

Minutes

Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force Meeting
Thursday, 24th January
1:30pm - 3:00pm
Portcullis House, Room M, House of Commons

Member	Department
Caroline Flint MP	DWP (Chair)
Pat McFadden MP	BERR
Barbara Follett MP	GEO
Jenny Ashby for Parmjit Dhandha, MP	CLG
John Landeryou for David Lammy, MP	DIUS
John Marsh for Gillian Merron, MP	CO
Alan Christie for Trevor Phillips	EHRC
Frank Carson for Angela Eagle, MP	HMT
Katja Hall	CBI
Cay Stratton	NEP
Wilf Sullivan for Leslie Manasseh	TUC
Cllr Mahroof Hussain	LGA
Iqbal Wahhab	EMAG
Dan Monzani	DWP
Harsha Savani	DWP
Hannah Ormerod	DWP
Presenters:	
Cecil Edey	Head of Skills, Manchester Enterprises, executive to Greater Manchester City Strategy
David Coyne	Executive Director of the Glasgow City Strategy
Stephen Martin	DWP
Ros Lynch	CLG
Caroline Flint MP	DWP (Chair)

Apologies received from:

Tessa Jowell, MP	GOE
Lee Jasper	GLA
Nahid Majid	DWP
Sir Michael Rake	Employment and Skills Commission

Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

- Members were introduced and welcomed. Apologies were noted.

Item 2: Minutes from Last Meeting

- Previous Action Points were signed off.
- HMT gave an update on the Business Commission steering group:
 - Initial discussions have been had on most of the recommendations, including procurement
 - The group aims to prepare advice will be issued for Ministers by the Spring

Item 3(i): Presentation by Glasgow and Manchester City Strategy Pathfinders (CSPs).

Key issues raised:

- Joining up work on different aspects of deprivation:
 - Ethnic Minority (EM) employment needs to be integrated with other areas such as housing, education and health.
 - Glasgow CSP creating links with local initiatives in the EM-populated South-East of the city, such as with the Chinese Healthy Living Centre.

- Data issues and targets:
 - No numerical employment targets set in Glasgow yet, due to data difficulties. However, participation in mainstream services can be measured.
 - Central government has chosen only to set two headline targets – on employment, and benefit receipt – as the Pathfinders are part of a devolved strategy.
 - Glasgow’s action plan includes developing specific targets into commissioning plans and employer engagement.
 - Glasgow plans to develop a tracking system on the web, allowing them to monitor the progress of providers.
 - **Q.** Of the 44,000 EM inhabitants in Manchester, how many are women, and what is their age-profile?

AP1: Manchester CSP to report back to the Task Force with these figures.

- Separating out Ethnic Minority groups:
 - The ‘non-white’ category is inadequate for EMs. There are large variations *between* ethnic groups in employment, educational attainment etc.
 - Outreach needs to be targeted, focussing where the need is greatest.

- Government Procurement and Representation:
 - Procurement is the ‘single biggest public-sector factor’ in making a difference in Manchester. The city’s procurement expenditure totals £1 billion.
 - Senior-level representation of EMs in the public sector, where change can be most immediately effected is too low.
 - The Business Commission proposals are useful in showing how CSPs can ask of contracted suppliers to fulfil diversity requirements.
 - Glasgow Pathfinder is getting apprenticeships and training courses with local public sector contractors, but would welcome a framework for procurement.

- Improving Employability:
 - ESOL provision being prioritised in Manchester
 - A need to translate good educational attainment amongst many EM groups, especially girls, into appropriate-level jobs.
 - Soft-skills (interview techniques, language fluency) are a problem across the piece, including for graduates.

- Private Sector/Employer Engagement:
 - Manchester looking at how to increase EM employment within public sector organisations. Have submitted multi-area agreement, and looking at how to engage with EMs in government structures and decision-making processes.
 - The private sector is not sufficiently aware of the business case for diversity. In response, Manchester are developing a strategy that includes targeting private sector HR practices; prompting Job Centre Plus to push the business case; and strengthening links with local schools.
 - Given overall EM educational attainment, the employment gap can’t be explained away by ‘poor skills’. Discrimination is therefore a factor in this.

- **Q.** What has worked well in employer engagement, and what are the biggest challenges?
 - Not force-feeding employers, but recognising the business needs and working with educational providers. Retail parks and businesses in the Glasgow City Centre have been responsive to this.
- **Q.** There is no duty to engage with closing the EM employment gap: how is the Business Link delivering on this?
 - The Business Link's capacity to deliver through on an EM agenda will require a lot of work, but is at present the preferred option.
 - Government agencies will not provide the main solution here: rather, the momentum for change will come through employers.

Item 3(ii): Presentation on the Working Neighbourhoods Fund:

- An important opportunity for Ethnic Minority employment. Not solely an EM initiative.
- Not ringfenced: the key is how to influence the spending of this fund.
- Consistent with the devolution agenda.
- WNF maps onto areas of high EM worklessness.
- Success is measured broadly – in its impact across housing, health as well as worklessness. Coordination of Regional Development Agencies, and Local Authorities is a promising possibility.
- There will be opportunities to align CSPs with local authorities in WNF areas, ie in health and employment. Co-ordination will be critical.
- WNF will be monitored through the government performance framework. Some funds available for rewarding high performance.
- Key future issues:
 - Agreeing LAAs with local partnerships. Draft LAAs are currently coming in, and employment indicators are expected to feature heavily.
 - Establishing indicators (overall employment rate, neighbourhood-level worklessness).

Item 4: AoB

- The Task Force will be reviewing its priorities and refreshing its agenda for 2008 ahead of the next meeting.
- If any members of the Task Force would like to arrange a visit to see the work of a Local Employment Partnership, please contact the Task Force secretariat.
- The next Task Force meeting will focus on the last of the Task Force's priorities: the employment legacy of the 2012 Olympics.

	Action Point	Responsibility	Deadline	Status
1.	Manchester CSP to report back to the Task Force with figures on how many of the EM inhabitants in Manchester are women, and what their age-profile is.	Cecil Edey, Manchester CSP	April 2008	Cleared