



Executive Summary

December 2006

Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector Regional Panel

For Yorkshire and the Humber

BUSINESS PLAN 2007-2010



1. Foreword

I have great pleasure in introducing this first business plan produced by the Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector (BME VCS) Regional Panel for Yorkshire and the Humber. It has been a tremendous year for the Panel, building a strong and cohesive team, able to deliver through innovative partnerships on behalf of the BME community. In the following business plan we have set ourselves a challenging set of objectives in the areas of regional advocacy, thematic priorities and operational activity that supports our role.

BME VCS organisations continue to grow and provide a huge and diverse range of services to our communities across the region. It is essential that the Panel is able to harness its capacity, skills and expertise by providing and sign posting the appropriate infrastructure needed to deliver 'excellence'. Learning from past experience has meant that rather than try to respond to the full range and breadth of priorities, the Panel will work to a very clear strategic remit to influence regional policy and to improve BME VCS accessibility to high quality infrastructure support.

Our achievements stem from the commitment and hard work of Panel members, staff and partners. The support of Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) and the Regional Forum has been invaluable to the process. The Panel looks forward to working with all our statutory and voluntary sector partners to further develop and strengthen the voice, capacity and address the unmet needs of BME VCS organisations across Yorkshire and the Humber region.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Naheed Arshad-Mather'.

Naheed Arshad-Mather MBE
Chair, BME VCS Regional Panel (Dec 2006)

2. Background

The Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector Regional Panel (the Panel) held its inaugural meeting in December 2005 following extensive research and consultation with public and voluntary sector stakeholders. Our purpose is to provide a strategic voice on behalf of the black and minority ethnic, voluntary and community sector in Yorkshire and the Humber.

3. Purpose of the Business Plan

The business plan introduces the Panel's mission, strategic objectives, thematic priorities and the outcomes that we are striving to achieve. The plan provides the framework for developing annual work plans, fundraising and allocating resources, progress monitoring, impact assessment and accountability. It is also a medium for building relationships within the sector and with statutory agencies, and for stimulating dialogue.

4. Our Mission

The Panel will work to empower the BME VCS across Yorkshire and the Humber by raising its voice at the regional level and by developing effective linkages.

5. Our Strategic Aims and Objectives

The Panel's long term aims and objectives are:

1. To provide effective BME VCS advocacy at the regional level by:
 - offering a perspective on the delivery of policies and programmes at regional level;
 - engaging in policy development with regional partners and influencing policy development and delivery;
 - addressing the issues of potential exclusion of the BME VCS from partnership working and ultimately the decision making process;
 - advocating on behalf of the BME VCS to effectively engage in partnership working and ultimately the decision making process;
 - acting as a think tank and developing the business case for cultural diversity.
2. To help sub-regional and local BME and non-BME VCS organisations to fully engage and benefit from the wider VCS infrastructure support at a district, sub-regional and regional level by:
 - providing a regional specialist forum for the exchange of ideas and good practice within the wider voluntary and community sector on BME issues;
 - developing wider VCS and specialist partnerships, ensuring that BME and non-BME VCS organisations gain the capacity to deliver on social and economic programmes;
 - acting as a catalyst for change.

6. Our Strategy

Our role is to advocate on behalf of the BME VCS, strengthening the BME VCS's voice to ensure that it is heard when policies are being developed and throughout their delivery. We want to increase the impact that public and VCS policy has on the BME VCS and on delivering equalities outcomes.

The regional policy framework is a complex one. Through regional governance there are national policies that are managed regionally, over-arching regional policies, thematic policies, sub-regional policies and VCS policies. Similarly there is an increasing number of regional policy makers and policy making structures. We have to find a way to navigate this landscape and our starting point is our continuing engagement with the three key public sector agencies in the region: GOYH, Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly.

There is a tremendous breadth of exciting and emerging policies within the region: from the Regional Economic Strategy to the Regional Strategic Framework for Public Health in Yorkshire and the Humber, city regions to the Local Government White Paper and from civil renewal to the Regional VCS Infrastructure Strategy. Our goal is to ensure that these policies recognise their responsibilities for promoting race equality and take on board a BME VCS perspective, thereby contributing to alleviating the social and economic exclusion for BME communities in the region and improving their quality of life.



