

# Deeds Not Words

## Progress Update and Anti Racism Wales

January 2024

## Introduction

Linc is committed to being an inclusive business and our vision is 'creating the right environment for people to flourish.' We are committed to tackling injustice, and to be leaders in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Linc signed up to the 'Deeds not Words' pledge from housing equalities charity Tai Pawb in 2020, which outlines our commitment tackling racial inequality. We have shared below the progress we are making against the commitments set out in the plan.

In June 2022, the Welsh Government launched its Anti Racist Wales Action Plan. This was the result of significant insight and efforts from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, about how to make Wales a stronger and fairer nation. The Plan was developed in collaboration with a wide range of communities and organisations across the country. The Welsh Government recognised the need to jointly shape the goals and actions with ethnic minority people and valuing people's lived experience as one of the key values that underpins the Plan.

The first version of the plan highlights what will be done from June 2022 – June 2024, before work commences to develop the next phase. Linc is currently finalising its merger plans with Pobl Group from April 2024. We are committed to playing our role in a more equal Wales. As part of the new group from April 2024, EDI continues to play a central and significant role. We want to ensure we are working with colleagues and customers with lived experience, who can help shape our future plans. We have highlighted how we are progressing against this plan below as we continue our anti racist journey.



## This is our progress so far – Deeds not Words.

January 2023 – December 2024.

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

#### We pledged to:

Our Commitment	What we have been doing
<p>Adopt the All Wales Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This tool was adopted and is now complete. Linc continue to consider the Welsh Government guidance in relation to Covid-19.</li> </ul>
<p>Commit to wellbeing/psychological and other support to Black, Asian and other minority ethnic staff who might feel affected or vulnerable right now</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linc’s Wellbeing Officer, situated in our HR team, has continued to lead a range of initiatives. This has included counselling, an employee assistance programme and occupational health support, 121 support, as well as signposting on other wellbeing issues such as financial management.</li> </ul>
<p>Investigate reasons for overcrowding and worse housing conditions amongst some BAME groups. Start acting on findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are now measuring EDI against a number of service areas, and this is growing each quarter and reported to our Executive Team and Board. EDI data is routinely collected and audited for new customers. We understand our data gaps for existing customers; and plan to utilise our customer portal to fill those gaps during 2024.</li> </ul>

## Improve ethnic diversity of board and staff at all levels -

### We pledged to:

Our Commitment	What we have been doing
<p>Adopt the Rooney Rule to improve recruitment of people from different ethnic backgrounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We adopted the Rooney Rule in 2021 and refreshed our recruitment and equality and diversity policy. All applicants from a minority ethnic background are now interviewed, where they meet the essential criteria.</li> </ul>
<p>Report annually and act on findings for pay gap, recruitment, promotion and retention data for minority ethnic staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We undertook a colleague EDI profiling exercise and had over a 90% response rate. We launched a new HR system at the end of 2023, and this data will be input into the system in 2024, so we can start using it to inform our decisions. Our Board approved our Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Data Reporting Framework, so we will be fully implementing this during 2024.</li> </ul>
<p>Invest in our recruitment channels to attract candidates of different ethnic minorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We continued to be a key partner on the 'Get into Housing Project' which supported unemployed people from minority ethnic backgrounds, providing paid work placements. We financially contribute to the project, sit on the project Board, and hosted 1 additional paid work placement with more planned for 24/25.</li> <li>We attended several job fairs throughout 2023 to encourage diverse applicants to consider a career in housing and care.</li> <li>In 2024, as part of our Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Data Reporting Framework, we will actively monitor the number of job applications we receive from ethnic minority people and subsequent appointments and consider how we can reach out to the community to advertise.</li> </ul>

<p>Train all staff and board in Unconscious Bias and raise awareness of white privilege</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 90% of non-executive directors and colleagues have now completed our mandatory 'Conscious Inclusion' training.</li> <li>• During 2024 we will be encouraging those who have not completed to do so.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure our recruitment panels are ethnically diverse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are due in merge in April 2024, and this is an area we can consider how to embed in the new group.</li> </ul>
<p>Invest resources in positive action initiatives aimed at improving BAME representation at levels showing gaps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our 'Pathway to Board' project, in partnership with other RSL's project was set up to specifically support people from minority ethnic communities into Board positions.</li> <li>• A Linc Director sits on the Project Board, and we will consider how to work with the project as part of the new merged organisation in 2024 to support participants and improve the diversity of our Board.</li> </ul>

