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## **Press Release**

### **Chevin tenant invited to Office for National Statistics consultation event**

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), approximately 70,000 people in England and Wales identified themselves specifically as 'Black British' in the 2001 Census. However, there is currently no specific 'Black British' category within the ethnic group questions on the national census form, or on the vast majority of other 'official' ethnicity monitoring forms.

Chevin Housing Group is currently supporting one of their residents, Edwina Thomas of Chapeltown in Leeds, who is frustrated that she and thousands of others who perceive themselves to have a 'Black British' identity may still not receive the official recognition by having their own tick box within the ethnic group question on the 2011 Census form. Edwina has stated on many occasions that this has made her feel 'invisible'. On the face of it, there may be at least 70,000 people across England and Wales who share Edwina's frustrations, not to mention across the rest of Britain.

It was a long sequence of events that led to Edwina's invitation to speak at a national ONS event in London in June of this year. Chevin encouraged Edwina to write to the ONS in March 2006 as part of the ongoing consultation regarding amendments to the 2011 Census questionnaire and the development of the question set for the 2007 Census 'test'. In July 2006, Edwina met with her local MP regarding the addition of a specific 'Black British' tick box on ethnicity monitoring forms, specifically the National Census questionnaire, and has requested his help in lobbying for this change. Edwina, Chevin staff and a Chevin Board member then attended a regional ONS consultation event in March 2007 to voice further opinion about the categories. It was after hearing her views at this event that the ONS invited Edwina to speak at one of their national consultation meetings in London.

Chevin understands that organisations are free to design their own ethnicity monitoring forms, but they argue that collecting 'non-standard' responses precludes comparison with census statistics for benchmarking purposes. Whilst a certain amount of discretion in designing ethnicity monitoring forms is welcome, it creates the potential for inconsistencies in reporting. In April this year, Chevin Housing Group reiterated these views to CORE during their consultation on their 'form review'.

As many organisations model their equal opportunities questions on those questions appearing in the Census, Chevin is asking the ONS to 'take the lead' ...

Watch this space.

If you want to find out more about Chevin's work in this area, please contact Deborah Colclough, Service Improvement Officer, [d.colclough@chevihha.co.uk](mailto:d.colclough@chevihha.co.uk) or on 0114 241 7728.