may wish to consider posting information about the allocation process on their websites and giving it to people when they apply for social housing; in some cases they may find it useful to translate the policy into selected languages, if there is sufficient demand. This may

help to ease any tensions between groups on the housing waiting list, addressing perceptions that minority ethnic communities ‘jump the queue’ on the one hand, or that they are discriminated against on the other.

In any case, authorities may opt to set aside a number or proportion of dwellings as vacancies arise, for letting to particular categories of applicant within the scheme of letting priorities. This approach has already been adopted by some local authorities in relation to homeless people and could be used for other categories. Local authorities may deem this an appropriate course of action if, for example, household size is leading to long delays in allocation relative to other categories, due to an absence of larger dwellings for instance. There are clear benefits to this approach, in terms of meeting the needs of large households belonging to minority ethnic communities, which may face indirect discrimination. If a quota system is used this should be roughly in proportion to the number of MECs represented on the housing waiting list and should be monitored on an on-going basis. At the same time, authorities may wish to avoid high concentrations of MECs in particular estates or areas, or in some cases placing different groups near each other that might lead to religious or racial tensions.

In addition, local authorities should liaise with housing associations and co-operatives operating within their areas to ensure that allocations policies and practice do not discriminate against MECs, either directly or indirectly. Authorities should also liaise with housing associations and co-operatives, with regard to the process of allocating tenancies, to encourage a good ethnic mix within voluntary and co-operative housing estates.

Combating Segregation

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 17

Use allocation policies and practices to avoid segregation and ‘ghettoisation’.

A common sense approach to the allocation of social housing to MEC households should be adopted. It is for each authority to decide the appropriate balance required to achieve good estate management. The allocations process should take into account the importance of integrating MEC households into the wider community, the need to

avoid high concentrations for minority groups in any one area, and the preferences of the relevant households regarding location. Issues such as whether existing tenants living in the estate are supportive, whether minority ethnic communities would feel isolated in the area and whether the local authority has support mechanisms in place in that locality should be considered. For instance, it may not be constructive to allocate a dwelling to a MEC household in an estate where anti-social behaviour is common, as this may expose the family to a high risk of experiencing harassment.

4.5 Social Leasing Scheme

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS No. 18

Use social leasing to achieve mixed tenure and integration

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has established a social leasing scheme for the delivery of social housing. This new initiative represents an expansion of the options available to local authorities for the delivery of social housing. Local authorities will lease properties, for the purpose of accommodating households from their housing waiting lists, in accordance with their schemes of letting priorities. The main features of the new arrangements are as follows:

- Local authorities will enter into lease arrangements with property owners for periods of between ten and twenty years;
- Properties will be tenanted, managed and maintained by the local authorities;
- Rent will be guaranteed for the whole lease period.

In addition to leasing properties drawn from the private-rented housing stock, social leasing will be delivered through a number of innovative mechanisms, including using unsold affordable homes and entering into contracts with voluntary housing associations and housing co-operatives. In common with other forms of social housing support, such as the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), allocations must be carefully managed, in order to achieve mixed tenure and integration.

4.6 Responding to Homelessness

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS No. 19

Ensure that homeless counts and homeless action plans and housing supports are inclusive of MECs.

The profile of homeless people from MECs can often be different to that of the rest of the homeless population. Those from MECs may have a greater risk of becoming homeless due to the absence of family and peer support that may be available to others. A study of non-Irish EEA citizens using homeless services illustrated that they were not always well prepared for moving to Ireland - the majority did not secure a job or accommodation before arriving and had a relatively small amount of money considering the cost of housing in Ireland (Homeless Agency, 2006). The absence of English language skills may also be a barrier to accessing homeless services in the community (Homeless Agency forthcoming).

It is important therefore, that homeless counts should include MECs and that, as far as possible, MECs are taken into account when developing homeless action plans and responses to homelessness.

4.7 Management of Social Housing

Following the allocation of a housing unit to a household belonging to a minority ethnic community, good communication is essential in ensuring that the tenancy starts smoothly. At this stage, it is important to bear in mind that new tenants from minority ethnic communities may be less familiar with the local authority housing system than other tenants. Particular care should be taken to ensure that all aspects of the tenancy are clearly explained and any questions answered. The main vehicles for communication at this stage are one-to-one contact with local authority staff, pre-tenancy training courses and tenant handbooks in addition to one-to-one contact with local authority staff.

Pre-Tenancy Training

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 20

Ensure Pre-Tenancy Training is inclusive of minority ethnic communities.

Pre-tenancy training should be provided to all tenants prior to the signing of the tenancy agreement. The training normally comprises 'in-house' training provision, supplemented by presentations or information from other services, e.g. the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and the local Health Service Executive office. Pre-tenancy training should normally cover the following topics:

- rights and responsibilities of tenants
- role and responsibilities of housing provider
- tenant conduct
- details of local area and services
- explanations of how components work, e.g. heating system
- rent setting, payment and arrears retrieval
- basic maintenance issues and policy
- local authority contact points

The benefits of providing pre-tenancy training are that it will help to maximise tenants' understanding of the tenancy agreement and improve the quality of life on estates. It will help to minimise future misunderstandings where breaches of tenancy such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour occur, minimising the associated costs to the local authority of enforcing tenancy conditions where breaches occur (Housing Unit, 2004). Pre-tenancy training also provides an important venue for future neighbours to meet and socialise, which may be important for the integration of minority ethnic communities into local communities. Local authorities should try to foster a friendly and inclusive atmosphere at pre-tenancy training.

Local authorities should review the content of their pre-tenancy training and ensure that it meets the needs of any minority ethnic communities within their tenant populations. Course content relating to anti-social behaviour should highlight the importance of respecting different cultures and the existence of policies on racially-motivated anti-social behaviour.

The information delivered at pre-tenancy training courses should be clear and easy to understand, using visual aids as much as possible. The format of pre-tenancy training should closely follow the Tenant Handbook, enabling any tenants with language difficulties to more easily follow the presentations. Question and answer sessions should be summarised in writing and made available to tenants.

Tenants belonging to minority ethnic groups may be less inclined to attend pre-tenancy training, if language difficulties or cultural differences are an issue. In order to maximise attendance and ensure that everyone benefits from the training, local authorities should consider providing an interpreter if there is a need and liaising with tenants to ensure that the timing is convenient. Tenant liaison officers could also meet with tenants from minority ethnic communities after the training course, to ensure that all of their questions have been answered. Local authorities should monitor the proportion of tenants from minority ethnic communities receiving pre-tenancy training.

There may need to be increased post tenancy support when MEC are allocated through casual lettings to existing local authority estates as there may be expectations amongst tenants that someone from their own community would be allocated a dwelling and this may lead to hostility. This support could take the form of a tenant liaison officer visiting the tenant on a regular basis to listen and act on any of their concerns that may have arisen.

