

Chapter 5 Moving Forward

This report sets out the progress we have made towards meeting the recommendations of the Strategy Unit Report and the ethnic minority employment strategy which set out to go beyond the report's original recommendations in order to try to meet its overall vision.

This is an evolving program of work and we are trying to overcome longstanding inequalities. The Enterprising People, Enterprising Places report set out a new approach to improving ethnic minority achievement in the labour market which has created a new set of challenges. Existing policies are also continuing to develop. This chapter sets out briefly some key areas of emerging policy and what we will do to move this agenda forward beyond 2006.

Procurement

As noted in chapter 3, the Task Force recognised the potential of public procurement to promote employment for ethnic minorities. DWP and the Home Office have led the work in this area in 2004-05, with the support of the CRE, Office for Government Commerce and the Minority Ethnic Group (MEG) of the NEP.

From early 2006, we intend to trial an approach to public procurement, in a limited number of contracts, for including race equality outcomes and requirements in contracts and using the contract management process to promote race equality within suppliers.

DWP and Home Office have already agreed to take part in this and we are working to identify full terms of reference and actual contracts to use. We hope to use a range of contracts, some where race equality is clearly relevant and some where it is less so.

A roundtable event which brought together suppliers, government, the CRE, TUC and CBI in early November identified the willingness of the private sector to work with government and the importance of policy people, procurement specialists and suppliers working in partnership to achieve these ends.

In Spring 2006 the CRE will launch its Supplier Diversity Guide which will provide guidance to both business and the public sector in how to promote race equality across the supply chain.

A Business Commission

A new Commission of private sector business leaders will be asked to advise on helping the private sector to tackle race discrimination in employment. This builds on the recommendation made in the National Employment Panel report "Enterprising People, Enterprising Place" and supports the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force's priority of looking across Government and

involving the CBI at what is being done to help and assist employers to achieve diversity of employment.

Outreach for Partners

The NEP report highlighted the fact that employment support is not reaching ethnic minority people who are not working and not claiming benefit, such as Pakistani and Bangladeshi women. With this in mind, the NEP recommended that tailored outreach support should be established. The Government is taking this recommendation forward by introducing community-based flexible support for people who are neither in work nor on benefit, especially the non-working partners of people in low-income families. This will be targeted on selected areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities population and high levels of deprivation.

Cities strategy

The NEP report recommended that government look at focussing resources for skills and employment related programmes on the cities with the largest ethnic minority populations as well as integrating the employment and skills systems in these cities. The DWP is taking forward these recommendations in partnership with other departments as part of a comprehensive Cities Strategy.

Job Centre Plus programs are continuing to develop and target resources on areas of highest need. The revised performance system from April 2006 will focus help on areas with high levels of deprivation and unemployment.

The Fair Cities pilots in Bradford, Birmingham and Brent will form part of this work by providing a compact between local employers and the local employment and skills system to provide trained candidates from these areas to fill existing vacancies.

ODPM are responsible for Local Area Agreements (LAAs), which are being rolled out to all areas in England over the next two years. A Guidance Note and good practice toolkit covers equalities and diversity. The new 'fourth block' of measures focusing on economic development and enterprise gives a greater focus on worklessness issues. Local areas will continue to identify ethnic minority employment issues for inclusion in the LAA where the partners agree it is a local priority.

Within the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (LNRS), ODPM has ensured that Local Economic Strategies developed within them address barriers to employment faced by people most disadvantaged in the labour market, including ethnic minority groups and that Neighbourhood Managers and Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers have an understanding of the barriers to ethnic minority employment through training and toolkits.

The Task Force will publish the final report on progress and a full review of its effectiveness next year. It will also agree its future work programme and consider how to provide leadership and direction beyond the completion of the Strategy Unit recommendations. To this end task force representatives are currently developing a set of future work priorities to be considered at the next Task Force meeting in January 2006.

The full review of the Task Force and the effectiveness of its programme of work in implementing the Strategy Unit's recommendations will commence towards the end of this year.