

Ethnic Minority Advisory Group Meeting

5th December 2007 @ Cipfa
3:00p.m – 5:00p.m

Notes of meeting with Action Points

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Iqbal Wahhab (Chair)	Roast Restaurants
Jonathan Baldrey (Deputy Chair)	Talent / At Work
Hugh Harris	London First
Helen Wollaston	Equal Opportunities Commission
Symon Sentain	The Bridge New Deal for Communities
Mohammed Ali (for Adeeba Malik)	QED-UK
Tunde Banjoko	Leap
Dr Husna Ahmad	Faith Regen
Celia Roberts	King's College, London
Dan Monzani	DWP
Liz Such	DWP
Hannah Ormerod	DWP

Apologies:

Nahid Majid	DWP
Collette Corkhurst	TGWU
Jeremy Crook	Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG)
Adeeba Malik	QED-UK
Jonathan Attree (Hugh Harris attending)	London First
Parvin Ali	FATIMA Women's Network
Rokhsana Fiaz	Change Institute
Tanzeem Ahmed	Olmec

Agenda Item 1: Welcome /Minutes and Action Points from last meeting

1. Iqbal opened the meeting, and passed on apologies. A special introduction was made for Celia Roberts, senior research fellow in applied linguistics at King's College London.
2. C2E data from previous meeting queried by Jonathan Baldrey. He highlighted the discrepancy of data between the presentation in September's meeting and the presentation sent out as being of concern. If government wants to endorse a diversity standard, it needs to be accurate, and stretching enough to prompt change.

AP1: EMAG to submit thoughts on good diversity standards. Treasury is chairing the Business Commission steering group which includes considering standards: opportunity for EMAG to influence this in January.

3. Iqbal raised the issue of EMAG membership. More employers on the group would be an asset, especially if procurement was going to be a major focus. If business is more involved, it shows to the Task Force that there's collective commercial support behind this. Iqbal highlighted the work that some business leaders are doing to engage with marginalised groups in a collaboration between Canary Wharf and the University of East London. EMAG should engage more with interested business leaders such as these.
4. This led to discussion about how EMAG can have a more concrete influence. The possibility of a logo was raised. It was stressed that EMAG's purpose is to make sure that ministers receive challenge and advice. The Task Force is dependent on clear advice in order to maximise its impact.

Agenda Item 2: Debrief

5. Dan Monzani reported back from the last Task Force meeting in October. A presentation was made by Virtcom Consulting: the Task Force felt that interesting points were made here on the US perspective. The prospect of engaging with different leaders in diversity consulting was discussed: Iqbal said that Jesse Jackson would be happy to talk to EMAG or the Task Force. The possibility of talking to other diversity experts within the US government was also suggested.

Dan said that the Business Commission was also discussed in the Task Force: it made recommendations on tackling discrimination, and particularly emphasised procurement. Tunde added that trying to quantify the effects of employer discrimination is important here. Dan highlighted that DWP analysts had found that between 25-50% of the employment gap was down to employer discrimination. There is therefore an onus on not just focusing on procurement, but on tackling discrimination within the workplace.

6. Symon Sentain fed back on the progress of the Olympics Focus Group. The group had had two meetings to date, and had established terms of reference which would be agreed at the next meeting.
7. This provoked wider discussion about the roles of EMAG and the Focus Groups. It was suggested that the work programme for both the Task Force and EMAG should be reviewed.

AP2: Schedule time to do this.

8. Jonathan Baldrey raised the Action Point from June's meeting, re. reviewing EMAG's scrutiny role over the City Strategy target process. He argued that looking solely at establishing a target process wasn't enough; and that more should be happening to move the City Strategy group forward. Jeremy's view (communicated by the Secretariat) was also voiced: that the City Strategy Group is progressing well, and that, as EMAG leads on the Focus Group, scrutiny was being upheld. This led to a further discussion about the relation of the Focus Groups to EMAG. Some confusion was expressed regarding membership of the Focus Groups, and how they should report back to EMAG. It was stressed by Dan that Government Departments (bar the Olympics) were chairing the Focus Groups, but EMAG members have an opportunity to challenge and drive the agenda forward.

AP3: Secretariat to forward membership details of all Focus Groups to EMAG and Focus Group members; members to report back if details are incorrect.

AP4: EMAG leads on Focus Groups to report back to EMAG more routinely. Jeremy to report on the City Strategy at the next EMAG meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Presentations

9. Iqbal introduced Celia Roberts whose work, sponsored by the DWP, has focused on the discursive processes in job interviews which build in disadvantage. Two DVD's have been

produced following the research findings: one for interviewers called 'Successful at Selection', and one for jobseekers called 'Frequently Asked Questions' [please contact Liz Such for more information].

10. Celia described how it was clear from the study that those who were foreign and had work experience abroad were significantly less likely to pass the job interview. It was paradoxical that two factors that were designed to facilitate equality were creating more problems: the structure of non-negotiable questions which had been intended to level out bias in interviews; and the competency framework, which didn't correlate with the nature of the job, and required very specific responses from candidates.
11. Discussion: Celia's presentation prompted a positive response. The impact of other factors, such as appearance and gender were also suggested as possible avenues for research. Jonathan Baldrey asked whether accent was a factor in the findings: Celia replied that this did not come out in the research, but as a whole, the interviewers tended to dismiss things as generally 'poor English'. This judgement was used to mask a 'multitude of sins': there was no specific elaboration of what that 'poor English' was, or how it prevented the candidate from doing the job. Moreover, the interviewee's fluency was very contingent on the interviewer's response and attitude. Celia made the distinction that being bad at interview did not necessarily correlate with being bad at the job. Iqbal asked whether there was much engagement with employers: Celia responded that there hadn't been much take-up. The benefit of engaging employers with this work was discussed.
12. Alternatives to the current interview procedure were discussed: Jonathan Baldrey cited the example of New York where they take workers on trial, and then retain them if they prove good at the job. Dr. Husna Ahmad mentioned the example of work placements, which has enormous negativity to begin with from employers; but where they want to keep the triallers once they had proved themselves. Husna also highlighted the Bangladeshi 'Channel S', which ran a programme on interview technique on the Bangladeshi community. The potential to combine Celia's work with the work of C2E was aired.

AOB:

13. EMAG membership to be reviewed at the next meeting.
14. Hugh Harris noted that the Consultation Document on the London Skills and Employment Board is out for consultation now. Comments need to be in before the third week of January, and can be submitted at www.london.gov.uk/lseb.

Hannah Ormerod
EMETF Secretariat

Action Points:

	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
AP 1	EMAG to submit thoughts on good diversity standards, and influence Business Commission in January.	All members	Next EMAG meeting - 11/3/08	Pending
AP2	Schedule time to review the work programme for Task Force and EMAG	Secretariat	31/1/08	Pending
AP 3	Secretariat to forward membership details of all Focus Groups to EMAG and Focus Group members; members to report back if details are incorrect.	Secretariat	31/12/07	Cleared
AP 4	EMAG leads on Focus Groups to report back to EMAG more routinely. Jeremy to report on the City Strategy at the next EMAG meeting.	EMAG leads	Next EMAG meeting – 11/3/08	Pending

Action point from September meeting

	Action	Responsible	Deadline	Status
AP 1	To invite Caroline to the next EMAG meeting.	Secretariat	31/10/07	Cleared
AP2	Janet to let EMAG have empirical data on the progress on diversity changes in organisations	Secretariat	31/10/07	Cleared
AP 3:	Tanzeem and Jonathan to let Helen have contribution on procurement to include in the DLR response	Helen	7/9/07	Cleared