

DRAFT 29 JULY 2005
IMPROVING OPPORTUNITY, STRENGTHENING SOCIETY

THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY
TO INCREASE RACE EQUALITY
AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Report of the event organised by the Community Cohesion Team
at the Government Office for the West Midlands on the 14th July 2005
at Shimla Pinks Restaurant, 214 Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1AY.

IMPROVING OPPORTUNITY, STRENGTHENING SOCIETY
THE GOVERNMENT’S STRATEGY TO INCREASE RACE
EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY COHESION

CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction	3
Opening Remarks	6
Chris Eade, Deputy Director, Social Inclusion Joy Warmington, Chief Executive, Birmingham Race Action Partnership	
Keynote Speech	8
Samantha Heilling, Deputy Head, Home Office Race Equality Unit	
Helping immigrants to integrate	14
Mohamed Aden, Networking and Partnership Officer, Horn of Africa Project	
Workshops	
Young people, common belonging	Aliur Wahid / Rooqia Begum 17
Faith and young People	Raymond Douglas 18
Helping immigrants to integrate	Mohamed Aden 20
Black History Month	Siobhan Harper-Nunes 22
Helping to ensure racism is unacceptable	Dave Allport 23
Marginalising extremism	Mohammed Tufail 25
Building local capacity in the public sector on the faith agenda	Sharon Palmer 26
Attendance List	28
Acknowledgements	30

Introduction

The event centred around the launch of *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*, the Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion. Attendees were issued with printed copies on arrival, but most had familiarised themselves with the document prior to the event.

The report is divided into four sections, an executive summary, followed by three chapters with sub headings, as follows:

Introduction

- Black and minority ethnic groups in Britain today (education, labour market, housing conditions, health, Criminal Justice System).
- Strengthening community cohesion (life chances, diversity within and between communities, vision of inclusive British citizenship).

Improving life chances for all

- Education – focusing on those whose attainment still falls behind (early years – integrated support for families, aiming high – raising attainment in schools, boosting the number of teacher role models, *Aim Higher* – increasing participation in higher education).
- The labour market - more tailored response to the needs of specific groups (connecting people to work, human capital – workforce skill development, equal opportunities in the workplace).
- Reducing health inequalities and providing culturally - appropriate services.
- Improving housing conditions (decent homes, equality of access).
- Creating better neighbourhoods.
- Equality in security and justice (improving the police service, addressing perceptions of discrimination by the courts, tackling racism and racial discrimination in prisons , monitoring and building confidence in the criminal justice system and the immigration service).
- Addressing discrimination and promoting better life chances for all across public services (using public service inspectorates more effectively, helping

public and private organisations to put equality first, promoting race equality through a new single body: the Commission for Equality and Human Rights).

- Extending protection against religious discrimination.

Building community cohesion

- Helping young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging.
- Helping immigrants to integrate into our communities.
- Helping people from all sections of society to understand and celebrate the contribution made by a range of cultures to Britain.
- Increasing opportunities to participate in civic life.
- Helping to ensure that racism is unacceptable.
- Marginalising extremists who stir up hatred.
- Promoting cohesion at local level.

The event was focused around seven workshops, repeated during the afternoon to allow attendees to choose and participate in discussion of two of the themes of the strategy document. There were three plenary sessions, one at the start, one between workshops, and one at the completion.

Workshop themes related to *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* subheadings, in the following way:

- Helping young people from different communities grow up with a sense of common belonging;

Young people/ common belonging

Led by Aluir Wahid/ Rooqia Begum from the Bangladeshi Youth Forum.

Faith and young people

Led by Raymond Douglas from Visionaries.

- Helping immigrants to integrate into our communities.

Helping immigrants to integrate into our communities

Led by Mohammed Aden, Networking and Project Officer, Horn of Africa Project.

- Helping people from all sections of society to understand and celebrate the contribution made by a range of cultures to Britain.

Black History Month

Led by Siobhan Harper Nunes, Birmingham City Council.

- Helping ensure that racism is unacceptable.

Helping ensure that racism is unacceptable

Led by Dave Allport, REWIND project.

- Marginalising extremists who stir up hatred.

Marginalising extremism

Led by Mohammed Tufail, Director, North Staffordshire Race Equality Council.

- Extending protection against religious discrimination.