A number of non-governmental organisations such as the Immigrant Council of Ireland and Crosscare organise mentoring programmes between migrant newcomers and established residences. These programmes match local people (Irish and any other long established Irish residents) with migrants through one to one mentoring relationships. The mentor assists the migrant (the mentee) in navigating Irish life, using the time to give practical information on access to social and cultural activities and to provide assistance with accessing services, education and support in learning English. The mentee will provide knowledge and expertise on the migration experience and on another country such as its customs and norms. Local authorities, if aware of such a mentoring programme in their area, may wish to refer migrants who would benefit from such a programme to the service providers.

Welcome Packs

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 21

Provide all new tenants with an information welcome pack for the community they live in, translated if appropriate for minority ethnic communities.

In addition to the tenant handbook, local authorities should consider the provision of information welcome packs for local areas, in conjunction with local Citizens' Information Centres. Welcome packs help tenants who are new to an area to quickly settle-in, by providing information on the key services available in the local area and where they are located. Consideration should be given to translating these packs into the main languages spoken by their tenants or sourcing information in different languages, if a need is identified.

Tenant Handbooks

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 22

Ensure tenant handbooks are inclusive of minority ethnic community issues and translated if appropriate.

Tenant handbooks provide the following opportunities for the local authority:

- to expand on the basic information regarding the terms and conditions of the tenancy which is set out in the tenancy agreement
- to expand and provide further details on the services that tenants can expect to receive including specific standards of services and key performance indicators such as repair response times for different categories of repair
- to provide information on the course of action available to tenants if the standard of service they receive is unsatisfactory, including use of the complaints procedure and the subsequent action they can expect. (Housing Unit, 2004)

Thus, tenant handbooks are an important source of information, to which tenants can refer back, if unsure of anything relating to their home or their tenancy. Providing comprehensive printed information is particularly important for tenants who may not have the necessary degree of fluency in English to fully understand verbal communication of complex information and for tenants who may, due to cultural differences, find it difficult to approach the staff of the local authority housing department.

Tenant handbooks should be easy to understand, using clear, jargon-free and inclusive language. Where technical language is necessary, such as legal terms, this should be clearly explained. Local authorities should also consider translating a soft copy of the tenant handbook into the main languages spoken by their tenants, if a need is identified. The handbook should also contain a clear anti-social behaviour statement that includes racially-motivated abuse within the definition of anti-social behaviour and clear reporting procedures of any such behaviour.

Promoting the Integration of Minority Ethnic Communities into Existing Estates

GOOD PRACTICE NO. 23

Develop measures as need be to promote the inclusion of MECs in existing estates.

MECs may find it particularly difficult to integrate into existing estates and so authorities may wish to consider if additional measures are needed on a case-by-case basis, such as:

- where possible choose supportive neighbours to live close to MEC families
- inform immediate neighbours about the MEC household who are moving in
- introduce MEC household to their neighbours
- introduce MEC household to people who may act as a support on the estate
- if local youth or sports clubs exist, encourage MEC household to allow their children to attend

- ensure that MEC household are visited by a local authority official in their new home and that this official provides a contact number in case of an emergency
- introduce MEC household to the community Garda
- link MEC household into local community support organisations

if racist harassment does arise take immediate action to support MEC families through a rapid recording response system and bring them to the attention of relevant authorities. (Source: Housing Unit, 2003)

Maintenance

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 24

Ensure maintenance policy and practice is sensitive to the requirements of minority ethnic communities.

Undertaking maintenance of the social housing stock inevitably involves visiting people in their homes and this may raise issues regarding cultural sensitivities and preferences. In some cultures, for instance, women may not be comfortable allowing men into their home without the presence of a male relative. There may also be areas within homes that have been segregated and designated men or women only. Maintenance workers (both in-house and external contractors) should be expected to be respectful of these cultural diversity issues and undergo training on the topic if necessary. Mechanism should be in place so that tenants can inform staff of their particular cultural needs in advance.

Anti-Social Behaviour Policies

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 25

Develop procedures to deal with racially motivated anti-social behaviour and have a proactive policy to address racism.

Anti-social behaviour strategies should specifically cover racially-motivated abuse and discriminatory behaviour directed towards members of minority ethnic communities. Such anti-social behaviour can include verbal abuse, criminal damage, violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person and each of these aspects should be incorporated into anti-social behaviour strategies. It is important that the local Gardai are notified of known incidents, including the ethnic liaison officer if one has been appointed. If an incidence is very serious or requires further expertise, the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office should be contacted in Harcourt Square Garda Station, Dublin 2.

It is also important that the MECs are aware of what constitutes anti-social behaviour within an Irish context. There are certain types of behaviour that are acceptable within some cultures, which may not be appropriate within an Irish setting; for example, holding a celebration in the courtyard of an apartment complex late into the night.

It is also worth ensuring that the following measures are in place:

- written procedures for dealing with racial discrimination / harassment,
- recording racially-motivated anti-social behaviour incidents,
- monitoring incidents in developments and using the feedback to inform the future development of anti-social behaviour/racism policies.

See Housing Unit, 2004.

Foster Integration and Celebrate Diversity

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 26

Foster the integration of minority ethnic communities within neighbourhoods and celebrate diversity.

Housing can be an important route to the better integration of MECs in society, at the estate level, the neighbourhood level and also the city or country level. At the estate level, encouraging and facilitating the participation of MEC on tenants' and residents' group should be considered (this might be initiated during pre-tenancy training); at the neighbourhood level a community spirit could be fostered through planning or supporting local events that bring people together to celebrate diversity and interculturalism. At a county or city level, events could be organised to coincide with national or international events, such as European Week Against Racism. Events should be planned to be as inclusive as possible and should be evaluated to aid continuous improvement.

SECTION FIVE

The Private Rented Sector and Homeownership



5.1 Introduction

This final section of the Good Practice Guidelines focuses on the important role that local authorities play in the enforcement of standards in the private rented sector and returns to the issue of information provision, in this case regarding information about private renting and homeownership.

5.2 The Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector is the most common choice of tenure amongst MECs for several reasons including: choice, flexibility and ease of access. There are concerns that some private rented sector accommodation used by MECs may not be meeting the minimum standards required by law. There is a tendency amongst some migrants to opt for the most affordable accommodation and this may make the issue of substandard accommodation greater for this group. It is important for local authorities to try and avoid concentrations of substandard accommodation in certain areas. These concentrations could in time lead to a spatial segregation in certain areas when this substandard accommodation houses large numbers of MEC households in one neighbourhood. The most effective way to prevent this situation is through enforcement of the minimum standards.

Enforcement of Standards

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION No. 27

Consider possible particular needs of MECs in inspections of standards in private rented accommodation and any follow-on enforcement activity.

Local authorities have a statutory role in relation to the inspection of private rented accommodation in order to ensure minimum standards. This activity is funded through the tenancy registration fee payable by landlords to the Private Residential Tenancy Board (PRTB).

