



# ETHNIC MINORITY NATIONAL RESILIENCE NETWORK

EMNRN Meeting 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

10am – 12:30pm

## AGENDA

Chairperson: Danny Boyle (BEMIS /EMNRN)

### Scottish Government Participants

Christina McKelvie	Minister for Equalities and Older People
Victoria Lopez	Partnerships Team Leader – Marketing and Insights Unit

Item	Time
Zoom meeting open. Participants sign in with music theme as we await attendees and opening	9:50 – 10:00
Welcome Rami Ousta and setting the scene by chair Danny Boyle	10:00 – 10:10
Updates from Thematic subgroup meetings – Group Chairpersons	10:10 – 10:30
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) <b>Mental Health</b> – Fiona Crombie</li><li>2) <b>Data, Health and Social Outcomes</b> – Jenni Keenan</li><li>3) <b>BME frontline workers and Economic Recovery</b> – Charmaine Blaize</li><li>4) <b>Education and YP</b> – Tanveer Parnez</li><li>5) <b>Collaboration</b> – Nina Munday</li></ol>

Victoria Lopez (Scottish Government – Partnerships Team)	<b>10:30 – 10:55</b>
SG Policy and Marketing to outline current and planned communications activities relating to COVID-19	
<b>Comfort Break</b>	<b>10:55 – 11:00</b>
<b>Minister for Equalities and Older People – Christina McKelvie MSP</b>	<b>11:00 – 11:10</b>
An update on the work of the Expert Reference Group on COVID and Ethnicity and next steps	
Open Discussion between members and Minister	<b>11:10 – 12:20</b>
Summing up and next steps	<b>12:20 – 12:30</b>

### Registered Attendees (25/08/20)

NO.	NAME	ORGANISATION
1	Christina McKelvie	Minister for Equalities and Older People (SG)
2	Rami Ousta	BEMIS
3	Victoria Lopez	Scottish Government
4	Noelia Martinez	Citizens' Rights Project
5	Eleni McLean	Adita Service SACRO
6	Ephraim Borowski	SCOJEC
7	Cath McGee	Refugee Survival Trust
8	Ahashan Habib	Aberdeen Multicultural Centre
9	Rajnish Singh	Scottish Indian Arts Forum
10	Suzanne Munday	MECOPP
11	Paul Quigley	Call it Out
12	Unyimeobong Matthews	Inspiring Families
13	Khaleda Noon	Intercultural Youth Scotland
14	Amy Allard Dunbar	Intercultural Youth Scotland
15	Trishna Singh	Sikh Sanjog
16	Alan Grey	Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
17	Kieron Achara	FROGnet communications
18	Kimi Jolly	East and Southeast Asian Support Network
19	Danny Boyle	BEMIS
20	FENIKS representative	FENIKS

21	Fiona Crombie	Freedom From Torture
22	Jenni Keenan	Perth Minorities Communities Hub (PKAVS)
23	Fife Centre for Equalities	Nina Munday
24	Paddy Callaghan	Comhaltas
25	Margaret Lance	Waverly Care
26	Soumi Dey	Education academic
27	Frances Hume	Interfaith Scotland
28	Rakiya Sulieman	NHS Lothian and Borders
29	Charmaine Blaize	UNISON Black Workers Committee
30	Ian Turner	Scottish Government Race Equality Unit
31	Sue Barnes	BEMIS
32	Talat Yaqoob	Pass the Mic / Race Equality Consultant
33	Kate Miguda	Scottish Government Race Equality Unit
34	Ruby Zajak	Lickety Spit Theatre Company
35	Eireann McAuley	STUC Equalities Officer
36	Usman Ali	STUC Black Workers Ctte
37	Rebecca Grant	Human Rights Consortium Scotland
38	Laura Merenciano	Scottish Government
39	Mary Louise	St. Angela's Participation Centre
40	Jaqueline Wallace	N/A
41	Eman Hani	Central Scotland Regional Equality Council

### Meeting Note

- 1) Meeting chairperson Danny Boyle (DB - BEMIS) welcomed all members to the meeting and outlined the days agenda items. In addition, on behalf of the EMNRN / BEMIS passed on our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Mercy Baguma.
- 2) An update was provided by representative of EMNRN thematic subgroups. Please refer to meeting notes of each subgroup for further details.

### ***Agenda Item - SG Policy and Marketing to outline current and planned communications activities relating to COVID-19:***

- Victoria Lopez (VL) of the Scottish Governments marketing and health messaging team provided an overview of health targeting to date (27/08) and outcomes of this messaging thus far.
- VL gave an overview of areas of key interest including health messaging, return to school consultations via Parent Club in conjunction with BEMIS. A copy of VL presentation has been published on the EMNRN webpage.

### Open discussion

- **DB BEMIS** welcomed the work of the parent club initiative and recommended that thematic areas of interest stemming from consultations about racist bullying and schools and health messaging should now see a period of direct Gov – community engagement via affected grassroots communities and experts.

- Various orgs identified that the digital poverty and exclusion was still a significant barrier to all BME communities participating in consultations and accessing information.
- **Khaleda Noon (KN)** Intercultural Youth Scotland (IYS) outlined that we must call bullying what it is. Racism. Racist bullying and its impacts cannot be properly responded to or understood if we use a generic term like bullying. To tackle racism we must be direct, unambiguous and call it out. There was general agreement from attendees to this point.
- **VL** outlined the SG 'door drop' activity targeting specific ethnic groups with health messaging. For example, this had worked well with the Scottish Gypsy Traveller ethnic group.
- **DB** inquired if this is a strategy that could be directed, in the event of further restrictive lockdowns and increase in virus spread to other vulnerable ethnicities. In particular reflected in COVID Ethnicity mortality, Pakistani, Irish and BME communities in significant socio-economic disadvantage and also digitally excluded.
- **Rakiya Sulieman** (NHS Lothian and Border Equalities Officer) suggested that non formal communication interventions should be used to engage BME individuals. For example, ensuring literature is available at hair salons, schools clubs, ethnic minority small businesses and other places
- Several members outlined in chat function and verbally that they were unaware of direct ethnic messaging in relation to Covid and that this may be beneficial.
- **VL** outlined that community engagement will continue via BEMIS, other affected communities and that SG Marketing and Health team are open to communications directly from key communities and organisations. EMNRN to share contact details of officials for those who want to contact them.