Building local capacity in the public sector on the faith agenda

Led by Sharon Palmer Strategy and Policy Coordinator; Regional Action West Midlands.

The event was attended by more than fifty persons invited from key public, voluntary and community agencies engaged in promoting race equality and community cohesion across the region (see attendance list).

Opening Remarks

Chris Eade, Deputy Director for Social Inclusion, introduced the event. It was originally planned for April. Events of 7/7 in London was once more a reminder that certain problems relating to the cohesiveness of our society needed to be addressed. If we wanted a civil society then we needed to tackle this together. This was the intention of the *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* report. Problems, ideas and good practice would be discussed at the event.

Joy Warmington, Chief Executive of Birmingham Race Action Partnership, felt it was an appropriate moment to reflect on the events of the previous week. The issues raised in the document had significant relevance to these events.

She asked the audience if, in the last month they had had lunch with people who were not from their own ethnic group! One of the things that came through the document was the question of how we should go about integrating. The CRE guidance on integration was also launched in the last week.

The organisations of those present had a key role in moving the strategy. Cohesion was at the forefront of all of our minds, in a context of the divisions created by recent events.

Race equality was a major priority for this government. Our role was to see how government strategy translated into reality.

Sessions highlight the key priorities and issues. The strategy built on key pieces of legislation. There was still a need for more effective legislation. A lot of good work was already taking place in education, health and housing, which remained priority areas of the strategy.

Perhaps it was time to change our approach. Not the 'one size fits all' one. The Government wanted to strengthen society for young people from different backgrounds, immigrants, etc. The challenge was to make the strategy reality.

There was a need for a commonality of values and respect for freedom.

Joy Warmington is the Chief Executive of Birmingham Race Action Partnership (b:RAP), which is the strategic race equality partnership for Birmingham. The organisation is at the cutting edge of developing and piloting innovative strategies, which effectively reflect the needs of communities and address 'race' discrimination in the public, private and voluntary sectors. b:RAP has adopted a perspective on 'race' that is underpinned by issues rather than characteristics of ethnicity. Under her leadership, the organisation operates at some of the most senior levels in the city, providing expertise, challenge and support to enable mainstream change across the public sector. In its relatively short life, b:RAP has developed a reputation for a positive and progressive work in an area of complexity and change. Her previous work history includes: Deputy Director of a voluntary sector training project in Birmingham, working to support socially excluded groups, followed by a senior management position with a large further education college, with responsibility for community education and widening participation, staff training and development, managing regeneration programmes and international work. Her professional remit has also involved researching, developing and accrediting curricula. Prior to taking up her current post, Joy worked as a freelance consultant in the area of equality and organisational development and as an Equalities Manager for local government, with responsibility for the black and ethnic minority sector.

Keynote Speech

by Samantha Heilling, Deputy Head, Home Office Race Equality Unit

It is good to see so many of you here. And I hope you can bear to hear from a civil servant – I suspect I do not have the charisma of any of the Ministers who were influential in the development of the Government’s first race and cohesion strategy *Improving Opportunity; Strengthening Society*, which the Government published in January. What I do share with them is a determination to move this strategy from warm words on paper to making real tangible difference to the lives of so many of our communities.

Today’s event is part of bringing the strategy to life. You have been invited as you have a key role to play in this in the West Midlands. This is one of ten such events across England and Wales.

It’s an event that has been planned for some time, but the timing has proven to be providential – a time where cohesion is at the forefront of so many of our minds and activities. When we are united rather than divided. When what we have in common is openly and passionately discussed.

The horrific attacks on London last Thursday, and the tragedy inflicted on our citizens and visitors, did not discriminate on the basis of religion or belief, skin colour, age or anything else. And our diverse communities- particularly in the West Midlands –have been united as much in their determination to move forward as in their abhorrence for what happened.

We are determined that these atrocities will not be allowed to create tension in and between our communities. The police, the local authorities and community organisations are working closely to ensure the safety and security of all our communities at this time, and, across the country, communities have shown their solidarity and support.

There have been a very small number of attacks on individuals, mosques and gurdwaras in the wake of the terror attacks. I utterly condemn them, the Prime Minister and his colleagues condemn them, and I must highlight the fact that members of all faith communities have also come forward to condemn them and support each other.