Minimum Standards

New minimum standards have been in place since February 2009 (these were supplemented in December 2009) although some measures have a four year phasing in period and will come into effect in February 2013. The standards cover a range of areas in some detail, they are as follows;

- Structural Condition
- Sanitary Facilities
- Heating Facilities
- Heating, cooking and food storage
- Ventilation
- Lighting
- Fire Safety
- Refuse Facilities
- Electricity & Gas

The new standards will result in the phasing out of bedsit accommodation; rent accommodation must now provide a separate bathroom to the main living area. The standards will also provide local authorities with greater enforcement powers. The Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 S.I. No. 462 of 2009 and Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008 S.I. No. 534 of 2008 and the technical guidance document should be consulted for further details.

The Good Practice Guidelines for Local Authorities, Standards in the Private Rented Sector: Strategic Planning, Effective Enforcement (Coates and Feely, 2007), gives guidance on planning inspection and enforcement strategies, with particular advice on how to pursue a targeted approach, (see recommendation no. 6). Inspection and enforcement strategies may need to take a targeted approach to areas known to have a concentration of substandard accommodation, and in doing so they may experience MEC households. In this instance it may be important for those undertaking inspections to inform members of MEC of the purpose of the inspections and to be sensitive to the concerns of migrants, who may not have previous experience of such activity. It may also be important that significant prior notice is given when undertaking inspections in case migrants wish to arrange to have a relative or friend present.

In the development of a targeted approach, local authorities may consider drawing on information from a number of sources. The PRTB database of tenancies to find letting in the areas suspected of having substandard accommodation. A targeted inspection policy that seeks out problem districts would help tackle the creation of pockets of substandard accommodation. It may also be the case that the worst forms of accommodation are not registered and inspection strategies will need to take this into consideration as well.

The building up of links with Community Welfare Officers (CWOs) who, through administering rent supplement, may be aware of substandard accommodation in the local authority area. This can lead to the inspection of hard to reach substandard accommodation. The Department of Social and Family Affairs Circular SWA 09/06 empowers CWOs to refuse to pay rent supplement for a dwelling if they have been informed that it does not comply with standards. CWOs should be encouraged to refer dwellings of this type to the local authority.

The local authority may also wish to advertise in MECs community newspapers or websites to make MECs more aware of the authority's role in the enforcement of standards. These adverts may also provide information on the minimum standards so that both landlord and tenant know their obligations and rights.

This information can be supplemented by liaising with local networks such as migrant support groups in the community. This local knowledge of residential concentrations of minority ethnic groups can also be used as a mechanism for targeting inspection activity.

Box 10 below provides a checklist of different sources of information available to local authorities.

Box 10**Suggested National and Local Sources of Information to Inform the Inspection Planning Process**

National	Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ PRTB database on registered tenancies■ Statistical information provided by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) which identifies concentrations of older properties■ DSFA database of short and long-term Rent Supplement claimants (as made available by the DoEHLG under RAS)■ Housing condition surveys published by central government agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Complaints received from tenants■ Local authority housing applications■ Rent Supplement cases referred by local CWOs■ Local knowledge including the views of Council staff and CWOs■ Internal records regarding outcomes of previous inspections

Source: (Coates and Feely, 2007: 18)

Information for Tenants and Landlords

The Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB) was established in September 2004 to regulate and support the private rented sector by providing efficient and equitable dispute resolution, tenancy registration, and information services to tenants, landlords, the Minister and other stakeholders and to promote best practice in the sector. The PRTB dispute resolution service replaces the courts in relation to the majority of landlord and tenant disputes. Tenancy registration forms and other publications are available on the PRTB website. There is also a tenancy registration frequently asked questions section for landlords and tenants on the website.

The PRTB has produced an information leaflet for landlords and tenants summarising their respective rights and obligations under the Residential Tenancies Act. These landlord and tenant guides are available from the PRTB website (www.prtb.ie) in the following languages:

- English (hard copies also available)
- Irish
- Portuguese
- French
- Russian
- Lithuanian
- Latvian
- Chinese
- Spanish
- Polish
- Slovakian

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS No. 28

Use RAS to achieve mixed tenure and integration

The RAS commenced in July 2005. Under the RAS, local authorities have a responsibility to meet the accommodation needs of rent supplement recipients of 18 months duration who are assessed as having a long-term housing need. On a phased basis, long-term rent supplement recipients will transfer to being accommodated under the RAS. The RAS aims to help local authorities to provide good quality, long-term rented housing for people who need it.

The same considerations in planning allocations in social housing need to be applied when allocating RAS accommodation, such as preventing spatial segregation and creating a balanced social mix. This may not be a significant issue as RAS accommodation is often supplied in individual units within mixed tenure estates.

The process whereby tenants are transferred from rent supplement to RAS involves a number of stages. It is important to ensure that when existing rent supplement accommodation moves to the RAS that it meets the required standards. The positive aspects of the scheme, such as differential rent and ensuring the minimum standards of accommodation need to be outlined for tenants from the outset. MEC households should be informed of their rights and obligations and to be taken through the lease before being signed. It is important that the MEC tenants know of the local authority's role within the RAS, how this role is different from their social housing role, how RAS differs from rent supplement and that tenant purchase does not apply.

5.3 Pathways to Homeownership

GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATION 29

Review the eligibility criteria for home ownership schemes to ensure no unintended biases are preventing MEC households from accessing this option and ensure information provided is clear and comprehensive and appropriate staff are available to explain these to MECs and answer queries

Homeownership is by far the dominant tenure in this country – accommodating about four-out-of-every-five households. There are a number of routes to homeownership, through the open market or through assisted schemes. Information is required regarding the options open to MECs who would like to buy their own home. It is also important that schemes run or managed by local authorities do not inadvertently discriminate against MECs.

Appendices



Appendix One

References

The following are books and articles from which information and ideas have been taken and used in these guidelines and may also be useful to readers who require more information.

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Appendix Two

Terminology and Definitions

There are a number of terms that are used when describing minority ethnic communities, some of which are misunderstood or given false connotations. In this regard, a very useful tool is the *Terminology for Service Providers* publication by the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism available at the website of the Office of the Minister for Integration <http://www.integration.ie/>. This provides a good overview of the terms involved.

What is meant by Minority Ethnic Communities?

Minority Ethnic Communities can also be referred to as Minority Ethnic Groups. In the UK the term ‘Black and minority ethnic group(s)’ is also used extensively. All these terms essentially mean a group whose ethnicity is distinct from that of the majority of the population. The term ‘ethnic minority’ is sometimes used, but the term ‘minority ethnic’ draws attention to the fact that there are majorities and minorities; all with their own ethnicity – white Irish people are the majority ethnic group. Minority Ethnic Communities is the preferred term, but it is noted that people may not identify with or wish to be identified with a particular group.

