

PORTSMOUTH COMPACT - BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The compact has been developed in the city as a framework to guide and improve working relationships between the local statutory, voluntary and community sectors. This Code of Good Practice has been developed to sit alongside the Compact to assist that process.

AIM:

This Code of Good Practice aims to make a positive impact on the relationship between statutory organisations and the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary and community sector. Statutory organisations recognise that the BME voluntary and community sector, including faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations, have an important and continuing role in helping them to achieve their objectives and that statutory organisations can play a positive role in supporting the work of the sector. The City recognises that race equality has significant far-reaching effects on individuals, their families, local communities and all city residents. It is a fundamental human right. Portsmouth City Council has worked within the framework of the Commission for Race Equality's Standard since 1995 and is now working the generic Equality standard which has replaced it. The Portsmouth City Council Race Equality Scheme 2005 – 2008 relates to the City Council's race equality aims for 2005-2008. (Other statutory organisations may want to add to this statement)

An effective partnership with statutory organisations is an essential part of ensuring that the BME voluntary and community sector is able to develop its full potential as an important contributor to society and a strategic agent of those it seeks to represent.

This Code of Good Practice applies the Compact theme of Getting it Right Together and aims to address the exclusion experienced by the BME voluntary and community sector.

THE BME VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR:

The BME voluntary and community sector works to tackle the disadvantage experienced by the communities from which it springs. However, despite their work with a diverse range of groups and communities, many BME voluntary and community organisations continue to be excluded from the traditional structures of the voluntary and community sector. It is vital that the BME voluntary and community sector engages in a positive relationship with statutory organisations and other voluntary and community groups, building mutual trust and confidence.

In order for statutory organisations and the sector to engage effectively a number of key issues need to be addressed. These include:

- ◆ Joint commitment to taking forward the race equality agenda as well as recognising the significant role to be played by the BME voluntary and community sector in partnership with statutory organisations and others towards achieving race equality
- ◆ Improved quality and quantity of consultation and participation by the BME voluntary and community sector in policy development, implementation and evaluation
- ◆ Better support and resources to the BME voluntary and community sector which reflects its role in addressing public service inequalities and allow it to operate, develop and contribute on an equal footing with other partners, particularly statutory organisations and the mainstream voluntary and community sector
- ◆ Recognition of the specific contribution and needs of the BME sector, particularly at local level, and how this impacts on funding, capacity and sustainability

FRAMEWORK OF PARTNERSHIP:

Joint Undertakings:

- ◆ Develop a partnership approach to carry forward the Government's strategy for achieving race equality, including promoting and sharing best practice and celebrating success.
- ◆ Work together in partnership with other agencies to promote joint working initiatives which improve the policy and implementation outcomes for BME communities, particularly those programmes aimed at community regeneration and a more inclusive and cohesive society.
- ◆ Encourage, develop and support volunteering by and within BME communities in line with the Compact Code of Good Practice on Volunteering and the Code of Good Practice for Community Groups.
- ◆ Make suitable mention of this Code of Good Practice in all appropriate documentation and publications for statutory organisations and voluntary and community sector.
- ◆ To adhere to the Portsmouth Compact and other Codes of Good Practice as they apply to BME groups

Statutory organisations undertakings:

- ◆ Value the work, knowledge and expertise of the BME voluntary and community sector, including its important role in helping the statutory organisations to achieve their objectives.
- ◆ Recognise and support the independence of the BME sector and its right within law to challenge institutions, policy and practice, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist, and to determine and manage its own affairs.
- ◆ Operate effective and transparent equal opportunity monitoring and evaluation systems that ensure BME voluntary and community organisations are treated fairly and with respect in all interactions with statutory organisations.
- ◆ Build, as appropriate, consultation with the BME voluntary and community sector into plans for policy development from the pre-consultation stage through to implementation, with the aim that implications for BME communities and race equality are examined and considered.
- ◆ Establish race equality strategies within the corporate planning processes of all statutory agencies, with clearly expressed objectives and targets.
- ◆ Ensure that BME voluntary and community organisations have fair and equal access to funding programmes, particularly those that impact significantly on BME communities. Statutory organisations should consider setting aside additional funds for BME organisations to build capacity, prepare and deliver projects.
- ◆ Ensure that statutory grants are appropriately administered and allocated to BME groups with the capacity to deliver agreed outputs and outcomes to agreed and predetermined standards.
- ◆ Consider the views and encourage the active engagement of the BME voluntary and community organisations in the local authority's community strategy and in the development of the local strategic partnership.

BME voluntary and community sector's undertakings:

- ◆ Play a full and active part within the wider voluntary and community sector in fulfilling the significant undertakings in the Compact, this Code of Good Practice and the other Compact Codes of Good Practice.
- ◆ Work in partnership with statutory organisations and other voluntary and community organisations in promoting race equality, tackling social exclusion and promoting civil society.
- ◆ Aim to establish a responsive local structure that is accountable to local groups and which will enable communication and consultation with them in order to provide BME perspectives on key local, regional and national issues.
- ◆ Facilitate consortium and partnership working among diverse ethnic and religious groups within the sector, sharing professional leadership expertise and other practical skills.
- ◆ Inform and present community concerns to statutory agencies and other partners based on accountable partnerships with local communities.
- ◆ Ensure proper governance, placing clear responsibility on trustees and chief officers to use public funds appropriately and inform funders when organisations face significant management and resource challenges, including financial difficulties.
- ◆ Adopt appropriate quality standards and apply best practice in management and delivery within organisations.
- ◆ Make use of appropriate training opportunities, particularly support and training for trustees and senior staff.
- ◆ Develop open and dynamic organisations providing opportunities for voluntary and community action by a diverse range of individuals demonstrating a commitment to wider equality issues in addition to race equality.