As a community we join together to offer our condolences to the victims of these attacks. At this time we should remember that there is more that unites communities in the UK than divides them. Recognising this is vital for developing good race relations.

Equally, all our citizens must feel that there are opportunities for them to benefit from

and contribute to society. That is why it is so important that there is equality of opportunity and outcome. Race equality is a major priority for this government, and we have come a long way. But we have not come far enough.

A determined focus on improving opportunity and strengthening society is so important. That is why it is important that people like you come together to explore what more can be done, and how a government strategy can be translated into real change in our communities. Making a reality of *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* feels to me more important now than ever.

The strategy

I am not intending to give you a detailed account of the strategy – you have copies in your packs today – and I know the sessions today are touching on many of the key themes. However I did want to highlight some of the key priorities and issues.

Building on legislation

It builds on the extensive legislation already in place – arguably the strongest race relations laws in Europe and beyond – the Race Relations Act, and the Race Relations Amendment Act.

The Human Rights Act

Specific offences to tackle race and religiously aggravated offences through the crime and disorder and the anti terrorism and crime acts.

And new bills have been introduced to close loopholes in existing legislation.

But it also recognizes the strong message that came from the *Strength in Diversity* consultation last summer (and I thank those of you who contributed to that) which stressed the need for more effective enforcement of that legislation. We are working with the CRE, public service inspectorates and others on that.

Existing good work

Some good work is already underway, such as the Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market taskforce which is looking at employer discrimination and guidance on *Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* which has now been published.

Areas where improvements are still needed

However, despite this work and despite many members of black and minority ethnic and faith communities thriving in Britain, there is still more to do to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Not everyone has benefited fully from the improvements that are being made and many communities still suffer inequalities.

Certain communities still suffer poor outcomes, especially in education, health, housing and employment. Discrimination on grounds of race or faith is still a problem. These are the priority areas for equality.

Our vision is one where everybody in Britain has the life chances they deserve. It is also to ensure that people are not held back because of their race or religion and that all can make a full contribution to our society.

Tailoring the approach to the IOSS strategy

Its time to change our approach – blanket one-size-fits policies all or even those tailored to “white” and “other” are not enough. *Strengthening Society* signaled a change in the way the Government is addressing disadvantage by giving greater emphasis to tailored initiatives that meet the specific needs of specific disadvantaged communities, rather than treating all black and minority ethnic communities in the same way.

Focusing on building community cohesion – national cohesion rests on an inclusive sense of Britishness with people playing their part in society and respecting others. It is where young people from different backgrounds grow up with a sense of common belonging, new immigrants are integrated, racism is rejected, opportunities are developed enabling a greater understanding among different cultures, and extremists who spread hatred are marginalised. The Government is determined to strengthen society by helping people from different backgrounds come together and supporting people who contribute to society

So on paper, it sets out to do what it says on its cover: ‘improve opportunity’ and ‘strengthen society’.

The challenge is make that a reality which really makes the difference we envisage to people’s lives.

West Midlands

I know that here in the West Midlands there has been determined work on race and cohesion issues for some time. Here as elsewhere, most ethnic minorities are disproportionately concentrated in areas of deprivation, suffering from

unemployment, poor education, poor housing and stunted business growth.

Here, as elsewhere, despite some incredible and often trailblazing work, there is still more to be done – but you do have work on which to build.

Pathfinders

Sandwell and Stoke on Trent have both been successful in managing and completing the Pathfinders in Community Cohesion projects. They have been involved in some innovative work that has been profiled at national level as good practice in community cohesion.

One of Sandwells's most successful Cohesion Pathfinder initiatives led by the LSP has been The Rewind training programme that unpacks racism with the cause/effect in a creative and engaging style. To date they have delivered many training sessions with Sandwell's public and voluntary sector and I am told that GOWM staff have greatly benefited from this. They have also been engaged in some national work in Oldham and Bradford. The challenge for Sandwell has been to sustain this work and presently they are being supported by Sandwell Health Authority.

The Cohesion Pathfinder in Stoke on Trent led by the Local Authority and closely supported by North Stafford REC have taken a more strategic approach in regards to their Pathfinder and to date they have done extensive research on community cohesion. Some of these findings are being implemented by the City Council and their partners.

