

**Wales Race Forum Meeting
22 February 2021 at 09.45am – 11.30am
Virtual Meeting (Microsoft Teams)**

Attendees:

Wales Race Forum		
1.	Riaz Hassan	Community Cohesion Co-ordinator, Swansea
2.	Patience Bentu	Race Council Cymru
3.	Maria Mesa	Women Connect First
4.	Isaac Blake	Romani Cultural & Arts Company (RCAC
5.	Daniel Hurford	WLGA
6.	Mymuna Soleman,	The Privilege Cafe
7.	Shahien Taj	Henna Foundation
8.	Rocio Cifuentes	EYST
9.	Althea Collymore	Welsh Refugee Council
10.	Shavanah Taj	Wales TUC
11.	Tasmaree Mukhopadhyay	KIRAN
12.	Dr Sibani Roy	NWAMI
13.	Abyd Quinn Aziz	Race Alliance Wales
14.	Fowzia Ali	Hayatt Women's Trust
15.	Alicja Zalesinska	Tai Pawb
16.	Aled Edwards	Cytun
17.	Kate Mills for Sunil Patel	Show Racism the Red Card
18.	Sophie Weeks	Welsh Womens Aid
19.	Patience Bentu	Race Council Cymru
20.	Andrew Ogun	BLM Gwent
21.	Sunil Patel	Show Racism the Red Card

22.	Sy Joshua	Race Equality First
Welsh Government Officials		
23.	Alyson Francis	Deputy Director Communities Division
24.	Emma Bennett	Head of Equality Branch
25.	Usha Ladwa-Thomas	Equality Branch
26.	Sue Vincent-Jones	Equality Branch
27.	Hannah Fisher	Senior Policy Manager –Race and Faith
28.	Uzo Iwobi	Specialist Policy Advisor
29.	Suzanne Duval	Diverse Cymru
Guests		
30.	Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing, and the Welsh Language Eluned Morgan MS	Welsh Government
31.	Doug Nicholls	Keep Wales Safe Campaign Welsh Government
32.	Catherine Evans	Public Appointments Welsh Government
33.	Craig Greenland	Public Appointments Welsh Government
Apologies		
	Shavanah Taj	Wales TUC

- **Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Introductions, and Update**

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip (The Deputy Minister) welcomed members to the ninth Forum meeting and the final one before the end of this Senedd-Cymru term.

She thanked Forum members for all their valuable work to date, and for their continued engagement with the number of extra Stand Alone meetings that have taken place. Recent sessions included discussions on the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy, and the BAME Helpline.

The Deputy Minister also informed members that WCVA have extended the BAME Helpline, without additional funding, for a further three months until the end of June.

She acknowledged that there are differing views about the most effective way of delivering much-needed helpline services, but asked all to support this work, and share information with their respective networks and community members - so the BAME Helpline can reach those who need it most.

The Deputy Minister encouraged Forum members to attend the three forthcoming Stand Alone Meetings. These were the Scoping a Race Disparity Unit for Wales exercise, followed by the Equality and Inclusion Funding Consultation Presentation, on Wednesday 3 March; the Economic Contract Stand Alone Meeting on 10 March; and the Local Places for Nature Grant Funding Engagement Session on 17 March.

She also, at the request of Sue Leake, reminded members of the Census 2021 and asked officials to arrange a further Stand Alone Meeting on this topic. Colleagues from the Office of National Statistics will present at this session, and invite feedback.

Speaking of the continuing challenges of Covid-19, the Deputy Minister stressed the importance of the vaccination programme, both now, and as we move out of our third national lockdown. She thanked the health professionals for delivering this work and asked members to encourage take-up of the vaccination within their communities.

Before moving on to the Agenda, the Deputy Minister updated members on the two high-profile cases that are causing hurt within our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

She reiterated her condolences to the friends and family of Mohamud Hassan, acknowledged the misconduct notice served on a police officer involved, and urged the services involved to expedite the case.

The Deputy Minister also spoke of the case of thirteen year-old Christopher Kapessa and the Early Day Motion in Parliament on 9 February in support of the family. She told members that she had met with Christopher's mother, Alina, to offer her condolences and listen first-hand to her experience.

The Deputy Minister reiterated that the Race Equality Action Plan states that Welsh Government pledge to work together with devolved and non-devolved partners to address the over representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in the criminal justice system, and the under-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people working within it.

She reinforced that the collective aim is that everyone who comes into contact with the criminal justice system will receive equal treatment and equal outcomes, whatever their ethnicity.

The Deputy Minister said she looked forward to continuing to work together in 2021 to tackle the issues that affect our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities through our Race Equality Action Plan – which will be launched for consultation by the end of March.

