

Summary of EMAG Meeting: 19th June 2007

- **Jim Murphy MP**, the then **Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform**, spoke on the work of the **Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force**. He expanded on the four priority areas of the Task Force: Employer Engagement, Procurement, The City Strategy and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A delivery-centred approach was stressed, with would need to contain realistic and achievable goals. The target of the City Strategy Pathfinder was identified as a 3% improvement on current performance: equating to an additional 30,000 people in work. However, Jim Murphy accepted that the real challenge would be sustainability: providing long-term, quality jobs to help lift families out of poverty. EMAG was identified as holding a potential role in scrutinising performance in the City Strategy target process.

- **Trevor Philips** spoke on the role of the newly-formed **Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)** as a bigger, single commission, building on the legacy of the earlier specialist commissions. The enlarged commission will facilitate the taking forward of cases that cut across numerous equality strands; whilst making it easier to promote institutional reform for equality as a whole. Starting in October 2007, the CEHR will adopt a regional structure, using existing networks at a local level. Developing a new business plan is a priority; as is the formation of new narratives for equality and tackling inequalities such as pay gaps. In response to questions on funding, Trevor Philips asserted that grants already allocated will roll forward, whilst a new and larger grant programme will be adopted, in order to mainstream programmes and foster improved relationships with other voluntary organisations. The issue of ethnic minority representation on boards was discussed: the possibility of including less experienced representatives at board level being put forward as a possibility.

- **Waqar Azmi** from **Cabinet Office** gave a presentation on current progress in **public sector recruitment** in meeting diversity targets. His main points were:

- At October 2006 3.2 percent of staff are from an ethnic minority background at Senior Civil Service (SCS) level.
- Targets have been set in each department to increase the diversity of the SCS, for ethnic minority staff this target is to reach 4 percent by 2008.
- The civil service have so far:
 - 10-Point Plan & Departmental Delivery Plans
 - Set departmental diversity targets
 - Continued monitoring/analysis to support & challenge
 - Completed mid-term performance reviews of all departments
- Improvements need to be made to ensure that there are strong succession planning and talent management systems that attract particular groups to roles. Data collection and analysis needs to be improved and business drivers more understood.

Questions included whether data was available that breaks the ethnicity of staff down by department, and what the level of ethnic minority women is at Senior Civil Service level? In response, Waqar outlined that individual departments have different diversity targets, and the remit of the departments is taken into account when setting the targets. Additionally, a task force has been created to look at women in the civil service. It will focus on ethnic minority women, including retention. Further work will be done beyond 2008 to continue to improve performance.

Summary of EMAG Meeting: 6th September 2007

- The necessity of keeping a 'watching brief' over the allocation of City Strategy funds to assist ethnic minority issues was expressed as an ongoing concern.

- **Douglas Freeman**, from **VirtCom Consulting**, gave an inspiring presentation on *Leveraging UK Ethnic Minority Employer, Suppliers and Customers for Employer Bottom-Line Impact*, which generated an active discussion. Two major challenges faced by UK organisations were highlighted: reducing the employment gap, and implementing a diversity infrastructure. It was pointed out that 50% of major global employers do not have diversity infrastructure. Douglas pointed to a Diversity Infrastructure Strategy with a supporting Diversity (Return on Investment) ROI programme to underpin this. *The Best Proof of Diversity ROI: EU Commission Survey* was drawn upon, highlighting that 83% of 495 EU companies noted "diversity and inclusion has a positive impact on my business". In the same survey, Tesco noted an increase in revenue linked to targeting multicultural consumers. Douglas stressed that a Diversity Infrastructure is the foundation for closing the employment gap.

- **Janet Lakhani** and **Allan Bouglas**, gave a presentation on **C2E (Committed to Equality)**, which promotes diversity through its C2E Kitemark; as well as undertaking research, and lobbying for change. They outlined two main programmes: the Diversity Assured Programme, which uses advisors to directly assist and accredit businesses; and the Supplier Diversity Programme, which enables organisations to manage supplier diversity and recognise the contribution that their supplier organisations are making to diversity. The aims of the programmes are to ensure that employers demonstrate equality and diversity practices, and that public bodies are able to monitor and influence employment and enterprise diversity. C2E reported an impressive rate of success: SME's accredited companies were hiring 3.9% of ethnic minorities in 2005. When reviewed in 2006, this figure jumped to 13%, a large percentage of which were women. Much discussion followed, with good practice from other companies highlighted. The need for a clear value system in relation to diversity and equality was identified, underpinned by an 'ethical pillow' of regulation, which also outlines clear social responsibilities.