The Home Office, in partnership with the local college in Stoke, is currently supporting a pilot project on the media, as Stoke has in the past encountered negative portrayals of some of their emerging communities by the media. For example, the local newspaper has in the past run stories that have portrayed refugees and asylum seekers in a negative light. Over the last two years, however, due to regular meetings with the Chief Executive of the North Stafford REC and the Chief of Police, the paper is now running a campaign against racism.

New migrant communities have provided new challenges. The Somalian community in Birmingham has become one of the most visible of the emerging communities. This has caused tensions sometimes leading to violence between this new emerging community and the more established. As a result, the Police and the community have established a community liaison group that meets regularly.

The GOWM has developed a multi agency steering group that focuses on the youth and have supported the Birmingham City Council Youth Service in setting up a training programme to develop youth workers from the Somalian and host communities.

Birmingham and Stoke are also two of just four areas nationally working to develop strong and positive relationships between people of all backgrounds through piloting Citizens Day on October 18th. Citizens Day will have a broad vision of citizens and citizenship and will be about people's behavior as members of society in Britain and not merely about the behavior of British Citizens. It will look to embrace some commonality of values, i.e. recognition of the importance of equality, tolerance, respect and freedom as well as participating in society as an active citizen. That sounds desperately formal – I know that in practice they will be lively and fun events bringing people together and celebrating together – events that we can hopefully build and grow in future years.

It is work such as this that we all need to build on to ensure a strong society with equality of opportunity to all. We will need to work in partnership; at national, regional and local level. With people like you – and the people you know and work with to ensure that we make a real difference in our communities. We need to drive action forward together and I hope this event today and the work that you are already doing, and will go on to do, will help deliver this.

Whilst many of us will look to success in delivering the strategy in terms of targets and improvements in data, the real measurement of success will be the difference that is perceived and experienced in our communities – if we make the difference we are aiming for, we will have stronger communities in a more inclusive society.

We all have a role to play in helping Britain move towards an inclusive society based on mutual respect and increased opportunity, an outcome which benefits not just BME communities but all of us. I hope today helps us explore some of the ways we can do that – remembering in this that one size doesn't fit all, and what works for one community may not work for another. We need to tailor policies and delivery. I am looking forward to learning all that I can, and I promise to take back with me any blockages or issues which you believe need 'top down' attention. Let's look at what needs to be done, and see how we can make that happen. And then let's make it happen!

Samantha Heilling is deputy head of the Home Office Race Equality Unit, with specific responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the Race Cohesion PSA target, and overseeing delivery of Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society; the Government's Race and Cohesion Strategy.

A career civil servant, this is the second time she has worked specifically in the area of race and diversity –she was also responsible for taking forward the Prime Minister's Diversity Challenge to the voluntary sector, working with NCVO and others.

The majority of her Home Office career has been spent on Policing and Crime Reduction. She was responsible for the introduction of Community Support Officers and the extended police family, and was key in the early development of the new Prolific and Priority Offenders Programme.

Prior to this, she worked in South East Region Jobcentres, focusing on helping the long-term unemployed back into work.

Helping immigrants to integrate

by Mohamed Aden, Networking Partnership Officer, Horn of Africa Project

Mohamed spoke to a powerpoint presentation on the integration of new immigrants.

He spoke of the problems they experienced, the barriers to integration, the coping strategies they were forced to develop, and the action that needed to be taken to assist in the process of integration.

Integration was a complex concept with a number of different connotations. It might mean one-way cultural adaptation, or adaptation two ways, mixing, amalgamation, incorporation, or assimilation. For him it meant 'the ability to integrate without feeling alien'.

Problems faced by new immigrants seeking to integrate included;

- dealing with identity problems,
- coping with the mixing of two or more cultures,
- lack of respect, bullying discrimination and violence,
- coping with loss , or severe trauma (for example the aftermath of torture or the loss of close family members) ,and
- issues with young people and involvement in gang culture.

New immigrants/ refugees also faced severe difficulties in entering the job market. Employment was often insecure, short term and poorly paid, with employees taking advantage of new-comer's lack of knowledge and vulnerability. People were often forced to take menial jobs well below their qualifications and capacity. There were few opportunities available to gain work experience. Qualifications and skills were not recognised, valued, or used.