## Communicate and engage -

### We pledged to:

Our Commitment	What we have been doing
Publicise your support for racial equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have promoted the opportunities for both 'Get into Housing' and the 'Board Pathways' project.</li> <li>• We published our 2023 Deeds not Words update; promoted the latest Deeds not Words Survey to all staff.</li> <li>• Our Business Plan action plan for 23/24 made specific reference to our commitment to race equality.</li> <li>• We have regularly reported to our Board progress on data, and EDI.</li> <li>• Continued to use diverse images and artwork across Linc.</li> </ul>
Publish our commitment to take specific actions to tackle the challenges we identify, and report on progress annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have specific actions within our Business Plan action plan relating to race equality.</li> </ul>
Disaggregate ethnicity data from customer satisfaction data to learn and improve the experiences of people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Board approved our Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Data Reporting Framework. We are building our reporting mechanisms to report against it and to understand key trends.</li> </ul>
Build more links and support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups to build their capacity to support local people and bring in community knowledge and challenge to the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have done more work to understand who engages with Linc, and the characteristics of those customers. We have further work to do to continue to build links and support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community groups.</li> </ul>

<p>In asylum dispersal areas, commit to donating or leasing housing to refugee communities (where they exist)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We been in discussion with an organisation called 'The GAP Wales', who provide support to refugees and asylum seekers in Newport. We will be exploring how we work with them further as part of the merged organisation in 2024.</li> </ul>
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## Develop an inclusive culture

### We pledged to:

Our Commitment	What we have been doing
<p>Our leadership team proactively champion and monitor our progress for tackling racial inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our Board and Executive Team has received regular updates on our work, including the Deeds not Words Pledge and our EDI work.</li> </ul>
<p>Promote an inclusive culture where people are comfortable talking about race and can bring their whole self to work, and people we work with are comfortable to voice concerns related to race and are believed when this happens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We launched our pulse surveys in 2023, to test culture and gain regular feedback from colleagues. This has explored topics including sense of belonging and support provided by colleagues and managers.</li> </ul>
<p>Invest in reverse mentoring schemes to share experiences and improve opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will explore how we can use reverse mentoring to share experience and improve opportunities at a future priority.</li> </ul>

## This is our progress so far -

### Welsh Government Anti Racist Wales Action Plan

We have made progress towards meeting the commitments set out in the Anti Racist Wales Action Plan and highlighted these below:

Anti Racist Action Plan Wales Commitments	What we have been doing – 23/24
<p>1. Delivery Plan with clear and achievable timescales and actions demonstrating how anti racism and race equality is embedded within the organisation, both as an employee and service provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linc have in place the annual Business Plan Action Plan 2023/24 which has specific commitments and actions relating to EDI.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Anti racist training to board members and senior leaders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Senior Leadership Team undertook a specific session on leading on race equality in 2023. Non-Executive's and senior leaders have completed the e-learning module called 'Conscious Inclusion' during 2023, with 90% completion rate.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Improved diversity of board membership, advisory groups, and the wider workforce – including senior leadership teams</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linc are involved with both a Board and Colleague diversity programmes, specifically aimed at improving the racial diversity of the business. This is an ongoing action and will be carried forward as a focus for the new merged housing group.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Implement 'Reflecting Wales in Running Wales' the diversity and inclusion strategy for Public Appointments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linc are continually working to improve the diversity of colleagues and the Board. This includes participating in positive action initiatives including using the Rooney Rule and involvement in specific partnership projects, improving data collection, and ensuring marketing and communications collateral is reflective of diverse communities.</li> </ul>



<p>5. Improved communication and engagement with ethnic minority people and reflect diversity within communication strategies and campaigns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of our involvement with the 'Pathway to Board' and 'Get into Housing' diversity programmes, we are getting regular feedback from minority ethnic people. We are currently working to improve the data we hold on our customers, and will undertake targeted engagement work as appropriate in the new merged group.</li> </ul>
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## High Level Anti Racist Wales Priorities for 24/25

Whilst our priorities for 24/25 will be considered by the new group leadership team in consultation with colleagues and customers, emerging priorities include:

- **Representation** – improve the diversity of colleagues at all levels and Board.
- **Data Integrity** – continue to improve the EDI data who hold on colleagues and customers, and fully embed the quarterly reporting against our new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Data Reporting Framework, highlighting key trends and insights to drive and target improvements.
- **Service Delivery** – Using insights from our revised EDI Data Framework to improve and shape services.
- **Engagement and Links** - Improved communication and engagement with ethnic minority people, spending time to build local links with community groups and reflect diversity within communication strategies and campaigns.
- **Learning** – Consider creative and innovative learning solutions for Board and colleagues, to raise awareness and improve cultural understanding and practice.