



**Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force Meeting**  
**25<sup>th</sup> July 2007, 2:00pm - 3:00pm**  
**Portcullis House, Room N, House of Commons**

## Minutes

**Attendees:**

No	Members	Department
1.	Caroline Flint MP	DWP (Chair)
2.	Angela Eagle MP	HMT
3.	Janice Munday <b>for</b> Pat McFadden MP	BERR
4.	Mike Porteous	BERR
5.	Chris Wells <b>for</b> Lord Adonis	DCSF
6.	Iqbal Wahhab	EMAG
7.	Alan Christie <b>for</b> Kay Hampton	CRE
8.	Katja Hall	CBI
9.	Wilf Sullivan <b>for</b> Leslie Manasseh	TUC
10.	Nahid Majid	DWP
11.	Dan Monzani	DWP
12.	Carol McDonald	DWP
13.	Viv Miller	DWP

**Apologies received from:**

	David Lammy MP	DIUS
14.	Gillian Merron MP	CO
	Parmjit Dhanda MP	CLG
	Leslie Manasseh	TUC
	Cllr Mahroof Hussain of Rotherham	LGA
	Jeremy Anderson	NEP
	Cay Stratton	NEP

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Action Point update.**

1. Caroline Flint (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave a bit of background about her self and explained how her experience and knowledge fits with her present role and with the ethnic minority agenda.
2. She asked everyone to introduce themselves for the benefit of Angela Eagle, who replaced John Healey at the Treasury and apologise that other Ministers were not able to attend, mainly because of the recent changes within the Government and other pressing engagements. She will be speaking to colleagues to ensure that they attend future meetings and asked officials to ensure that their Ministers do.

**Agenda item 2: Minutes and action point of April's meeting**

3. Two actions points (**AP2 and AP3**) have been brought forward - City Strategy Team to feedback to the next TF meeting on employment outcomes and produce a profile of the labour market in each of the City Strategy areas. A paper detailing BME targets within Cities Strategy plans was handed out at the meeting, for information.

### **Agenda item 3: Presentations**

4. Nahid Majid, Deputy Director for Area Initiatives and Communities Division in DWP gave a **presentation on the Ethnic Minority Employment Strategy** which focused on the following points:
  - Why focus on Ethnic minorities
  - Progress, baseline and challenges
  - Our Strategy
  - The role and challenges for the Task Force
5. Comments and questions followed:
  - Angela - wanted to know why it has taken so long to close the gap since discrimination has existed for so long and is rife. Dan Monzani briefly outlined some of the proposed measures to understand and address discrimination which would be discussed at future Taskforce meetings.
  - Caroline – ask for clarification about the **employment gap** as shown on the graph. Dan explained that the gap is closing but that, historically, ethnic minorities have been hit particularly in periods of economic downturn. It was essential that the overall strong labour market was maintained. Chris commented that there is still a marked gap between men and women and that there is a focus in DSCF to address this within the childcare agenda. Wilf also pointed out that there are regional gaps, especially where there was once thriving industries. Caroline is keen to ensure that the focus of the Green Paper i.e provision for people into work is pertinent to the TF agenda.
  - Nahid said that the **City Strategy**, with the Cross Governmental working, will be a good lever for addressing local issues. Angela agreed that the City Strategy will offer local solutions to local problems but would like to know how quickly we can put the spotlight on where the real problems are - those out of work, inactives and those stuck in particular kind of low paid jobs. Iqbal agreed that there are many people in Tower Hamlet who are not on benefits therefore not 'in the system' so the City Strategy will help local people to address local needs. The issue of a lack of BME representation on local boards which make decisions that affects BME communities.
  - Alan commented that the **Ethnic Minority Outreach** programme wound up before it had the chance to show real outcome and he hopes that the City Strategy will address the BME issues. Angela said that we will not solve the problem by having pockets of money round the edges for BME groups. We must mainstream.
  - Iqbal mentioned a need for **skills** - especially soft skills for job applicants. Caroline said that the Green Paper and the Government's response to the

Leitch Review on Skills will enable us to get: a better sense of what employers want, what we want to achieve and a better balance of qualification and skills.

- Angela is concerned about **employer discrimination** and cited example in Oldham where ethnic minorities are not being employed by local employers. She said that the TF needs to be more proactive and that we need to mainstream policies in order to address the issues. She also agreed that although analysis is important it should not instead of action.
6. Janice Munday, Head of Employment Relations apologised that her Minister, Pat McFadden is unable to deliver the **presentation on Employer Engagement**. She introduced the aims and objectives of the Employer Engagement Focus Group, led by BERR which is looking at how best to crack the issue and the most constructive way to engage with employers. This will include an input from DIUS on skills.
  7. Mike Porteus, Head of Employer Relations Strategic Hub presented the S-curve Innovation strategy which he hopes will:
    - Champion pioneers by raising profile, forming strategic partnerships and (possibly) support for innovation;
    - Provide practical 'how to' advice, case studies of business benefits, provision of skills and learning networks for early adopters;
    - Leave the followers and laggards to follow and lag whilst ensuring accessible guidance on what's needed to comply on [businesslink.gov](http://businesslink.gov).
  8. The next step in the coming months will be to:
    - Review existing activities and initiatives and map them against model;
    - Identify possible gaps for potential future development with business partners, CEHR and others;
    - Inputting into Government response to Equalities Review, integrating BME focus into broader diversity challenges; and
    - Explore strategy for employer engagement for other groups.
  9. Comments and questions followed:
    - The model is fine but will only apply to a tight labour market and will need more active engagement from employers.
    - Strategy is about demand side, not supply side. In order to make a difference, it needs to focus on diversity issues with levers to get the buy-in from key players, including the Government.
    - Model will not address the issues within BME-led employers. Potential pioneers are likely to be big companies who are not perfect role models for small companies.
    - It is important to get the narrative right and the key players need to understand the same language - one of engagement. The question is, who engages with employers? We should not expect JCP alone to do this.

10. Summing up, Caroline said the four TF priorities are good but they must be considered together. We have an opportunity for the employer engagement strategy and the City Strategy to work together and to share examples of good practice. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, and it would be sensible to ensure there were a few people in common on both the City Strategy and Employer Engagement Focus Groups. TF will need to influence, monitor and apply pressure as appropriate.

**Agenda item 4: TF Membership**

11. Caroline was keen to ensure, within reason, that all those who want to be involved have a voice at the table. Caroline said she will consider any suggestion for additional members from Taskforce Departments on the basis of what nominees could deliver to each priority. **[AP]**

**Agenda Item 5: AOB**

12. It was agreed that future TF meetings should be an hour and a half to give more time for detailed discussions. The next meeting which is scheduled for 24th October (half term) may need to be rearranged. Secretariat to check date, rearrange, if necessary, as soon as possible. **[AP]**

Viv Miller  
EMETF Secretariat

### Summary of Action points:

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Status</b>
AP 1 c/f	City Strategy pathfinders to feedback to TF on the targeted additional level of ethnic minority employment outcomes.	City Strategy Team	October	
AP 2 c/f	City Strategy team to produce a labour market analysis of each City Strategy pathfinder.	City Strategy Team	July	
AP 3	Caroline to consider additional nominations to sit on the TF.	Nahid/Caroline	October	Cleared
AP 4	Secretariat to check if the 24 <sup>th</sup> October (date scheduled for the next TF meeting) is during term time. Need to rearrange date if it is and circulate details to TF members.	Secretarial	31 July	Cleared