In regard to education, there was a pressing need for:

- conversion courses for overseas qualifications (reaccreditation),
- ease of access to English classes.
- English language classes specific to technical and professional needs.
- school places for children and young people to be made available close to where the family lived. Often children are offered a place many miles away, making them insecure and vulnerable to attacks from strangers.
- more support for unaccompanied young people particularly in the light of the recommendations of *Every Child Matters*.

There should be policies supporting integration at all levels. The current 'one-size-fits-all' was inadequate. There should be a joined-up approach, through partnership work, to inclusion. The approach should be more structured with, for example, well-thought-out induction programmes, workshops for the newly-arrived and work placements,

There should be better signposted sources of information, advice and guidance, or proper gateway services.

Immigrants were often unaware of government policy in regard to integration, and there was a dearth of accessible information, made worse by language barriers. There was a strong case to be made for mainstream service providers to recruit from marginalised communities themselves.

Other major barriers were discrimination and prejudice often among those who were supposed to be providing services to new immigrants or refugees.

Mainstream providers were often unaware of new immigrants' special needs and did not work together, thus duplicating provision or exacerbating gaps.

The media had a particularly negative effect on the situation, creating irrational responses, alarm, fear and xenophobia.

Front-line staff from all agencies needed to understand these special needs in order to respond to them effectively. In the absence of effective agency support, immigrants themselves developed various coping strategies, such as

- making use of their own social capital.
- adopting active or avoidance strategies.
- pooling resources, for example after-school classes to raise educational standards.
- informal information exchange, counselling and advice.
- setting up community organisations and resource centres.
- ethnic community marketing through cybercafés and shops.

Action was needed to make information available in their own language about local agencies and sources of support.

Special help needed to be given to young people newly arrived to assist them in adjusting. Schools had to be more responsive to the needs of newly-arrived youngsters.

Greater family support needed to be given to people without relatives. There was a requirement for bespoke projects and culturally-sensitive services.

A job placement and voluntary opportunities scheme would enable people to get work experience and to demonstrate their skills to potential employers. The availability of more systematic vocational training would also be advantageous.

The challenge was to build a far more positive image of new arrivals and the contribution they could make to the host community.

Mohamed Aden is a Community Development worker at the Horn of Africa Project in Birmingham. Previously, he was the director at Horn Enterprise and before that he was deputy director at the National Refugee Commission/United Nations Commission for Refugee Resettlement project in Somalia. He has a BSc in Education from the College of Education in Somalia, and then went on to study at the Larenstein International Agricultural College in the Netherlands, where he gained a BSc in Rural Development and an MSc in International Development. Mohamed Aden is married and lives in Birmingham.

The Workshops

(Points emerging from the two successive workshops have been combined under a single theme.)

Young people, common belonging

Aluir Wahid / Rooqia Begum

- Create an environment in which young people feel that they can communicate their needs and aspirations in a safe and confident manner. Acknowledge history and learning from past mistakes and the impact on today's youth.
- Partnership working and concepts of inclusion are vital in the context of the current patchwork of youth provision. This can be achieved by developing a Youth Charter (local) which feeds in at regional and national levels to promote *real* outcomes.
- Local patterns of discrimination and disadvantage need to be tackled by making the local authorities accountable through measurable outcome targets. This must be achieved by working with credible and committed representatives. Wider section of the community should recognise the value and the voice of young people. Respect!

Faith and young people

Raymond Douglas

- The West Midlands Police Diversity Co-ordinator will make sure that the police achieve their Race Equality Scheme action plan and develop relationships with communities.
- Minorities of Europe, Charities of Coventry and others in the West Midlands try to create opportunities for young people to become citizens and get involved in projects. The Crown Prosecution Service is committed to implementing its race equality scheme.
- There is a need to look at the document and see how each faith community can implement its daily work.
- Role models could be gang members which have turned to 'good'. We need to check on role models of the past and of today.
- West Midlands Police are trying to recruit black and minority staff. It wants to ask its employees what their faith is, and their views on, for example, the 7/7 London attacks and the Tsunami. Police want to know their impact on their employees.
- There are currently about 500 Muslim police officers.
- The police do not collect data on faith.
- Complaints since 9/11 have risen due to stop and search.
- Minorities of the European Union: until 1999 the number of interfaith organisations in UK was 129. After 9/11, this went up by 50%. It takes a long time to gather data. There are forums. The government has now accepted that faith communities are important. They shape young people's lives. The aim is to increase dialogue between young people of different faiths.
- CPS wants to work with young people from different faiths. They have mentoring programmes for a wide selection of schools, not just Islamic or other single faith schools.
- Churches should address social problems of drugs and gangs. But how many gang members go to church? Muslim youths might be involved in a gang but might still go to the mosque.

