

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations Code

Introduction

Government recognises the important role of the BME sector in ensuring the voluntary and community sector is more representative of society, and in supporting Government's efforts to create a more cohesive and inclusive society. The BME sector represents diverse communities including faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations. This Code provides a framework for joint working towards race equality that gives the BME sector an increased voice, and more effective support and resources.

Key Principles

- Government support for BME infrastructure is necessary to enable the BME sector to work effectively
- Government must use the BME sector's expertise effectively and ensure the wide range of the sector's views are heard and understood by effective consultation
- BME organisations must be included in the development of Local Compacts wherever possible

Government undertakes to

- Recognise the independence of the BME sector and its right to challenge institutions, policy and practice as part of its goal of achieving race equality
- Consult appropriately with the BME sector throughout policy development and implementation
- Establish race equality strategies, objectives and targets in all Government departments
- Give BME voluntary and community organisations fair and equal access to Government funding programmes and consider the possibility of dedicated funding to support capacity building
- Ensure that BME organisations are actively involved in local service planning and review and the development of local community strategies
- Require that all partnership bids to Government programmes demonstrate real consultation with and involvement of BME communities

The BME sector undertakes to

- Play a full and active part within the wider voluntary and community sector and to work in partnership with the sector and Government to promote race equality and to tackle social exclusion
- Establish a responsive and accountable regional structure with Government support
- Encourage joint working by diverse groups within the BME sector
- Present the BME sector's concerns to Government
- Ensure proper governance and effective management of BME organisations
- Develop quality standards and best practice measures and offer effective training to staff and trustees
- Work to ensure BME organisations are open and dynamic

