



## Minutes

Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force Meeting  
 Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2008  
 9:30-10:30am  
 Room P, Portcullis House

### Attendees:

Member	Department/ Organisation
Stephen Timms, MP (Chair)	DWP
David Lammy, MP	DIUS
Barbara Follett, MP	GEO
Parmjit Dhanda, MP	CLG
Frank Carson (for Angela Eagle, MP)	HMT
Jennifer Hutton (for Tom Watson, MP)	CO
Iqbal Wahhab	EMAG
Katja Hall	CBI
Leslie Manasseh	TUC
Alan Christie (for Trevor Phillips)	EHRC
Nahid Majid	DWP
Melanie Field	GEO
Abu Ahmed	GEO

### Apologies received from:

Pat McFadden, MP	BERR (oral questions)
Sir Michael Rake	Skills Commission
Mahroof Hussain	LGA

### Item 1: Welcome and Introductions

- Arun Batra, Director of Equality and Diversity at the LDA, has been asked to join the Task Force.

### Item 2: Minutes from Last Meeting

- Not all the Action Points from the last meeting have been cleared.

**AP1:** Stephen Timms has offered to write personally to the ODA requesting an update.

### Item 3(i): Task Force Strategy for 2008/9

#### Key issues raised:

- The Task Force was set up to tackle the Ethnic Minority Employment gap. That gap is still obstinately large and persistent.
- Achievements over the past year.
  - 'Closing the Gaps' event exploring barriers for ethnic minority women in work
  - Strategic Review on government provision for ethnic minority women.
  - One of the Procurement Pilots initially launched by the Task Force in three Departments has resulted in diversity clauses being embedded in New Deal and all service contracts across Jobcentre Plus. They require contractors to monitor their workforces for ethnic, gender and disability diversity and report progress regularly.
  - Ethnic minority targets for all Flexible New Deal contracts.
  - Considering the legal feasibility of having a Job Outcome Target for ethnic minorities in Jobcentre Plus.
- Need to consider changing conditions:
  - Impact of economic downturn
  - Progress on government procurement
  - An increasing ethnic minority population: working population projected to double over next 10 years.
- Task Force has set new strategic challenges:
  - **Positive action** to tackle discrimination
  - Ensuring that **government mainstream programmes** are set up to be effective for ethnic minorities
  - **Effective local, targeted interventions**
- EMAG:
  - EMAG in a stronger position to support the Task Force
  - Focusing on 4 target areas: procurement, employer engagement, local areas, and London 2012 Olympics
  - Will take a stronger scrutiny role, and take forward more practical action
  - Have recruited new members
  - Are looking at what the ODA are doing to recruit ethnic minorities through Jobcentre Plus.

Q. Would EMAG assist in supporting positive action targets in the fire service?  
 R. Yes [see **AP3 below**].
- Task Force delivery strands:
  - Monitor progress across government
  - Commission work from EMAG
  - Drive the implementation of the Business Commission recommendations
- Business Commission update from HMT:
  - Submission is with Chancellor of the Exchequer before going to DA
  - EHRC will take forward a couple of recommendations separately
  - Recommendations applicable to wider equalities agenda will be taken forward by Government Equalities Office
- The Task Force can use transparency of data as a catalyst (**see AP4**)
- The Task Force Strategy was agreed.

**AP2:** Iqbal Wahhab to give update on ODA's use of LEPs at the next Task Force meeting

**AP3:** Parmjit Dhanda to circulate papers and give presentation on fire service diversity at next Task Force meeting.

Iqbal Wahhab to liaise with Parmjit to explore how EMAG can contribute.

**AP4:** Collate statistics from members' organisations.

### **Item 3(ii): The Equality Bill**

- Aim: to make life opportunities more equal.
- Opens up possibilities of working across government.
- Timescale: present to parliament late 2008/Spring 2009.
- A mistake to think that legislation changes everything. A cultural change required too.
- Simplification: currently 9 separate acts, 3000 pages of guidance.
- A single duty, including age.
- Positive Action: 2 candidates of equal ability: have the right to choose the minority candidate to balance work force.
- Transparency for gender pay gap. Working to improve transparency for ethnicity pay gap too, eg. by examining public appointments. Form on GEO website available to calculate pay gap.
- Procurement essential: govt spends £160bn a year on buying services.
- A document which pulls different government departments together is the Home Office's 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society'.
- Vital to distinguish between positive action and positive discrimination. This is not positive discrimination.

**Q.** What is the ethnic minority pay gap?

**A.** EHRC and TUC have some figures (see **Action Point 4**).

**AP5:** Secretariat to circulate 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society'.

### **Item 4: AoB**

Future Possible Agenda Items:

- Business Commission
- Public Sector as employer (CLG and Fire Service)
- Civil Service Equality and Diversity
- 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Task Force
- CBI/TUC Business Guide on Diversity

	<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.	Stephen Timms to write to the ODA requesting an update on incomplete Action Points	Stephen Timms	August 2008	
2.	Iqbal to give update at the next Task Force meeting	Iqbal Wahhab/ 2012 Project Group	October 2008	
3.	Parmjit Dhanda to circulate papers and give presentation on fire service diversity at next Task Force meeting. Iqbal Wahhab to liaise with Parmjit to explore how EMAG can contribute.	Parmjit Dhanda  Iqbal Wahhab	October 2008  October 2008	
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ BERR to provide figures on ethnic minority business participation</li> <li>▪ Stephen Timms to write to Barbara Follett with statistics that we have readily available.</li> <li>▪ These to be published in the quarterly Task Force Newsletter to show a picture of Britain today.</li> <li>▪ DWP to make contact with ONS to look at what information they can provide.</li> <li>▪ EHRC, TUC and GEO to look into what information they have on the ethnicity pay gap.</li> </ul>	BERR  Secretariat/ Stephen Timms  Secretariat  DWP  EHRC, TUC and GEO	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2008	
5.	Secretariat to circulate 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society'.	Secretariat	August 2008	