- Young people say that representatives from churches are old, and do not reflect their problems. Faith groups tend to engage with other faith groups, not with other organisations.
- How do you empower young people?
- Minority faith leaders should not be blamed for not achieving greater empowerment. We need to build young people's confidence and need to celebrate achievements.
- Faith groups also needed capacity building.
- Action needs to go beyond faith. There has to be a 'vehicle' e.g. faith group. There have to be operations beyond that.
- When the police try to attract young recruits they know they have to influence the parent as, for instance, parents don't want their daughters to join.
- Why do the media have to combine faith and crime? e.g. a 'Muslim bomber'. There is no need to racialise or clericalise the issue in this way. *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* is insufficiently representative of young people's or faith groups' needs.
- How did the police deal with certain religious requirements e.g. praying five times a day?
- The police provide prayer rooms. There is an accommodation of Ramadan. Sikh police officers can wear turbans.
- There was a debate about identity, British? British- Asian? Asian?
- How effective are the religious leaders? Faith groups should mix with non-faith groups, but they often see themselves as exclusive and superior.

Helping immigrants to integrate

Mohamed Aden

- There are a number of barriers communities face in achieving integration.
- The keys to getting through the barriers are education and employment.
- If employment opportunities are good then people are likely to integrate further.
- Children have difficulty finding school places in mainstream schools. Volunteers are supposed to assist sometimes, inappropriate places are offered due to pressure on schools.
- Large numbers of Somali children are not in school. Parents are getting together to support each other to gain places for children in schools closer to home areas. Sometimes the wait for a school place could be nine months.
- There is an issue of offering places to children from one family in two or three different schools, and this causes parents stress because many haven't got cars.
- Many new immigrant children do not speak English. They face racism as a result, and become disengaged.
- There is a concern that citizenship ceremonies only superficially promote inclusivity.
- Immigrant themselves are rarely consulted on policy towards them.
- There is a concern that strategy is rhetoric not reality. The government is sending out mixed messages about integration, possibly because it wants to discourage others from coming for populist political reasons.
- Different parts of the strategy will apply to different communities, as they have different needs.
- It is important to recognise that refugees are only a small proportion of new immigrants.
- Statutory bodies need to monitor numbers to stand any change of taking measures that encourage integration.

- Settled black and minority ethnic communities still face similar problems as the new communities.
- Different communities find coping mechanisms involving the use of their own social capital.
- Refugee community organisations do not have the capacity and the funds to deliver the necessary integration outcomes.
- A distinction should be made between refugee groups for whom there is provision and other groups for whom there is little or no provision.
- Strategy implementation should not run in the face of other existing initiatives.
- The government estimates that there are around half a million illegal immigrants, many of whom are vulnerable and prone to exploitation. If they are not to remain a significant underclass, shouldn't the Government declare an amnesty, as in Spain? What happens to them?
- If the government is ever to keep track on extremists, it will need to take effective measures to integrate illegal immigrants.

Black History Month

Siobhan Harper-Nunes

Background

- Started 8 years ago in Birmingham.
- From 6 projects to 500.
- BFS is a strategic organisation with an overview of all events.
- “Black” generic/political.

Activities

- BME veterans.
- Joining the Dots.
- The annual Magazine 60,000 circulation.
- Handsworth Evolution .

Barriers

- Poor communication and marketing.
- Insufficient funds.
- Seen as an add-on.
- Sharing good practice.
- Evidencing success.
- Perception that it is just one month, and only for black people.
- How organisations manage Black History Month.

Opportunities – use of the word ‘black’

- GO scrutiny – duty to promote.
- Employers – getting involved.
- Improving opportunity, strengthening society.
- Engaging Black elders.
- ‘Things I wanted to know but didn’t dare to ask!’ (culture)
- Want to know more? www.blackhistoryfoundation.com
- Organisational/ corporate support.
- More awareness = partnerships.