7. Strategic Priorities

We have set ourselves a challenging set of objectives and outcomes but on our own we are limited in what we can achieve. In order to strike the best balance between the breadth of our engagement and the depth of our impact we propose to establish work programmes under three headings:

- regional advocacy
- thematic advocacy in priority themes
- operational activity that supports our advocacy role

Regional advocacy

This work has already commenced being delivered by the Panel collectively and Panel members individually. For example Panel meetings have received presentations from policy makers across the region and the Panel has been able to feed into consultation processes eg future European programmes and the Cross Cutting Review 2007. In addition to our collective working, individual Panel members have been delegated to represent the Panel on bodies such as the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly, the Regional Forum (Yorkshire and the Humber's regional VCS network), NOMS (National Offender Management Service), RLSG (Regional Learning and Skills Group, and SubNet (network of sub-regional VCS networks and consortia in the region).

Thematic advocacy

In the short term, the Panel will focus on three areas of public policy:

- Learning Communities
- Healthy Communities
- Safer Stronger Communities

These themes feature significantly in the disadvantage and deprivation that BME communities experience and are areas where the BME VCS is active. In addition they are covered by key regional institutions e.g. the Yorkshire and Humber Learning and Skills Council and the new Yorkshire and the Humber Strategic Health Authority and are key components of national and regional policy eg Local Area Agreements, the Regional Economic Strategy 2006-15 and Advancing Together. A clear focus will ensure that engagement is purposeful and sustainable.

Operational activity

In tandem with the policy themes that we have prioritised, we also have a range of cross-cutting objectives to deliver. Again we are concerned to avoid taking on too wide a range of functions and as a consequence failing to make any real impact. We have taken a pragmatic approach to selecting functions to prioritise as summarised below:

- Equalities
- Information and intelligence
- Promotion



8. A Regional Framework

The Panel aims to add value through strategic alliances and mainstreaming. This begins with aligning the Panel's objectives with existing strategic frameworks across the region. The most appropriate framework is the Regional VCS Infrastructure Strategy being developed by the Regional Forum and SubNet.

The purpose of the strategy is to set out long-term VCS infrastructure development objectives and strategies for pursuing them. It includes a Common Framework through which regional and sub-regional consortia can align their respective objectives and strategies and develop opportunities for collaborative working. The Framework is conducive to aligning our objectives and promoting the principle of mainstreaming race equality.

9. Delivery Plans

The Panel is preparing delivery plans to direct activity in our priority areas and to provide benchmarks for monitoring progress and impact. A worked example is appended to illustrate the format and content of a delivery plan.

10. Organisation and Management

At December 2006, the Panel members are: Naheed Arshad-Mather MBE; Justina Oraka; Fiaz Rashid; Lilian Rose; Patrick Spencer-Salami; Rita Sanderson; Ruksana Sardar-Akram; Sara Saxon and Sajda Shah.

The nine members of the Panel have operated through full panel meetings. The foundations have been laid and work programmes are developing under the prioritised themes and functions. It is now time for us to introduce new structural arrangements that increase our operating capacity whilst retaining accountability to the full panel.

- set the Panel's overall strategic direction;
- co-ordinate thematic and functional task groups (see 7);
- influence over-arching regional policy;
- determine its budget and fundraising requirements.

Terms of reference for thematic and operational task groups will include:

- establish short and medium term objectives under their designated priorities;
- develop respective work plans;
- make links with relevant regional bodies from the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- manage implementation of work plans and monitor progress towards objectives;
- put forward proposals for information, consultation and market testing;
- report and account to the full Panel.

The lifespan of task groups will be determined by the full Panel. In so doing we will take account of the period of time required to enable task group objectives to be met and the need for the Panel to address a wider range of issues than those currently prioritised.