Agenda Item 2 - Actions from Wales Race Forum Meeting of October 19 2020

The Deputy Minister confirmed that the minutes of the last meeting were correct.

Agenda Item 3: Update on Race Equality Action Plan development work

Ayanna Mathurine provided an update on the Race Equality Action Plan.

She reported that work on our Race Equality Action plan continues at pace as officials work with policy colleagues, key stakeholders and community mentors, to produce the draft Plan for a twelve-week consultation on 24 March.

Officials are developing a full Communications Strategy for the Consultation – with one or two week’s activity in the lead up to the Pre-Election period, before revisiting post-Election.

A weekly Race Equality Action Plan Stakeholder Bulletin with a roundup of events, news, and information is being issued to our wide list of key stakeholders, and their networks.

We will also be delivering a monthly e-newsletter to key stakeholders through our existing networks from the Consultation period until the delivery of the final Plan.

Agenda Item 4 – Keep Wales Safe Covid-19 Campaign

Doug Nicholls from the Welsh Government Keep Wales Safe Communications and Marketing Team gave a brief overview of the vaccination programme work.

Doug stated that Welsh Government are acutely aware that we need to increase the up-take of vaccinations for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, to strongly refute misinformation about the vaccine and issue a plea for all ethnic communities to help in the fight against COVID-19.

He said we are monitoring vaccine uptake by ethnicity and this, along with insight on barriers and motivators to vaccination, has helped to inform ongoing community engagement activity.

Doug confirmed that the Team are also working closely with community and faith leaders to address any concerns individuals may have and to help tackle misinformation.

He invited all members to the next Vaccination Task and Finish Group session, and confirmed he was happy to be contacted directly if members had any questions.

Agenda Item 5 – Public Appointments and Inclusion Strategy

Catherine Evans and Craig Greenland gave an update on the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments in Wales launched on 27 February 2020 – representing a significant milestone for improving the diversity of our public leaders in Wales.

Talking through a short Paper they had provided to members, they outlined key aims of the Strategy, and explained that initially, the strategy was to focus on helping disabled people and those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to obtain public appointments but will now cover all protected groups.

Catherine explained the implementation plans for the Strategy which included a Senior Independent Panel Members targeted recruitment campaign; diversity training; mentoring and Shadowing opportunities; work with existing external partners; another online engagement event; and name-blind recruitment.

Craig confirmed that they are working with the officials who are leading on development of the Race Equality Action Plan to ensure both the strategy and plan align.

He acknowledged the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on resources and has hampered their ability to progress the Diversity & Inclusion Strategy at pace but stressed they are continuing to work to deliver key priorities and tangible benefits.

Agenda Item 6 – Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policy

The Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing, and the Welsh Language Eluned Morgan MS spoke of her concern about the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on particular groups in society, particularly those who may be financially vulnerable, on low incomes and from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities.

Referring to a short Paper that had been issued to members by officials, she said this was being addressed through recently strengthened commitments in the Welsh Government Mental Health Delivery Plan.

The Mental Health and Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-22 has also been refreshed during 2020 to strengthen the actions in response to the impact on those groups disproportionately affected by Covid-19, for example, ethnic minority communities.

The Minister said there are new commitments within our Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan. These include Welsh Government and partners to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 to ensure that all people in Wales have access to

appropriate mental health support. And to ensure the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Helpline Wales links with the CALL mental health help-line to provide access to mental health support.

She stressed that Welsh Government (Health and Social Services) are committed to work with health boards, trusts, local authorities and the third sector organisations to continue supporting a range of programmes and initiatives to protect vulnerable groups and to improve access to services for individuals with additional needs.

The Minister said that Welsh Government continue to support professionals and services to deliver more appropriate care and support through adoption of the Diverse Cymru and UKIED BME Mental Health Workplace Good Practice Certification Scheme (WGPCS) three and Cultural Competency Toolkit.

She added that Welsh Government (Mental Health) had recently provided additional funding to Diverse Cymru to support the commitment to further embed the Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups Mental Health Workplace Good Practice Certification Scheme across more organisations in Wales.

The Minister spoke of the new action in our Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019 – 2022. This is to review the actions in the Plan to assess them against those groups that have been most impacted by COVID-19. These are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, low income/unemployed, those in debt, and children and young people - including those in the Criminal Justice System.

Finally she confirmed that the Welsh Government and Area Planning Boards are aware that the numbers of people accessing services from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community is relatively low (under 2%) and she will ensure joint working to ensure services are more accessible.

Agenda Item 7 - Any Other Business

There was no other business.