

**Wales Race Forum Meeting
21 May at 12.00pm – 1.00pm
Ty Hywel, Cardiff Bay**

Attendees:

Leader of the House and Chief Whip	
Aled Edwards	Faith Communities Forum Representative
Rocio Cifuentes	Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)
Maria Mesa	Women Connect First
Salah Mohammed	Welsh Refugee Council
Shereen Williams	Community Cohesion Regional Co-ordinator, Gwent East
Daniel Hurford	Welsh Local Government Association
Uzo Iwobi	Race Council Cymru
Sunil Patel	Show Racism the Red Card
Isaac Blake	Romani Cultural and Arts Company

Welsh Government Officials in Attendance:

Paul Dear	Equality Team
Emma Small	Equality Team
Cerys Davies	Equality Team

Apologies:

Mandy Burrows	Community Cohesion Regional Co-ordinator, North East
Shahien Taj	Henna Foundation
David Phillips	Welsh Equality Group
Samesunear Ali	BAWSO

Presentations:

Rocio Cifuentes and Ginger Wiegland, EYST

Welcome and Introductions

The Leader of the House introduced herself and welcomed members to the meeting.

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting and the actions paper were noted and agreed.

Item 1: Update from Uzo Iwobi on Third Sector Partnership Council

Uzo said that her two year term serving on the TSPC had finished in March. EYST and Race Council Cymru were elected to represent the BAME sector as a “BAME Alliance”. EYST and RCC have just signed a Memorandum of Understanding, with both organisations hopeful that their partnership will lead to focused work with a positive impact.

Uzo highlighted that she had attended the education stakeholder group but it wasn't an interactive event and therefore she had not been able to contribute. Sunil said he felt that the issue of racist incidents in schools needed to be raised again with the TSPC to ensure that they were fully aware.

The Forum agreed it would be helpful if the Leader of the House could make representations to the TSPC chair (the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services), to see if the BAME alliance or members of the Wales Race Forum could have a slot on the TSPC agenda to flag race issues, such as those relating to education and also public health. The LoH confirmed that she would approach Alun Davies to ask that the Wales Race Forum members contribute an agenda item at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat to contact the secretariat for the TSPC meeting in the first instance.

Item 2: Windrush anniversary and Windrush scandal discussion

The LoH highlighted a number of related anniversaries this year: 50 years since the Race Relations Act 1968, 50 years since death of Martin Luther King, 25 years since death of Stephen Lawrence, 70th Anniversary of the NHS (with many ethnic minority health personnel working in Wales), 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in the UK. LoH invited members to consider how they could collaborate together to mark these anniversaries. In advance of the meeting, RCC had sent a letter to all Forum members to invite collaboration during a Windrush commemorative event and during Black History Month.

Uzo said that the Black Cymru History Elders are leading on Windrush celebrations, and would welcome any support from Forum members, who are also welcome to contact RCC with suggestions for invitations to the Windrush Commemorative event.

LoH highlighted that Welsh Government continues to press the UK Government to resolve the Windrush Generation issues and make clear its continuing concerns about the impact their 'hostile environment' policy is having on our BAME, refugee, asylum seeker and migrant communities.

Aled reminded the Forum that the Welsh Government is constitutionally bound by the Human Rights Act. Implementation of the UK Government's 2014 Immigration Act is therefore putting our Institution at risk because the Immigration Act has not paid due regard to the Human Rights Act. The current scandal relates to the Windrush generation, but it is likely that in the near future there will be a similar scandal in relation to EU migrants. Could the Forum put forward in a strong voice our concerns to the UK Government? LoH agreed to support a letter going from the Forum to UK Government.

Shereen highlighted a recent case in Newport where the Home Office had not accepted a person's National Insurance Number as proof of identity, as a result of which the person was almost made homeless. People in such situations may not know where to turn for support. The Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales,

Children Commissioner for Wales and Future Generations Commissioner for Wales could be included in the correspondence, for them to ensure they are aware of the impact of the hostile environment policies being imposed, and people could be encouraged to contact them in order to access support.

Rocio enquired whether it would be possible for WG to liaise with and potentially provide resources to Citizens Advice Bureau and other advice providers to enable them to be better equipped to support communities on migration, rights etc. Paul confirmed that Equality officials are currently holding discussions with colleagues responsible for policy on advice services, to explore whether funds are available from any source to provide such extra resources.