Helping ensure that racism is unacceptable

Dave Allport

Three key areas

- Young people and children.
- Health inequality.
- Training for professionals.

Racism is unacceptable

- Some concern that proposals under this heading are reactive.
- Agreement that ongoing proactive work is essential; too many agencies/organisations ask the key workers to respond rather than initiate.
- Teacher training must tackle issue and teachers need to be constantly 'refreshed'.
- Young people need tools to tackle racism.
- Induction programmes should have a mandatory section on diversity.
- Tools for constructive/gentle challenging, e.g. humour for older people.
- Councillors /community leaders, ongoing training /commitment needed. 'Top' must set tone.
- Racism / diversity education needs to start in playgroup/nursery and continue through all age groups. Most pupils are not aware of role of black and minority ethnic troops in the World Wars.
- Need to recognise the different types of racism.
- Pro-active working partnerships are key.
- Parents are the key influences; need to find opportunities to influence/inform, e.g. Sure Start, schools.
- There is a need for a 'whole school' approach, regarding community issues, and for 'myth busters' to counter misconceptions. Right-wing tactics should be tackled.

- Multiculturalism alone will not challenge racism: anti-racist approaches must be embedded in all subject areas, not just citizenship education.
- Too dependent on individual approaches/styles at work, as opposed to coherent policy.
- Budget silos can be a barrier. Funded work into should be built into baseline budget, not added on.
- Agencies and individuals must take ownership, not just pass it on or ignore.
- We need to remove the ‘fright’ (old-style anti-racist training caused damage) and work in a no blame way. All need to learn.
- The voluntary and community sector is not fully used to deliver work of this kind.

Marginalising extremism

Mohammed Tufail

- Research shows increase in far right support in West Midlands (demonstrated in vote share).
 - There are large number of racist incidents.
 - West Midlands has seen a reduction of £90, 000 this year in CRE funding.
 - Community cohesion work is intermittently, poorly and inadequately funded.
 - There are only two potential sources of regional funding : Government Office or the Regional Development Agency: neither gives funds to counter extremism.
- Because most funding goes to local authorities, they determine priorities in this area; anti-racist work is not generally treated as a priority.
- It is essential to work with the white working class and communities, where alienation is expressed as jealousy and racism is rife.
- We must distinguish between violent actions and the reasons for it. Nelson Mandela was once a terrorist /violent in the society, but now people lionise him.
- People in different communities have to mix. For example, what happened in London was not thought of in one day.
- 99.9% of Muslims condemn the London bombings.
- The police so far have been very positive in taking action against extreme right groups threatening blacks and minority ethnic and religious communities.

Building local capacity in the public sector on the faith agenda

Sharon Palmer

- What is meant by the faith agenda?
- How can we tell others about it if we don't know/understand it ourselves?
- Does the Government understand what is happening in local communities?
- Is the government setting an agenda that communities are at odds with?
- It's easy to get sucked in, for example, to the security agenda, and to get caught up in something we don't really understand.
- Are we so politically correct that we are frightened to have an honest debate?
- There was a discussion of fear /obstacles to talk about morals and values.
- People don't have the language to talk about morals and values in public on policy or in an educational context. There is a need to build the capacity to enter into such a dialogue rather than avoiding it.
- Is this debate wider than the faith communities? It should be wider. At the moment do resources for this predominantly go to faith?
- If only faith communities have a say, the voices of other sections of the community go unheard, which is dangerous.
- Small communities have trouble because they don't get to hear all sides and voices.
- Intermediate institutions needs to be built up and built on, e.g. tenants associations. Faith communities make people feel safe and give people an arena for them to talk. We need to link into these.
- We should not encourage people to express their opinions honestly in a way that when bad things happen, they incur hostility and anger.
- Moral leadership is a necessary part of capacity building.

