

**Wales Race Forum Meeting  
19 October 2020 at 10.00am – 11.00am  
Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)**

**Attendees:**

Jane Hutt (MS)	Deputy Minister and Chief Whip
Cindy Ikie	BLM Wales
Kay Denyer	Race Council Cymru
Aled Edwards	Cytun
Isaac Blake	Romani Cultural and Arts Company
Ailish Carroll-Brentnall	Show Racism the Red Card (Mentee to Sunil Patel)
Mutale Merill	BAWSO
Ravina Croft	Show Racism the Red Card (Mentee to Sunil Patel)
Suzanne Duval	Diverse Cymru (BAME Mental Health)
Alicja Zalesinska	Tai Pawb
Maria Mesa	Women Connect First
Sunil Patel	Show Racism the Red Card
Rocio Cifuentes	Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST)
Riaz Hassan	Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, Swansea
Patience Bentu	Race Council Cymru
Ali Abdi	BAME Youth Forum
Iolanda Viegas	Black History Month
Professor Robert Moore	NWREN
Sibani Roy	NWAMI
Sy Joshua	Race Equality First
Abyd Quinn-Aziz	Race Alliance Wales
Faith Walker	Race Alliance Wales
Sophie Weeks	DMCW Mentee

**Welsh Government Officials:**

Alyson Francis	Community Division
Uzo Iwobi	Specialist Policy Advisor
Ayanna Mathurine	Equality Branch
Hannah Fisher	Equality Branch
Suzanne Vincent-Jones,	Equality Branch
Nashima Begum	Equality Branch
Mitchell Theaker	Special Advisor

**Apologies:**

Emma Bennett	Equality Branch
Andrew Ogun	BLM Gwent
Laura O'Keeffe	Race Equality First
Daniel Hurford	WLGA

**Welcome and Introductions**

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (The Deputy Minister) introduced herself and welcomed members to the meeting.

The Deputy Minister explained that she had extended the membership of the Race Forum to broaden the intersectional nature of the work of the group and also to ensure there was a grounding in grassroots activism within the group membership.

The Deputy Minister expressed her apologies for having to leave the meeting at 10.45am to join an urgent cabinet meeting and explained that Hannah Fisher would chair the remainder of the meeting in her absence.

### **Item 1: Setting out the purpose of the extended Race Forum and Introductions (new members joining group)**

The Minister left the meeting for a moment and Hannah Fisher provided a short update to the group on recent policy activity.

The Deputy Minister rejoined the group and emphasised the importance of the group in providing specific policy advice on the development of the Race Equality Action Plan and also the issues faced by the BAME community as a result of COVID-19.

The Government has set an ambitious and challenging task to publish a draft Race Equality Action Plan for consultation in March 2021. This Group would play a key role in providing expert, evidence-based advice to the Welsh Government and oversight and scrutiny for the development of a Race Equality Action Plan for Wales.

The Terms of Reference have been updated to reflect the suggestions made at the last meeting of the Wales Race Forum and would be issued to the members following the meeting.

The Minister invited members to briefly introduce themselves.

#### **Action:**

- Welsh Government to issue revised Terms of Reference to the members of Wales Race Forum.

### **Item 2: Update on Race Equality Action Plan development work**

The Minister emphasised that the vision for the Action Plan was grounded in a recognition of the need for fundamental change. Work on the Plan was moving at pace with three work streams already established.

Work stream 1 – A Race Equality Action Plan Steering Group has been established chaired by Professor Ogbonna and the Permanent Secretary. The group has met twice and to date has focused on determining areas of priority for focus within the Action Plan. Training on anti-racism was also being planned for the group at the next session to ensure they were working to a shared understanding of the issues at hand.

Work Stream 2 – The Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) has been commissioned to undertake a rapid review of evidence. The WCPP is working closely with BAME experts to review the literature, including reports and recommendations made by organisations who are members of the Race Forum, to identify priority areas of work and key policy levers that will affect the tangible change required by the Action Plan.

Work Stream 3: Community Engagement Grants have been awarded to over 20 organisations. This piece of work will seek to capture the voices of BAME communities across Wales that may otherwise not be heard.

The Minister re-emphasised the key role the Group would play in the development of the Race Equality Action Plan.

### **Item 3: Feedback and discussion on emerging themes from Vision setting events for the Race Equality Action Plan**

Two vision setting events had been held by EYST, in partnership with the Welsh Government, over the course of the last two weeks. These events provided an opportunity for BAME community organisations and representatives to discuss the purpose, vision, mission and values for the Race Equality Action Plan.

Representation at both events was very broad, both geographically, as well as organisationally. Around 80 people attended the two events.

The Minister invited Rocio Cifuentes and Usha Ladwa-Thomas to speak.

Usha Ladwa Thomas delivered a presentation outlining the big picture for the proposed approach in the development of the Race Equality Action Plan. She agreed to share a copy of the presentation with the group with the minutes of the meeting.

Rocio facilitated a discussion exploring the current culture of the Welsh Government and how it should change in order to support a meaningful Race Equality Action Plan. Members were given the opportunity to write their comments in the chat bar which have been captured below.

*What is the current culture in the Welsh Government?*

- White culture
- Divided / confused
- Culture that has a desire for change (seemingly, more so now) but with great difficulty actioning the change
- Complex and hard to navigate
- Not inclusive / representative of our local demographic
- Race equality is at times as an 'add on' rather than an integral part of policy making across the board.
- Leadership and public appointments not reflective of BAME and POC communities
- Not seen as open to communities
- Lack of diversity of BAME within Welsh Government hampers real understanding of their needs

- Not engaged with grass root communities

*What would the culture of the Welsh Government look like in 2030?*

- Inclusive leadership
- Open for exchange with grassroots and supporting and learning with them
- Entirely reflective of the diversity of people in Wales
- Diverse, inclusive, representative of all sections / local demographics
- Representation and engagement is an integral part of policy making
- Refugees and migrants are truly welcomed by everyone

*How can we change the culture of the Welsh Government?*

- More diverse Members of the Senedd
- Representative workforce
- Departments need to talk to one another
- Positive action
- Engage with diverse bodies as part of policy development
- Tackle institutional racism
- Better internal communications between departments
- Improve transparency, scrutiny and enforcement around race equality
- Make race equality a key strategic indicator
- Unpack the term BAME so we reach the hardest hit and furthest away communities.
- Be bold and ambitious on spearheading change that is reflective and inclusive
- Regular engagement with grassroots groups

**Action:**

- Send members a copy of Usha Ladwa-Thomas' presentation with the minutes of the meeting.
- Officials to consider feedback from the Forum in developing a draft vision, mission and purpose for the Race Equality Action Plan.

During the session the Minister left the meeting.

Hannah Fisher thanked the group for their contributions and explained that the Race Forum would be asked to consider many of the issues raised in more detail over the coming months.

**Item 4: Any other business**

There was no other business. Meeting date for the next meeting will be sent by officials in due course.