Maria shared that Windrush support groups have been established, including one in Butetown, whereby lawyers from the Windrush generation are providing advice and support on a voluntary basis. Some members of the community are nervous about contacting official bodies for help (including CAB) and prefer to be able to access support from a local group. The Forum agreed that it was essential that members of the community are consulted over the type of support that they would like to see put in place.

Actions:

- Secretariat to draft a letter on behalf of the Forum to the UK Government, voicing concerns that the 2014 Immigration Act did not pay due regard to the Human Rights Act, which is binding upon Welsh Government. This letter would be copied to the three Commissioners in Wales to highlight the potential impact of hostile environment policies within their demographic.
- Forum members to contact RCC regarding collaboration in the Windrush commemorative event and Black History Month.
- Type of support wanted by the community in relation to the Windrush Scandal should be a topic of discussion at the Windrush Commemorative event.

Item 3: EYST conference paper, Rocio Cifuentes, Director EYST and Ginger Wiegand

Rocio updated on the initial findings of the All Wales BAME Engagement Programme, alongside Ginger who has led the project team. In the first year of the All Wales BAME Engagement Programme, the team focussed on making connections with relevant individuals and organisations throughout Wales, building regional fora and working with partner organisations to host local / grassroots engagement events across LA's in Wales. In the first year, 20+ events have been held, alongside numerous 1-2-1 meetings, reaching 700+ people and working with 90+ organisations.

The 4 key themes emerging from discussions were:

- Racism and islamophobia
- Socio-economic issues
- Representation
- Achieving transformation

These key themes were discussed at the annual conference, to agree on potential solutions for these issues, details of which are included within the conference paper.

Action: Secretariat to re-send Conference report to members. Members invited to respond to EYST with comments by 15 June

During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

Concerns were raised regarding the progression and retention of BAME teachers in schools throughout Wales, and the need for anti-racism to be embedded in the curriculum, and re-emphasised each year.

Sunil commented that he thought the solutions paper presented a good summary of discussions held, and shared his concern that the Education Improvement Grant is being significantly reduced, which will impact on Show Racism the Red Card's ability to work with a high number of schools. LoH shared that the administration costs have been removed from the above grant, and is therefore less of a cut than is being reported. Dan highlighted that the WLGA had held positive discussions regarding this grant, and would share the positive solutions once able to.

Isaac queried how anti-gypsy racism could be monitored. LoH updated that she had been undertaking a tour of visits to Gypsy sites across Wales and had held discussions with various LA's. LoH commented that the Sites Capital Grant is not currently being used to its full potential.

LoH updated members that Welsh Government and Chwarae Teg are currently undertaking a rapid review of gender equality, and exploring inter-sectionality will form part of this. She highlighted that WG are committed to becoming a more inclusive organisation and are working towards this. Maria highlighted that it would be useful to know the number of BAME leaders in WG, and the barriers that have been faced when such an exercise has been undertaken in the past. LoH updated that she welcomed any ideas on how to take this work forward.

Uzo commented that Race Council Cymru welcomed this report and this innovative way of working. She highlighted that in times of funding cuts to organisations, RCC are keen to continue to work with others.

Action: Secretariat to follow up the discussion with members of the Forum and provide feedback at the next meeting.

Item 4: Review of the Wales Race Forum

LoH introduced plans for a review of the Wales Race Forum this year. She said that the Forum exists to provide advice to the Welsh Government on race-related issues, and that it was important for us to find the best mechanism through which to have an effective, two-way dialogue. It is time to consider whether the Forum is still the best mechanism and whether other mechanisms (for example, an annual or biannual conference) would be better.

The LoH set out plans and a timetable for the review as follows. Firstly she has asked officials, working with the all-Wales BAME project, to produce a map of the current BAME sector, so that we can identify gaps in delivery against priority issues, and identify where the funding pressures are most acute.

Secondly, she has asked officials to engage with Forum members and wider BAME stakeholders over the coming months to seek views on how the limited Equality and Inclusion budget at her disposal could be best used to support the BAME sector as a whole to achieve our shared ambition to make Wales a more equal place to live and work.

Thirdly, she has asked officials to engage with Forum members and wider BAME stakeholders over the best mechanisms through which the Welsh Government can gather advice on BAME issues across Wales and engage in a two-way dialogue on race-related issues.

She appealed to all Forum members to engage with her officials during this process, to help “shape the future”. The review will report during the autumn, and the next Race Forum meeting will be scheduled during this time.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be issued to members shortly.