Attendance List

Name		Job Title	Organisation
Mohammed	Aden	Community Development Worker	Horn of Africa Project
Kurshid	Ahmed	Chair	Dudley LSP
Aftab	Ahmed	Regeneration Manager	Enterprising Communities Team
Rani	Ahmed	Equalities Officer	Stoke on Trent City Council
Dave	Allport		Rewind Project
Mashuq	Ally	Head of Equalities	Birmingham City Council
Nazneen	Amin		Government Office for the West Midlands
Nginder	Bahia		Government Office for the West Midlands
Rooqia	Begum		Bangladeshi Youth Forum
Pam	Bowen-Knowles	Executive Member	DOSTI
Gary	Bowman	Director	Sandwell Partnership
Derrick	Campbell	Chief Executive	Race Equality Sandwell
John	Curtis		Government Office West Midlands
Paul	David		Home Office
John	Darnbrook	Head of Youth Services	Walsall MBC
Raymond	Douglas		Visionaries
Chris	Eade		Government Office for the West Midlands
David	Galliers	Partnership Development Manager	Coventry Partnership
J	Gardner	Detective Constable	West Mercia Constabulary
Karen	Grant	Equalities Development Advisor	Solihull MBC
Parveen Khanom	Hassan	Equality Diversity Manager	Crown Prosecution Service
Dennis	Hodson	Lead	Dudley LSP
Samantha	Heilling	Deputy Head, Race Equality Unit	Home Office
Pete	Jackson	Acting Head of Community & Neighbourhood	Telford and Wrekin Council
Vennetta	Johnston		Birmingham City Council
Harjinder	Kaur Mann	Training and Staff Development Manager	Walsall Youth Service
Sofina	Kausar		Government Office for the West Midlands
Margret	Keane	Director	Saltley Trust
James	Kingston	CFU	Home Office
Amalie	Kjaergaard		Home Office
Marcus	Lou		Minorities of Europe
Anastasia	Lymperaki	Project and Fieldwork Officer	Race Equality West Midlands
Liz	Mabley	Development Manager	Sandwell Partnership
Abu	Malek	Community Development Officer	Nuneaton of Europe
Bill	Mally	Development Officer – Economic & Community Regeneration	CEDC
Sylvia	McTaggart		The Civic Centre, Stoke on Trent
Narinder	Moor	Equality and Diversity Manager	Wolverhampton PCT
Cynthia	Morrison	BCC Lead Officer	
Deepak	Naik		Minorities of Europe
Siobahn	Harper-Nunes		Birmingham City Council
Sharon	Palmer	Strategy and Policy Co-ordinator	Regional Action West Midlands

Lorna	Prescott	Senior Development Officer	DOSTI
Aftab	Rahman		Government Office for the West Midlands
Frank	Reeves	Director	Race Equality West Midlands
Russell	Sandbach	Manager	Birmingham Sport Action Zone
Farahna	Sheikh	Policy Officer	West Midlands Consortium for Asylum & Refugee Support
Mpazi	Siame	Race Equality Support Worker	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Mohammed	Tufail	Director	North Staffs REC
Anthea	Turner	Council Member	National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education
Jenni	Venn	Policy and Performance Manager	Coventry City Council
Aliur	Wahid		Bangladeshi Youth Forum
Joy	Warmington	Chief Executive	Birmingham Race Action Partnership
Simon	Weaver	Police Support	
Joanne	Wilbraham	Manager	Dudley LSP
Lelir	Yeung	Head of Equalities	

Acknowledgement

The Government Office for the West Midlands would like to thank Mohamed Aden, Networking and Partnership Officer, Horn of Africa Project, Samantha Heilling, Deputy Head, Home Office Race Equality Unit, and Joy Warmington, Chief Executive, Birmingham Race Action Partnership, for their contributions to the plenary sessions. We are also grateful to workshop leaders: Mohamed Aden, Dave Allport, Rooqia Begum, Raymond Douglas, Siobahn Harper-Nunes, Sharon Palmer, Mohammed Tufail, and Aluir Wahid.

This report was compiled by Race Equality West Midlands from presentations and notes taken at the launch event, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*, held on 14th July 2005 by the Government Office for the West Midlands. GOWM would like to acknowledge Frank Reeves, Anastasia Lymperaki and Tanya Barrett of REWM for producing this report. Race Equality West Midlands is a regional agency which promotes race equality and community cohesion by providing a service to race equality councils and partnerships, local government, public authorities, the private, voluntary and community sectors, through leadership, strategic policy development, consulting, education and training, research, fund raising and improving the quality of race equality services to individuals, see website www.rewm.org. REWM has published the report *Community cohesion: concept, policy, implementation and theory* and will shortly be producing further practical guidance on how to develop and pursue effective local community cohesion initiatives.