Integration

This is a complex term there are many different views on what constitutes integration and the approaches taken. There is still an ongoing debate in Ireland as to what approach constitutes integration. In the most simplistic terms, integration can be a one way process (in effect assimilation) where minority communities are expected to adapt or change without any expectation of change from the state or majority communities. On the other hand, integration can be a multi-faceted, intercultural process that requires the state, majority and minority ethnic communities to work together and to make accommodation of diversity, without glossing over challenges and barriers such as extremism or racism.

Interculturalism

Interculturalism is essentially about interaction between majority and minority cultures to foster understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for within society. As the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, (2005) Planning for Diversity, the National Action Plan Against Racism notes *“Developing a more inclusive and intercultural society is about inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought. It is essentially about creating the conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect”*.

Multiculturalism

The term multiculturalism generally refers to a theory of racial, cultural diversity that applies to the demographic make-up of a specific place such as a city or a State. Multiculturalism acknowledges the need for recognition and celebration of different cultures in a society. Multiculturalism differs from one country to another and has had varied success. One criticism has been that it allowed the growth of parallel communities with little interaction between them, whilst not dealing explicitly with issues such as racism and economic deprivation.

Appendix Three

Background Information on Some of the Minority Ethnic Communities Living in Ireland

This information was compiled as part of a FAS publication from 2009 entitled, *Guidelines on interculturalism*. The guidelines provide information for all Fas staff who work in an ethnically diverse environment. Consultation with minority ethnic groups and their representative organisations formed an essential part of this process in developing the guidelines.

Roma

Although precise figures are unavailable there are possibly over 10 million Roma living in Europe today. Precise demographic data is not available due in large part to the stigma associated with the Romani identity and the reluctance of many Roma to identify themselves as such for official purposes, and the absence of Roma as an official category for census purposes.

Roma are not a homogenous group but are characterised by a rich diversity in cultures, languages and way of life. Designations such as Sinti, Manouches, and Tsigani, all refer to particular Roma communities, some of which identify as Roma, some of whom do not but are generally viewed as such by the majority community. Diversity within the Romani communities is, as with all communities, complex and multi-dimensional.

The history of Roma is not well documented, mainly due to the fact that Roma have left behind few written records related to their communal existence. However, it is largely a matter of consensus – particularly on the strength of linguistic evidence – that the Romani people are descended from groups who left the Indian sub-continent towards the end of the first millennium C.E. Down through the centuries Roma appear to have been discriminated against. In recent times Roma were targeted for race-based persecution during the Hitler regime in Germany, 1933-1945, and in Nazi-occupied countries.

With the fall of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989, the situation for the Roma has for the most part worsened. During Communism food and some form of work were guaranteed. With the transition to a market economy in the former Communist states, the Roma have become increasingly marginalised, relative to the majority population, both socially and economically. Dormant anti-Roma attitudes, suppressed under the Communist systems have emerged in the form of societal discrimination and at times violent attacks. Particular problems have been identified by Amnesty International in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Kosovo. This pattern has led to many Roma migrating. Their nomadic way of life and lack of a homeland has resulted in Roma leading a separate life outside the various cultures they inhabit.

Roma form tight family bonds and family roles and obligations are very important. Large extended families usually live together, including married sons and their wives, children and grandchildren. Each family works as a unit, and the work is divided equally although the men tend to make most decisions. The leader of every community is called Bulibasa, Shero Rom or Puro Rom. All members share in the punishment, glory or shame of each member of the clan. Becoming tainted is extremely important because it causes the entire clan to become outcasts. The situation can occur by marrying a non-Roma or by breaking a taboo.

The Roma community is divided into nomadic people and those who are settled. However most Roma do not have the intention of moving. Children grow up early in Roma society and do not generally experience the long adolescent period that is common for most Western teenagers. Roma people tend to marry young, but marriage usually does not take place before the age of fourteen. Some communities practice arranged marriages while others allow courtship. Marriage may be arranged or undertaken according to practical, economic and/or social considerations of the family or clan. The newly weds traditionally live with the groom's parents until they have several children of their own, and the family is satisfied with their adult behaviour and skills, at which time they are allowed to establish a semi-nuclear household.

Roma women wear long, colourful skirts because traditionally a woman's legs must not show. Clothes and jewellery can indicate status in the gypsy community. However with modern influences there are immense variations in the way people dress.

There are approximately 7,000 Roma currently living in Ireland.

Language and Communication Patterns

The Romani language is spoken by millions of Europeans, making it one of the principal minority languages of Europe. Romani is an Indic language, closely related to modern Hindi. While this language is common to all Roma groups there are variations due to influences from the majority language in the region where they are currently living or from which they originated. Most Roma people from Romania speak Romani and Romanian languages. However, Roma people from other countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland may speak only Romani. 95% of Roma women cannot read or write in any language, while 85% of the Roma population in general is illiterate.

Naming conventions

Roma people keep their parents' family name, either mother or father. Common names are Ghiocel, Rostas, Gabor, Manica, Crisma. With Roma from Romania the name order is the same as in Romanian society where the family name comes first followed by the personal name. But this varies with different groups and depends on the originating country.

Belief System

Roma often adapt to the faiths of the countries in which they live. Among the Roma can be found Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Muslims, and Buddhists. Orthodox is the most common among Romanian Roma. However many Roma prefer to carry out religious observances in their own homes or in the context of folk observances. Formal religion is often supplanted by faith in the supernatural.

Diet

For Roma from Romania the diet is very similar to the Romanian diet. All foods are allowed unless specifically prohibited by their religion; for example Muslims do not eat pork.

Festivals and Holy Days

The main festivals and holy days celebrated are those which are celebrated by the community in which they live. Ceremonial events such as weddings, funerals and the birth of children are important community events and the celebrations can continue for very long periods.

Useful contacts

Roma Solidarity Group, Pavee Point, North Charles Street, Dublin 1
Email: romacommunity@yahoo.com
www.romasupport.ie www.romnews.com

Sikhism

The word 'Sikh' in the Punjabi language means 'disciple'. Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak Devji (1469 to 1538) over five hundred years ago in the Punjab region of Northern India. There are over twenty million Sikhs mainly concentrated in their homeland, Punjab. However, substantial Sikh populations exist throughout the rest of India and the world. At present there are around 1,000 Sikhs in Ireland.

Naming conventions

The common naming structure is first name, followed by a Sikh name (Male members of the Sikh religion use the name Singh (lion) as their middle or last name, while females use the name Kaur (princess), followed by a post or traditional name.

Belief System

Sikhs believe in one God and the teachings on the Ten Gurus enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. Sikh's place of worship is called 'Gurudwara', the door and abode of Guru. The Sikh teachings are based on the principles of Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humankind. Many Sikhs keep a special room in their home where the holy book is placed. The Guru Granth Sahib is opened daily for prayers and closed at the end of the day after reciting prayers. It is written in Punjabi and chanted daily in all Sikh temples to classical Indian music. Sikhs wear a turban which some Arab nationals also wear, and this can create confusion. Sikhs start wearing the turban from the age of eight onwards and continue until the end of their lives.