TACKLING RACISM, INEQUALITY AND EXCLUSION:

A successful BME voluntary and community sector is an important partner in helping local authorities make its commitment to race and equality a reality. Tackling racism, inequality and exclusion should be kept firmly on the agenda across all levels of local government.

CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION:

A number of barriers exclude BME voluntary and community organisations from effective involvement in consultation processes. Implementation of the Compact Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal will go some way to addressing these.

Statutory organisations should:

1. Review with the BME voluntary and community sector how representatives from organisations and communities are selected to engage in policy and consultation processes.
2. Develop a wide ranging network of specialist local BME voluntary and community organisations to contribute to policy and consultation processes.

3. Aim to develop an equality protocol for the involvement of BME voluntary and community organisations to contribute to policy and consultation processes.
4. Monitor the race equality practices of funded mainstream voluntary organisations with regards to employment, service delivery and composition of trustee boards, and consider setting equality targets where appropriate.

FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT:

To date funding for the BME voluntary and community sector, whether from existing or new sources has been significantly below that of similar organisations in the mainstream voluntary and community sector. Implementation of the Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding will help to address many of the issues around funding for the BME voluntary and community sector.

Statutory organisations should:

- ◆ Aim to establish an accessible database of all funded BME organisations
- ◆ Ensure that they have good quality internal policy advice on BME issues
- ◆ Use their influence to work with other funding bodies on supporting the BME voluntary and community sector and encourage, where appropriate, other funders to monitor and publish the proportion of funding that goes to BME voluntary and community organisations
- ◆ Recognise that the BME sector includes faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations and consult with them to resolve issues of their access to public funds.

BME voluntary and community groups should:

- ◆ Ensure bids are appropriate and adequate for their purpose
- ◆ Provide appropriate accountable finance mechanisms for their organisations
- ◆ Develop effective and supportive monitoring and evaluation systems
- ◆ Work towards achieving appropriate quality standards

LOCAL RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP:

The majority of BME voluntary and community groups work at a local level, consequently, relations with local statutory organisations are key. The diversity of the BME voluntary and community sector should be adequately represented on Local Compact steering groups and in consultation.

Local statutory authorities should:

- ◆ Provide vigorous structures to ensure that race equality and the involvement of BME communities is a prerequisite for accessing regional and local partnership funding
- ◆ Aim to have a lead officer on race equality and BME voluntary and community sector relations, within their senior management structure

DEVELOPING CAPACITY:

Support for the development of capacity and infrastructure for BME organisations should include strategic funding support at local, regional and national level where appropriate.

Capacity building within BME organisations should be directed towards policies and initiatives that enhance the skills of individuals within organisations. Shared training initiatives and secondment schemes between statutory organisations, mainstream and the BME voluntary and community sectors, enable all parties to gain an insight and develop understanding of the issues confronting respective organisations.

Statutory organisations should:

- ◆ Develop the concept of joined up funding, in partnership with other funders, so that support to the BME voluntary and community sector focuses on developing capacity
- ◆ Where possible support income generation and fundraising initiatives which develop the capacity of the BME voluntary and community sector.
- ◆ Consider support for the acquisition of premises for BME voluntary and community groups

BME voluntary and community groups should:

- ◆ Recognise the value of developing their organisational capacity and that of individuals in their community
- ◆ Actively support and encourage initiatives with statutory organisations and/or other voluntary and community groups to develop their capacity

VOLUNTEERING AND MENTORING:

Statutory organisations should recognise the different experiences of volunteering and construct support for volunteering in the BME communities that meets their differing needs.

There are a number of issues that organisations need to consider when attracting BME people to volunteer:

- ◆ Taking a proactive approach to dealing with any existing under-representation of BME people among volunteers, paid staff and trustees
- ◆ Dismantling unnecessary bureaucratic procedures
- ◆ Offering a choice of ways to be involved
- ◆ Removing practical obstacles

Action points:

1. Mentoring programmes between statutory organisations and the voluntary sector should be encouraged as a means of skills development and access for all involved
2. Statutory organisations must recognise the contribution and the cost for BME volunteers in the development of initiatives to support and increase levels of volunteering
3. Mainstream volunteer bureaux should give particular focus to both placing volunteers from BME communities and supplying volunteers to BME groups.

The BME voluntary and community organisations – Code of good practice will be subject to annual review with all partners to maintain its relevance in line with the Consultation and Policy Appraisal – Code of good practice.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THE CODE:

This Code of Good Practice is not a legally binding document, it should be seen, as an enabling mechanism to enhance the relationship between statutory organisations and the BME voluntary and community sector.

The development of action plans to implement the good practice guidance in this Code will be the responsibility of individual departments, agencies and bodies and the range of voluntary organisations in the voluntary sector. Where they do not follow this good practice, they must satisfy themselves that, if asked they have good reasons for not doing so.

DISPUTES

Any dispute arising as a failure to comply with all or part of BME voluntary and community organisations – Code of good practice or any other, can be resolved through the Dispute Resolution Document, agreed as an attachment to the Portsmouth Compact.