11. Accountable Body Arrangements

Accountable body services are commissioned from the Regional Forum. In this role the Forum holds the Panel's funding; undertakes financial administration and reporting on the Panel's behalf and assures compliance with the conditions of grant support.

Additional services delivered by the Regional Forum include secretariat to the Panel, Panel development and strategic support to the Panel. The Regional Forum will continue to deliver these services.

12. Building Links

The Panel does not have formal accountability to the BME VCS but the strength of our voice rests upon our ability to demonstrate strong links with the sector. We will build links where we can, through a communication strategy, and work with existing specialist infrastructure providers to engage their service users in our work and to ensure that our work promotes the interests of their service users. Where specialist provision is weak we will be lobbying appropriate agencies to investigate why and consider how to address such weaknesses.



13. Partnership Working with the Regional Forum

We aim to extend our partnership working with the Regional Forum. The Forum already has a well-developed strategic operation and is connected into regional policy makers. It has been able to attract financial resources to support the Panel's work and is well-placed to promote our message across the generalist VCS in addition to the partnership structures in which it is engaged.

Partnership working will be a mutual benefit in assisting the Forum to achieve its vision of inclusive and thriving communities and open doors for the Panel to be promoting race equality and advocating on behalf of the BME VCS.

14. Panel Development

The Panel will continue its own development through short-term tactical co-options to plug gaps and weaknesses; thematic knowledge and understanding and geographic gaps and a structured programme of capacity building to develop our collective and individual capacities.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Panel will monitor how efficiently it operates and how effectively it delivers its objectives. There are already a number of existing frameworks upon which we can draw and seek alignment – e.g. PERFORM and Active Partners, with the potential for creating a resource that can be implemented by BME regional networks elsewhere.

Worked example for Learning Communities

Theme Policy Frameworks	Working Together 14-19 Agenda Youth Matters Regional Economic Strategy	Regional Agencies	Regional Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Regional Learning and Skills Group (RLSG) Jobcentre Plus Yorkshire Forward GOYH
--------------------------------	---	--------------------------	--

Panel Objectives	Thematic objectives	Delivery actions	Outcomes
Advocacy and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve BME VCS workforce development, skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat on RLSG Seat on Yorkshire & Humber Assembly Progress recommendations from relevant reports eg 'Building the Foundation' – Regional LSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased BME engagement in policy design and delivery
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase BME infrastructure and voluntary and community organisations' awareness of workforce development opportunities and resources To promote diversity in the VCS workforce – paid staff, volunteers and trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BME Information Service website (www.bme.org.uk) updated and relevant Maintain links with BME infrastructure organisations through communication strategy Bring local intelligence back to regional agencies eg through RSLG, Working Together groups at local level Support infrastructure consortia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more skilled BME VCS workforce Increase in the number of trustees drawn from BME communities Improved BME VCS management and performance
Coordination, networking and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop skills and attitudes for collaborative and partnership working To develop a co-ordinated voice for BME VCS workforce development Input to VCS development in relation to Leadership and Management Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use website to disseminate information on current policies and issues, in accessible format Commission workshop events to gather information, share best practice and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BME VCS benefits from increased range and level of appropriate skills and knowledge
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain an up-to-date understanding of the BME VCS workforce development needs, good practice in responding to such needs and 'accredited' providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission appropriate research Input into research commissioned by other agencies, at an early stage of its development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline information established as evidence base Workforce development customised to BME VCS workforce needs
Infrastructure support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the impact of provision from generalist infrastructure organisations and learning providers and BME VCS accessibility to their services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ChangeUp Infrastructure Race Equality Framework to infrastructure consortia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BME VCOs to engage in delivering learning A highly skilled BME VCS workforce – paid staff, volunteers and trustees

BME VCS Regional Panel
c/o Suite D10,
Joseph's Well,
Hanover Walk,
Leeds, LS3 1AB
Tel: 0113 34 2300
Fax: 0113 394 2301
office@bme.org.uk
www.bme.org.uk



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

regional forum 

m.e.i. 

