



Social landlords and diversity

**Vipul Thacker, Group Director, Central Services at Notting Hill
Genesis**

*Why London landlords do not reflect their diverse communities
(Board, Executives and Senior Managers)?*



**Million
Dollar
Question!**

Big Picture



- Gender – Good progress – but still, have “traditionally male dominated’ areas such as Development, Repairs, Asset Management.
- LGBTQ and Disability – Simply not enough data
- Race, colour, ethnicity – We are not reflecting the communities we serve at all levels.

In light of BLM, I will concentrate on this area – although principles can be extended across all diversity strands.



Ethnicity and Race Diversity - Facts

Inside Housing data (2017)

- Only 3 BAME chief executives (out of 64 associations to respond)
- Only 4.5% of all executives came from a diverse background.

Nov 2019 – seen some progress...

- Board representation had risen to 13.6% (6.8%: 2017)
- Executive representation to 9.1% (4.5%: 2017)

Altair report (Nov 2019) - a survey of the largest 50 housing associations in England

- Only 7% of board members and 5% of executives are BME.
- 40 of those organisations do not provide public information

Ethnicity and Race Diversity – London, Nov 2017



- G15 - higher than national average BME representation
 - 12% of board members and 10% of executives.
- Of the 12 G15 organisations, four organisations with no BAME representation at board or executive level
- Overall representation is 10% at board level (excluding BAME executives on the board).

London BAME population (2011 census) – 40.2%		
Nov 2019	Board	Exec
Average G15	12%	10%
Top 3	29%	26%
Bottom 6	3%	3%

London

- London is the most diverse city in the world.
- Communities come to live, work and settle in London – so there ought not to be dearth of talent.
- Our ‘customers’ (residents) are BAME.
- Attracting talent is not an issue
- BAME talent is not escaping
- But
- We have difficulty in getting talent up the organisation



Why?

- Is this a key priority for Board and Executive?
- Need to do more than development programmes
- Leadership is key
 - Address the structural changes – remove obstacles, and tackle mindsets.
 - Address the bias that is engrained in processes

And...

- Weave it into
 - Governance
 - Transparent reporting,
 - Regulatory and Financial review.



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Networking as a means of overcoming challenges

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Challenges faced by diverse groups- a personal perspective

I have worked in the housing sector now nearly 30 years

Joined as a PATH trainee- The programme introduced me early on to the benefit of a support group to share experiences.

Worked in various senior roles in London, Bristol, Birmingham

Chair of a couple of Housing Associations in the past

Involved with the Nat Fed and regional groups

Co-founder Leadership 2025

Why share this background?

Challenges faced as a survivor of the housing industry

Pressure to prove your worth continually

Burden of Ethnic minority leader

Glass cliff

Always coming second

Going through the motion

Confronting overt racism

Losing confidence- periods of loneliness, self doubt

Resilience, drive and ambition

Disillusionment, backing yourself , going for broke and discovering a new world

Making positive difference on unimaginable scale

Benefit of networks

Support and champion

Source of strength, uplift and inspiration

Walked in your shoes and understand the unique experience of a minority leader in mainstream institutions

Understand glass cliff

Sharing of ideas and coping mechanism

Critical friend

Now opportunity to galvanise and change the landscape

Practical examples

Lunch and Learn sessions - Harrogate

BME leaders' network forum

Leadership 2025

Unify

Opportunity

Post BLM if sufficiently resourced and galvanised could be a major catalyst to drive cultural change to address structural barriers in the housing industry.

I am hopeful