A baptised Sikh, called Khalsa, must observe a strict code of conduct. He must:

- worship only one Almighty God
- recite five prescribed banis (hymns) every day
- learn Punjabi language and read Guru Granth Sahib
- wear and observe the significance of the five religious symbols of faith.

These are personal objects sacred to Sikhs and are known as 'Kakkars' or Five Ks:

1. *Kesh*: uncut hair representing spirituality. Sikhs do not cut hair, beard or remove their turban.

2. *Kangha*: a semi-circular wooden comb which fixes the uncut hair, symbolises cleanliness.
3. *Kara*: a stainless steel bracelet symbolises unity of the Sikh brotherhood, self-restraint and link to God,
4. *Kirpan*: a short sword, for defence of truth and justice, and emblem of courage and commitment obtained by mercy of God.
5. *Kaech*: a type of shorts which represents purity of moral character.

In Sikhism, there are four cardinal sins (Kurehats). Sikhs should not:

1. cut their hair,
2. commit adultery,
3. use tobacco or other drugs,
4. eat ritually-slaughtered meat, such as halal meat.

Diet

For Sikhs this is a matter for individuals. However, alcohol and halal or kosher meals are prohibited and Sikhs are unlikely to eat beef or pork. Some Sikhs are vegetarian but many eat chicken, lamb and fish.

Festivals and Holy Days

Sikhs celebrate both religious and social festivals. The religious festivals are called Gurbpurbs. The Sikh festival calendar is as follows:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Gurbpurb</i>	<i>Other festivals</i>
December/January March/April	Birthday Guru Gobind Singh	Vaishaki Day

Useful contacts

Sikh community, Sikh Temple, 78 Serpentine Avenue, Dublin 4
Tel: 01 667 1588 www.irishsikhcouncil.com

Islam

Islam was founded in the early 7th Century CE by the prophet Mohammed, who was born around 570 in Mecca, modern day Saudi Arabia. The basis of Islam is a series of divine revelations in which the voice of the archangel Gabriel revealed the word of God to Mohammed. His first revelation happened at the age of 40 and these happened throughout his life and were originally committed to memory and then written down. This text forms the Qur'an (the name literally means 'recitation'). Mohammed died in 632, but the new religion continued its rapid spread, reaching all of Arabia by 634, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and western Iran by 642, and most of Iran and Afghanistan by 656. Not long after the death of Mohammed, Islam suffered a major schism that divided the faith into two main sects: the Sunnis and Shiites. The largest Muslim group consist of Sunni Muslims who make up 90% of the world's Muslims.

Islam is the second most popular faith in the world with over a thousand million adherents. There are around 25,000 Muslims in Ireland. Muslims in Ireland originate from the Middle East, South Asia, North Africa, Central and Eastern Africa, Eastern Europe, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan. In addition there are a number of Irish converts to Islam.

Muslims differ from generation to generation, culture to culture, some are more devout than others and interpretations and practices of the faith are numerous. It may also be the case that the individual is Muslim by name only and chooses not to practise their religion. Although many Muslims will be comfortable shaking hands or making physical contact, many may not. There is an opinion among some Muslims that touching between men and women should be avoided. You may come across Muslim men and women who do not like to shake hands with members of the opposite sex. If you are unsure then it is advisable to wait and see if they extend their hands.

Naming Conventions

For men the common naming system is a religious name (e.g. Mohammed) followed by a personal name (Yusuf) and the family name. For women the common naming system is personal name (e.g. Jameela) followed by family name.

Belief System

Conversion to Islam is achieved by a profession of faith in front of two witnesses (the shahada). This is the first of the Five Pillars of Islam, the five tenets which guide Muslims in their daily life:

1. *Shahada (the profession of faith)* ‘There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet’. This is the fundamental tenet of Islam.
2. *Salah (the call to prayer)* Muslim men and women are required to offer five daily prayers in the direction of Mecca. Prayers can be performed anywhere if a mosque is not available and Muslims often travel with a prayer mat. Reciting prayers follows a procedure of bowing and prostrating and typically takes between 5 and 15 minutes depending on the individual. Prayer times are calculated according to the movement of the sun and take place at dawn, midday, late afternoon, dusk and night. A prayer is preceded by an act of purification, the ‘wudhu’. The ‘wudhu’ involves washing the face, arms (up to the elbows) and feet. The main congregational prayer ‘Jumu’ah’, is held on Friday between 1pm and 2pm and in most denominations its observance in a mosque is mandatory.
3. *Zakat (the giving of alms to the poor)* This was a fundamental part of the social teaching of Islam.
4. *Sawm (fasting)* Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, commemorates the month when the Qur’an was revealed to Mohammed. In a demonstration of Muslims’ renewal of faith, they are asked to abstain from food, drink, chewing and smoking from dawn to dusk for an entire month. At the end of each day during Ramadan, Muslims traditionally break their fast with dates and water before proceeding to eat a meal. Ramadan is a time when Muslims who are fasting may decline an invitation to lunch or to some other function involving food.
5. *Haji (pilgrimage)* The pilgrimage to Mecca is the ultimate profession of faith for the devout Muslim. Ideally the pilgrim should go to Mecca during the last month of the year, Zuul-Hijja, to join with Muslims all over the world in the pilgrimage and subsequent feast. On the pilgrimage, the pilgrim wears a white seamless robe and walks around the Kaaba, the black stone in the centre of the Grand Mosque, seven times. The returned pilgrim can be addressed as hajji.

To Muslims, Allah is the same God as the Christian and Jew worship. Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus are all recognised as prophets. Jesus is not recognised as the son of God. According to Islam, all these prophets partly received the word of God, but only Mohammed received the complete revelation. Together with Judaism and Christianity, Islam is one of the three Religions of the Book.

Diet

There are certain restrictions as to what a Muslim can/can’t eat. Meat must always be ‘halal’. Such meat has been slaughtered according to Islamic practice. If ‘halal’ meat cannot be sourced then Muslims are allowed to eat Kosher meat. Pork is not eaten at all by Muslims, nor is food with alcohol content, or the blood of any animal. Muslims do not take any alcoholic drinks.

Festivals/Holy Days

There are only two Muslim festivals set down in Islamic law: Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha. But there are also several other special days which Muslims celebrate.

1. The end of Ramadan is marked with Eid ul-Fitr, the Festival of Breaking the Fast. It is traditionally a time when extended families congregate and presents are given to children. Although this holiday extends over three days, many Muslims typically take a single day holiday. In Islamic countries it is a public holiday.
2. Eid ul-Adha marks the end of the Hajj or holy pilgrimage, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. However it is celebrated by all Muslims, not just those who are on the pilgrimage.
3. Friday Prayers: Most Muslim men attend the mosque on Friday afternoons for obligatory congregational prayers.

