

# Our Compact

## The Black and Minority Ethnic Communities Code of Good Practice

### Introduction

The Black and Minority Ethnic Communities Code is one of five Codes of Practice developed as part of "Our Compact" for Doncaster. "Our Compact" is being led by our local strategic partnership (DtS) in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the diverse communities within Doncaster. This agreement is between the members of the DtS family, which includes public bodies, the private sector and social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations, and aims to improve their relationships for mutual advantage.

### The Compact

The Compact sets out the principles that underpin the relationships whilst the Codes of Practice set out detailed recommendations for best working practice. Together they aim to increase understanding, clarify expectations and strengthen collaborative working across the partnership.

The Compact and its codes have been developed by representatives of public bodies and the Third Sector, with the intention that organisations across sectors will be able to adopt them as a shared and common way of working.

### The Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities Code

Public agencies and all partners that sign up to the Compact will comply with the undertakings set out in the Compact and all other Codes of Practice in working with the BME Third Sector. In addition this Code of Practice aims to give specific attention to the needs of the BME organisations within the Third Sector. The overarching aim is to make a positive impact on the relationship between the BME sector and all partners.

This code will ensure that the sectors take into account the needs of BME communities and other minority groups in their policy development and set action plans to meet identified needs, implement those actions and evaluate their effectiveness in partnership.

### What is the aim of this Code of Practice?

All partners will comply with the undertakings set out in the Compact and all other Codes of Practice in working with the BME Third Sector. In addition this Code of Practice aims to give specific attention to the needs of BME organisations within the Third Sector. The overarching aim is to make a positive impact on the relationships between all partners.

This Code of Practice specifically aims to set a framework for promoting:

- A joint commitment to taking forward race equality, including sharing best practice and promoting good relationships
- Improved quality and quantity of consultation and participation with BME organisations
- Recognition of the specific needs of BME organisations
- Better access to resources and support for BME organisations
- Better links at a strategic level between all partners

## Background and Context

Doncaster has a rich and diverse multi cultural range of communities located across the Borough.

The BME population accounts for 3.5 per cent of the population compared to a national figure of 13 per cent. The gypsy and traveller population is estimated to account for over 4,000 residents, and there are approximately 1,000 asylum seekers in the borough. (Audit Commission 2006). This means that there are people from a wide range of backgrounds and speaking a wide variety of languages now living in Doncaster.

BME organisations within the Third Sector have arisen in response to the specific needs of Black and Minority Ethnic communities and through efforts to bridge gaps in existing services.

The BME sector is made up of groups which could be defined as community based groups and organisations whose approach is geared towards the empowerment of Black and Minority Ethnic people and will include amongst others: faith groups, refugees, asylum seekers, Gypsy & traveller, migrant workers. It is the responsibility of all partners to recognise that the diversity of BME communities is constantly changing in terms of race, culture and faith groups.

All partners to acknowledge that BME communities are made up of many diverse groups and that multiple layers of discrimination linked to age, faith, gender, sexuality and disability may also exist.

## Joint Undertakings

All partners undertake to:

- Recognise the ever-changing diversity of the BME Third Sector in relation to race, culture and faith as well as other issues
- Develop a partnership approach to taking forward the Government's strategy for achieving race equality and community cohesion by promoting and sharing best practice and celebrating success
- Promote and support compliance with the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and other equalities legislation which promotes civil society
- Where found, eradicate individual or institutional racism within organisations
- Work together to improve the quality of life for BME communities so as to promote an inclusive society in Doncaster
- Contribute to initiatives to promote understanding and learning between the sectors

- Encourage access to volunteering opportunities for and with BME communities, acknowledging that fear of racism often stops BME people from volunteering
- Promote and comply with policies for responding to incidents of harassment
- Support capacity and organisational development within the sector
- Review funding criteria to see that they do not disadvantage BME groups
- Accept the independence of each community within the BME sector, and the right within the law to challenge institutions' policies and practices, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist

## Public Sector and Non BME Third Sector Undertakings

The above Partners undertake to:

- Public sector bodies comply with their statutory duties
- Non BME Third Sector partners have in place, and comply with equal opportunities policies and procedures
- Raise general staff awareness and knowledge of the BME communities and sector across the borough through training, information and signposting
- Provide opportunities for the BME Third Sector to supply information and training on BME issues to public sector and other bodies
- Ensure that knowledge and links exist with the BME Third Sector at the highest level within individual agencies
- Acknowledge the emerging and continuing needs of BME communities
- Make information available, on request, in the most reasonable format to people who speak or write other languages
- Use the partner networks for targeted distribution of information
- Involve the BME Third Sector at the earliest stage so that the implications for BME communities and race equality are considered and addressed
- Provide feedback from any such consultation carried out with the BME Third Sector
- Recognise that smaller organisations should be invited to have a say through informal as well as formal meetings and structures
- Time consultation to take into account periods of religious or faith observations and celebrations

## Black & Minority Ethnic Third Sector Undertakings

The BME Third Sector undertake to:

- Strive to play a full and active part within the wider Third Sector in fulfilling the undertakings of the Compact
- Actively promote ethnicity, culture and diverse religions and beliefs
- Recognise that multiple layers of discrimination may exist linked to age, gender, sexuality and disability and that these also need to be addressed
- Encourage co-operation, collaboration and joint working amongst the diverse groups that make up the BME Third Sector

- Continue to develop a local structure accountable to local groups which will enable communication and consultation with them
- Continue to make use of appropriate training and learning opportunities
- Ensure that any services provided by the BME Third Sector in response to identified need are culturally sensitive and inclusive
- Develop BME organisations that are open and dynamic and provide opportunities for Third Sector activity on the wider equality issues
- Inform and present community concerns to all partners based on accountable partnerships with local communities
- Be clear about whose views are being represented when presenting BME Third Sector concerns to partners. If speaking on behalf of the whole sector be clear as to how this has been agreed