

Equality & Diversity Update

October 2007



Welcome

Welcome to the Equality and Diversity Update, the newsletter of the Regional Strategic Partnership for Equality and Diversity, which provides a brief update on current developments and details of forthcoming events.

Partnership Activity Update

The Equality and Diversity Partnership will next meet in 18th October 07. An agenda and papers for the meeting will be available from www.wmra.gov.uk/equalities shortly. More information on the work of the partnership is also available at www.wmra.gov.uk/equalities

The West Midlands Race Equality Advisory Board

A new advisory board has been created in the West Midlands to progress 'race' equality in the region. The board, which was established in April 2007, consists of 13 members, selected through competitive interview and against competency-based criteria. They will work to promote, support and influence the relationship regional bodies have with the BME voluntary and community sector across the region.

Why is this important?

There is increasing emphasis on the importance that regions will play in both strategy and policy. Several regional bodies, both public sector and voluntary sector, already exist and have an established remit. However, there is currently no clear vehicle for the consideration of the BME voluntary sector and both the relationship and potential influence it may have with regional bodies. A new board of this type will be well placed to offer critical advice on issues of 'race' equality.

What will the panel do?

This is a new advisory board and they will be working proactively with regional players to establish their own work programme. However broadly speaking, the board will be:-

- Using a range of evidence to understand regional inequality issues and prioritising these into a practical work programme

- Communicating their work programme to the sector and involving others in broader consultative exercises as appropriate
- Sign-posting regional players to other relevant organisations and creating opportunities for others to influence.
- Consulting with regional players on the issues they have identified and exploring current and future strategies designed by these players to deliver equality of outcomes across the region
- Being consulted by regional players on key aspects of regional policy-making and being given opportunities to influence, as appropriate.

What the panel won't do?

- Become a substitute for other forms of consultation that should be undertaken by public bodies as part of their legislative responsibilities
- Undertake 'local' work
- Undertake roles that are currently being played by other BME voluntary organisations
- Become a 'representative' of the BME sector

Next steps...

The board are currently developing work programmes in a number of areas of public policy:

- Employment and skills
- Health
- Voluntary sector commissioning and procurement
- Early Years and Education

Board members will be contacting key regional agencies over the next few months to progress activity in these areas. The board intend to offer insights that will really affect the work of the region and improve how we collectively tackle inequality.

If you have any questions on the role of the panel or how you could make best use of board expertise, please contact Asif Afridi from the secretariat on 0121 456 7400 or asifa@brap.org.uk

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Launch of Equality and Human Rights Commission

The new Equality and Human Rights Commission, launched on 1st October, replaces the three former equality commissions: the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The new commission aims to build on their legacy to achieve change to benefit some of the most disadvantaged and voiceless people in our society.

The new commission will have a presence in the Region based at the previous CRE Offices with Zahid Nawaz as the main point of contact. Zahid can be contacted on 07947357168. For further information see www.equalityhumanrights.com

LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans) Youth Matters Information Day: 13th November 07

This event, [Section 28: Four years later, do we matter yet?](#) Is being organised by Coventry City Council and will be held in Coventry on 13th November 2007 to raise awareness of the issues affecting young LGBT people and to facilitate discussion of these issues amongst professionals working with young people.

The event is aimed at professionals and practitioners working with young people in a support, education or health role, especially those who have direct contact; e.g. teaching & pastoral staff, youth workers, Student Liaison Officers, frontline health staff, voluntary sector, child protection, housing & accommodation providers etc and those wishing to further their knowledge of the issues. For further information contact laura.slegg@coventry.gov.uk or phone 024 7683 3693.

West Midlands' First Gender Identity Centre

Gender Matters, the charity that supports transgendered people, their families and supporters, is pleased to announce that the "Big Lottery – Reaching Communities programme" has awarded them a three year grant to set up a "Gender Identity Centre" in the West Midlands.

The purpose of the centre is to provide care and support for a hidden misunderstood part of society from a specialist centre. The centre will provide; support, guidance, counselling and education and sign-post people to other organisations as required.

CRE publishes report of Formal Investigation into Regeneration

The Commission for Racial Equality has recently published the report following its formal investigation into Regeneration and the Race Equality Duty. It is available to download at www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publicationsandresources/Race/Pages/Formalinvestigations

What's the difference between community cohesion and good race relations?

Race Equality West Midlands in Partnership with The Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Culture, University of Birmingham are holding a seminar to debate this issue. Dr Tahir Abbas and Dr Frank Reeves will be speaking at the event which will be held on 10th October from 12.30-2pm at the University of Birmingham. For more information, please see www.rewm.org/Seminar_Series or call Freda Edwards on 0121 250 3859.

Contact

If you would like further information about the issues raised or to disseminate information through this newsletter, please contact Cassie Manly at c.manly@wmra.gov.uk or on 0121 678 1077.