Useful Contacts

Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland
19, Roebuck Road, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14
Tel: 01 208 0000 www.islamireland.ie

Nigeria

Nigeria is located on the west coast of Africa bordering the Atlantic ocean. Nigeria is easily the most populous nation in Africa and one of the fastest growing on earth. The estimated population is 130.2 million (UN 2005). The inhabitants are divided into about 250 ethnic groups. The largest of these groups are the Hausa and Fulani (29%) in the north, the Yoruba (21%) in the southwest, and the Igbo (18%) in the southeast. Other peoples include the Kanuri (4%), Nupe and Tiv (2.5%) in the north, the Edo in the south, and the Ibibio-Efik (3.5%) and Ijaw (10%) of the southeast.

Following independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria maintained the British model of administration. In 1999 Nigeria returned to civilian rule with the first presidential win of President Olusegun Obasanjo, after nearly 30 years of military regimes. He was re-elected in 2003. The transition to democracy has not been an easy one. An OPEC member, Nigeria is the largest oil producer in Africa and the eleventh largest in the world. The country is a major oil supplier of both Western Europe and the

United States. Although Nigeria has substantial oil wealth it is one of the world's poorest nations, with more than 70% of the population living in poverty. Nigeria's economy is heavily dependent on oil sector revenues, which account for nearly 80% of government revenues.

Nigerian social life is very communal. The extended family is very important in Nigerian society and people are generally used to having a lot of family, friends and people around them. In general old people are looked after in their children's homes. It is customary to acknowledge elders and to show them respect. It is not untypical for parents to choose a spouse for their children when they reach marriageable age.

Language and Communication Patterns

The official language of Nigeria is English and each ethnic group speaks its own language. Voice tones are an important aspect of communication. Yoruba people in particular tend to use high voice tone. Voices are often raised in discussions but this does not necessarily mean that people are angry at each other. Eye-to-eye contact is not considered appropriate between young people and older people; it is seen as a sign of disrespect.

Naming conventions

Nigerians consider three things when naming a child; the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy, the liking for a particular name and the inheritance. Family and ethnic traditions influence patterns of naming. Each member of a family, parents, grandparents, relatives and even friends may provide a separate name for the child and the list of names a person has may often be very long, up to as many as twelve names. The structure of a name consists of many traditional names followed by the Christian or Muslim name and lastly by the surname or family name. The name used by the individual is a matter of personal choice; it may be their traditional name or their Christian or Muslim name and indeed a person may be known by different names in different contexts. It is not uncommon for a woman to retain her maiden name. Normally, a woman will be addressed by her own first name, with reference to her relationship to her child or by her husband's name.

Belief System

There are three major religious groupings in Nigeria – Christianity (40%), Islam (50%) and African Traditional beliefs (10%). Elements of African Traditional beliefs are important for many people regardless of their stated religion. Belief in witchcraft and voodoo is prevalent. The imposition of Sharia (Islamic) Law in five out of Nigeria's 26 states has led to thousands of Christians fleeing. Interfaith violence is said to be rooted in poverty, unemployment and competition for land. In general Christians tend to be strict in their doctrines though there are obvious variations from one church

to another. Muslims also tend to be strict in their religious practice. The Muslim population live mostly in the north, while Christians live almost exclusively in the south.

Diet

There is no specific diet in Nigeria and no specific foods are forbidden. The most common foods are rice, yams, cassava, meat, fish, and vegetable stews, which are prepared according to people's own taste. Muslims do not eat pork or pork products. Each ethnic group has particular foods for particular special occasions.

Festivals and Holy Days

The most important festivals are Christmas, Easter, The main Muslim Festivals, May Day, Children's Day celebrated on May 27th, Nigerian Independence Day, which is celebrated on October 4th.

Useful Contacts

ANASI (Nigerian Solidarity Group)
c/o Cairde, 19 Belvedere Place, Dublin 1
www.nigerian.ie

Nigerian Association Ireland Ltd. (NAI)
c/o Comhlamh, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 1
www.africultures.com

Appendix Four

Towards Integration: Dublin City Council Charter

Dublin City Council included this Charter in its report *Towards Integration – A City Framework*. It describes the integration and diversity framework which will be incorporated in to the city council's work, by the development of integration measures and the promotion of social inclusion. The charter commits Dublin City Council to being a key driver for integration in the city in partnership with other agencies and will establish the city administration as a focal point of integration in common with other European cities.

Dublin City Council will:

- Act as a focal point for Integration in the city through strong civic and political leadership and build a strong knowledge base through active participation in local/national/international networks.
- As lead agency of the City Development Board, continue to promote and support the implementation of the integration process in partnership with all stakeholders national and local, state and non-governmental and the social partners.
- Establish an Annual Integration Dialogue and facilitate and support Integration Forums at area level.
- Establish a Migrant Forum as a channel of communication on migrant issues at city level.
- Promote and support the development of a City Intercultural Centre as centre of culture, learning and exchange, and training resource.
- Progress the implementation of Traveller Inter Agency Initiatives on employment, education, health and delivery of programme of accommodation.
- Continue to build supports for, and the capacity of, ethnic-led organisations to ensure full participation in economic social cultural and political life of the city.
- Establish integration as a core element of business processes and strategic planning in the organisation. Review and adapt organisation delivery of services

and the accessibility of information for the migrant population particularly in areas of housing, recruitment and training, customer services, public works and service contracts.

- Commit to international best practice, and action through the UNESCO Charter and European Coalition of Cities against Racism and the implementation of the 10 point plan, and as an active member of international networks.
- Monitor and review activities, progress and outcomes and report on them

Appendix Five

DEHLG Circular SHIP 2010/19 on Access to Housing Supports for Immigrants



Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



Re: Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals

Dear Director/Town Clerk,

On foot of an increasing number of queries in relation to access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals, I have been asked by the Minister for Housing and Local Services to clarify this advice to ensure that there is a consistent and equitable approach being taken by housing authorities. Regard should therefore be had to the following in assessing a household's eligibility and need for social housing support. This circular is mostly a consolidation of guidance on access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals and as such replaces Circular HPS 4/08, Circular N14/08 and Circular SHIP 2/2010. The two main changes to policy set out in this Circular relate to access to social housing support for non-EEA nationals, who are **not** classed as either refugees, programme refugees or who have subsidiary protection status.

The following rules will now apply to such persons -

- a non-EEA national applicant for social housing support must have a Stamp 4 endorsement for at least 5 years in order to be eligible for consideration for social housing support; and
- the spouse and/or dependents of an eligible non-EEA national applicant, who are usually given a 'Stamp 3' endorsement, must have that endorsement for at least 5 years in order to be eligible for consideration as part of an application for social housing support.

In the context of EEA nationals, this circular consolidates advice given in previous circulars on the entitlement such persons to access social housing support. In general EEA nationals are entitled to seek housing support from a housing authority on the same basis as an Irish citizen if they have been residency in Ireland for longer than 3 months and are working. Section 2 sets out the detail of these requirements including the particular rules that apply to –

- Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, and
- Non-EEA spouses of EEA nationals.

A description of the main stamp endorsements and a sample of the categories of person to whom these may be granted is attached for your information at Appendix 1.

1. Determining a household's residency status

All households applying for social housing support must have a legal right to remain in the State on a long term basis in order to be considered. This right to remain is determined by legislation set down by the Department of Justice and Law Reform. Rules in relation to residency can be broken down into two main areas:

- European Union (EU) based legislation governing the movement of EEA¹ (European Economic Area) nationals and their families within EEA States; and
- Mostly national legislation governing the access of non-EEA nationals to Ireland and their residency rights thereafter.

In general immigration stamps (which are endorsed on a person's passport), in conjunction with the Certificate of Registration issued by Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB), are evidence of permission to be in the State. Attached at Appendix 2 is a copy of a Certificate of Registration for your information. As you will note it is a credit card size document which should be easily recognisable. Authorities, in examining stamps and registration certificates as part of their assessment of need, should note the following points –

- the expiry date on the registration card should match the expiry date endorsed in a non-EEA nation passport;
- a person granted refugee status in the State will not have a passport for you to examine; and

¹ The EEA includes the following EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom – and the following non-EU States: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

2. EEA NATIONALS

The primary EU legislation governing the movement of EEA-nationals between Member States is the European Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. That Directive was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons)(No. 2) Regulations 2006 and 2008. It replaced a number of earlier EU instruments governing free movement rights and it replaced Articles 10 and 11 of EC Regulation 1612/68 on the freedom of movement of workers within the Community.

The most important effect of Regulation 1612/68 is Article 9 which establishes that, after the initial 3 months residence, any Union citizen who is working in the State has the same entitlements to housing as any Irish national.²

Any EEA-national therefore is entitled to apply for social housing support from housing authorities in accordance with the following criteria;

- 1) they are in employment/self-employed in the State; or
- 2) where they are not currently working/employed it is because -
 - they are temporarily unable to work because of illness/accident;
 - they are recorded as involuntarily unemployed after having been employed for longer than a year, and they have been registered as a job-seeker with Department of Social and Family Affairs and FAS.

After 5 years legal residence in the State an EEA citizen is entitled to seek permanent residency.

² The basis of the residency determination in such circumstances is generally on the proviso that the person has sufficient resources to support themselves and their family; not having sufficient resources being defined by the 2006 Regulations as being where the union citizen or their dependants would qualify under Part 3 of the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005, if a claim were made.

Non-EEA Spouses of EEA Nationals

In relation to non-EEA nationals that are married to EEA nationals, a European Court of Justice ruling in 2008 clarified that these persons are entitled to the same rights of free movement under Directive 2004/38/EC on the basis of family relationship alone irrespective of when and where the marriage has taken place or of how the non-EEA spouse entered the host Member State. This means that a non-EEA national married an EEA national can be considered to have the same rights and entitlements as afforded their EEA-national spouse in relation to accessing social housing supports i.e. if the EEA national is assessed as being entitled to support then their spouse will have the same entitlements.

Bulgarian and Romanian Nationals

The rules for EEA nationals apply to citizens of all Member States within the EEA with two exceptions. For Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, these rules apply slightly differently. As a general rule, social housing support is not made available to those persons who are working in Ireland under only an employment permit; regardless of nationality. The same rule is applied to Bulgarian and Romanian nationals.

On 17 December 2008, the Government announced its decision that from 1 January 2009 it would continue to restrict access to the Irish labour market for nationals of Bulgaria and Romania. Bulgarian and Romanian nationals therefore still require work permits to take up employment in the State. Notwithstanding this, however, the requirement to enter employment in accordance with a work permit only applies to the first continuous twelve months of employment in the State. At the end of this twelve-month period, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals are free to work in Ireland without any further need for a work permit.

In that context, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals, who have had an employment permit for a continuous 12 months period are now free to work in Ireland without a permit, will be entitled to apply for social housing support from housing authorities in the same way as any other EEA national in accordance with the criteria applied to an EEA national resident in Ireland i.e. that they are in employment/self-employed in the State; or where they are not currently working/employed it is because they are temporarily unable to work because of illness/accident or they are recorded as involuntarily unemployed after having been employed for longer than a year, and have been registered as a job-seeker with Department of Social Protection and FAS.

3. NON-EEA NATIONALS

The legislation governing the residency of non-EEA national in the Irish State is extensive and complex. Ranging from the Immigration Act 2004 and various Visa Orders, in respect of general immigration matters, to the Immigration Act 1999, as amended, which governs amongst other things deportation proceedings. Statutory instruments that are also included in this are the Refugee Act 1996, as amended, EU Directive 2004/83/EC [which provides the legal basis for subsidiary protection status in Member States] and the various statutory instruments which give detail to these Acts/Directives. Non-EEA nationals can be divided into a number of sub-groups which are defined essentially by the basis for the persons stay in the State:

- asylum seekers [Refugee Act 1996];
- refugees, including programme refugees [Refugee Act 1996];
- those granted subsidiary protection status; and
- other non-EEA nationals.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum seekers are essentially persons who are seeking refugee status in the State. They have **no rights or entitlements** in relation to accessing social housing support as asylum seekers. They are permitted to enter and reside in the State until such time as their application for refugee status has been considered and a decision is made. While awaiting that decision they are not entitled to work in the State or to carry on any business, trade or profession.

If granted refugee status, they will be given a 'declaration' of their status as a refugee (which is a statement in writing) by Minister for Justice and Law Reform and thereby acquiring the same entitlement to apply for social housing support as any other refugee.

Refugees

Those that have been granted status as refugees in the State are entitled to the same access to social housing support as an Irish citizen as per the terms of Section 3 of the Refugee Act 1996. Section 3 provides that a refugee for whom a declaration is in force is entitled to receive, subject to any terms and conditions applicable to Irish citizens, the same social welfare benefits to which Irish citizens are entitled. Social welfare benefits are defined in the Refugee Act as including any payment or services provided for in or under the Social Welfare Acts, the Health Acts 1947 to 1994, and the Housing Acts 1966 to 2009. Therefore a refugee is entitled to seek social housing support from a housing authority. As with any applicant, Irish, EEA or non-EEA, in order to be eligible the applicant must meet all of the other eligibility criteria for social housing support.

Programme Refugees

These are a particular subset of refugees who are sometimes called resettlement refugees and who are given permission to enter and remain in the State. The entry and residence of these particular refugees in the State is a product of commitments made by Ireland to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Arrangements for the resettlement of these refugees are co-ordinated by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) and the Office of the Minister for Integration. In accordance with Section 24 of the Refugee Act 1996, these programme refugees are entitled to the same rights and privileges granted to other refugees under Section 3 of that Act, as detailed above.

Subsidiary Protection Status

This form of residency was introduced in Ireland in 2006 on foot of an EU Directive 2004/83/EC which provides for minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the context of the protection granted. This Directive is transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006 [SI No. 518 of 2006].

This Regulation is applied to persons who do not qualify as refugees but in respect of whom it can be shown that, if returned to their country of origin, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm [serious harm being defined as: death penalty or execution; torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and serious and individual threat to a civilian's life by reasons of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict].

Where it is determined that an applicant is to be given subsidiary protection status, the Minister for Justice and Law Reform will give the applicant leave to remain in the State. This permission is usually for 3 years and is renewable unless compelling reasons of national security or public order require otherwise. As per Article 19 of the 2006 Regulations, those who have been granted subsidiary protection status are given the same entitlements to access State supports as given to refugees under Section 3 of the 1996 Refugee Act i.e. they are entitled to apply for social housing support.

Other Non-EEA Nationals

All non-EEA nationals' need some form of permission to remain in the State which is usually in the form of an endorsement in a passport confirming the conditions and period of time for which permission to remain in the State has been granted. In addition, in relation to social housing support in particular, there is a requirement that the


basis of that permission to remain be long term. The endorsement that is generally acceptable for consideration for social housing support is the Stamp 4, however, members of a household with only a Stamp 3 may be considered to be eligible in specific circumstances, as set out below.

Non-EEA nationals who have been in receipt of a Stamp 4 endorsement for at least 5 years prior to application are eligible to be considered for social housing support. Their current Stamp endorsement must be in date.

Non-EEA nationals who are in receipt of a Stamp 3 endorsement for at least 5 years prior to application can be considered in an application for social housing support where that Stamp 3 has been granted to a spouse or dependent of a non-EEA national who has been in receipt of a Stamp 4 endorsement for at least 5 years prior to application as set out above.

For further information or enquiries in relation to this circular, please contact Lisa Clifford, Social Housing (MIR) at lisa_clifford@environ.ie.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Lewis', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Eddie Lewis
Social Housing (Modernisation, Integration & Regulation)

Appendix 1

Immigration Stamp Endorsements (from Department of Justice and Law Reform)

Note: This an outline of the main immigration stamps as currently used by the immigration authorities. The immigration stamps, in conjunction with the Certificate of Registration issued by GNIB, are evidence of permission to be in the State. They are not an indicator of, nor an interpretation of, legal entitlements other than those explicitly set out in the stamps.

The immigration authorities have the right to assign or refuse immigration stamps to the various categories of persons as appropriate.

The information below is an indicative list of categories of persons who may be granted permission to remain in the State but it is not exhaustive. This table does not give any assurance that a person in one of the categories will obtain the immigration stamp indicated. The immigration authorities have the right to grant or refuse permission to remain on a case by case basis.

STAMP 1

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on conditions that the holder does not enter employment unless the employer has obtained a permit, does not engage in any business or profession without the permission of the Minister for Justice and Law Reform and does not remain later than a specified date.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 1 Endorsement

Non-EEA national issued with a work permit

Non-EEA national issued a Green Card Permit

Non-EEA national who have been granted permission to operate a business in the State

Working Holiday Authorisation holder

STAMP 1A

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland for the purpose of full time training with a named body until a specified date. Other employment is not allowed.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 1A Endorsement

Non-EEA national studying accountancy

STAMP NUMBER 2

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not engage in any business or profession other than casual employment (defined as 20 hours per week during school term and up to 40 hours per week during school holidays) and does not remain later than a specified date. Also the person has no recourse to public funds unless otherwise provided.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 2 Endorsement

Non-EEA national attending a full time course of study

STAMP NUMBER 2A

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession, has no recourse to public funds and does not remain later than a specified date.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 2A Endorsement

Non-EEA national attending course of study not recognised by the Department of Education and Science

STAMP NUMBER 3

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on conditions that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession and does not remain later than a specified date.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 3 Endorsement

Non-EEA visitor

Non-EEA retired person of independent means

Non-EEA Minister of Religion and Member of Religious Order

Non-EEA spouse/dependant of employment permit holder (Stamp 4)

STAMP NUMBER 4

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland until a specified date.

Categories of Person who may receive a Stamp 4 Endorsement

Non-EEA family member of EEA citizen

Non-EEA spouse of Irish citizen

Refugee

Non-EEA person granted family reunification under the Refugee Act 1996 Programme refugee

Non-EEA parent of Irish citizen child where parent was granted permission to remain in the State

Non-EEA family member of EU citizen where family member qualifies under the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 (S.I. 656 of 2006)

Sample GNIB Certificate of Registration Card

Garda National
Immigration Bureau OF REG
Buaro Naisiunta Inimice OF REG
An Chard Siochana CERTIFICATE OF REG
CERTIFICATE OF REG

Name
Sample Document

Nationality Irish Date of Birth 01/01/1970 Sex: M Stamp No: Stamp 4

GNIB No. 16877 Dept No. 69/103152/01 Expiry Date: 24/10/2002

Registration Office: G.N.I.B.

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

GNIB 001

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

This certificate indicates that the person named on the certificate has registered with the Garda Síochána as required by Irish Immigration Law.

This Certificate is the property of the Garda National Immigration Bureau.

THIS IS NOT AN IDENTITY CARD

Other Publications

RESEARCH REPORTS

- Housing Policy Review 1990-2002
- Mixed Tenure Estates: Development, Design, Management & Outcomes
- Profiles of Households Accommodated by Dublin City Council
- The Housing Management Initiatives Grants Scheme: An Evaluation
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance, Rent Supplement: Implications for the Implementation of the Rental Accommodation Scheme
- Supporting Low-income Homebuyers in Ireland, 1990-2003: Profile, Policy and Issues
- Traveller-Specific Accommodation: Practice, Design and Management
- Pilot centre heating and insulation scheme report

POLICY DISCUSSION SERIES

- Regenerating Local Authority Housing Estates: Review of Policy and Practice
- Promoting Improved Standards in the Private Rented Sector: Review of Policy and Practice
- Traveller Accommodation in Ireland: Review of Policy and Practice

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Housing Refugees
- Managing in Partnership: Enabling Tenant Participation in Housing Estate Management
- Preventing and Combating Anti-Social Behaviour
- Repair and Maintenance of Dwellings
- Rent Assessment, Collection, Accounting and Arrears Control
- Training and Information for Tenants
- Void Management
- Regenerating Estates, Rebuilding Vibrant Communities
- Standards in the Private Rented Sector: Strategic Planning, Effective Enforcement
- Management and Maintenance of Traveller-Specific Accommodation

All publications are available on our website www.housing.ie



Tithíocht agus Pobail Inbhuanaithe

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