*The Meeting stopped for a 5-minute comfort break at 10:55 – 11:00 to allow Minister to join meeting.*

## The Minister for Older People and Equalities – Ms. Christina McKelvie MSP

### INTRO

- **Rami Ousta (RO)** BEMIS CEO welcomed Christina to the meeting and outlined the community-based recommendations that have been developed by network members and were shared with the Expert Reference Group on COVID and Ethnicity. RO outlined that the EMNRN and subgroups are ready to respond to ongoing COVID / Ethnicity challenges and engage more directly with the ERG.

- **Minister Christina McKelvie (CMcK)** provided an overview of the work of the Expert Reference Group on COVID and Ethnicity. Outlining that SG challenged members to respond to two key areas. 1) Improving Health Data and 2) tackling systemic issues.
- **CMcK:** Two recommendation reports on both themes have now been submitted to Government and are under active consideration.
- **CMcK:** SG will publish both reports, the terms of reference of the group and meeting minutes on the SG website.
- **CMcK:** Work undertaken so far alongside setting up the ERG include the development of an individual risk assessment tool for frontline workers, sectorial guidance on supporting and protecting workers, multilingual assets to share health messaging and emergency funding to frontline BME organisations via Scottish Government and SCVO resilience fund.
- **CMcK:** SG is committed to engaging with communities as we move through this difficult period and we are re-assessing the best way for the ERG on COVID / Ethnicity to move forward in conjunction with stakeholders.
- **DB:** The EMNRN recommendations on responding to COVID / ethnicity have been shared with the ERG and we hope that moving forward these recommendations are given appropriate consideration. The terms of reference, minutes and reports of the ERG should be made public at the earliest possible opportunity to ensure communities have oversight and time to process recommendations that will affect them directly.
- **DB:** For example, People subject to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) have been significantly affected by the COVID pandemic. 3<sup>rd</sup> sector has stepped in to try and fill the void however this is not sustainable. BEMIS position is that the SG has the power to make discretionary payments to those subject to NRPF in areas of devolved power, health, education for example. As threat of further lockdown looms SG should move quickly to develop a discretionary payment or coordinate 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to do this on their behalf.

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

- **Nina Munday (NM)** from the Fife Centre for Equalities shared their work activity supporting the elderly, also alerted the Minister that the winter will have an impact and the communication system is difficult, since the lockdown measures being carried out.
- **Various members** outlined concerns about the return to school. Given the disproportionate medical and social impact the virus has had in BME

communities there remains concerns and fear about the safety within primary and secondary school environments. In addition, concerns continue about a rise and experience of racism in schools due to the origin and perceived responsibility of the virus emanating from China / Asia.

- **DB** outlined that given the complexity of the issues affecting BME Young people and youth, racism, poverty, digital exclusion, mental health that Government should instigate a working group of solely BME focussed youth and young people organisations, including young people themselves, to guide responses to COVID and the next Race Action Plan. This group should run parallel to any future iteration of the ERG.
- **Amy Allard Dunbar (AAD)** an ambassador of Intercultural Youth Scotland outlined the need to embed anti-Racist education in Schools. Crucially this work must be led Black people, including young people, and not solely delivered by White People on their behalf. Lived experience is critical to understanding how colour-based racism is affecting the present generation of young Brown and Black people in Scotland. COVID has occurred against the backdrop of Black Lives Matter and it is critical that decisions and conversations about us, include us. We are the experts of our own lives and experiences.
- **CMcK:** Minister agreed that our position in response to Amy must be “nothing about us without us”. That Government is committed to increasing the representation of Black people in particular within our civic spaces. For example, the Scottish Parliament has never had a Black MSP or BME women MSP and we need to see progress.
- **Usman Ali (UA)** Outline that the STUC Black Workers Committee had submitted key plans and evidence to the ERG on Covid / Ethnicity. That the STUC have instigated a ‘Break the Race Ceiling’ campaign that has received preliminary funding. In addition, the STUC BWC have asked the Minister for a meeting too respond to the evidence they submitted the STUC. CMcK agreed to meet the STUC in due course.
- **Jenni Kennan (JK)** Update from Perth and Kinross Minorities Community Hub (PKAVS) on the outbreak of COVID at the 2 Sisters Chicken Factory. Thanks to support from the EMNRN and BEMIS PKAVS are in a position to respond to NRPF issues within the workforce. 75% of workforce are from minority ethnic communities and have socio economic, language and precarious employment issues. PKAVS working hard to attend to language issues in conjunction with the local authority. There remains a lack of understanding that the outbreak is an Equalities issues and that the staff are recognised under the protected provision of the equality act.
- **DB** Outlines that the Perth situation is indicative of a systemic inequality where all communities’ human rights are not equally recognised by national statistical

bodies, government, and some public services. As such the outbreak has received no Race Equality focus despite clearly falling within the scope legal protections. There was no Race Equality consideration of the dangers of vulnerable sectors like factories despite employing significant numbers of minority ethnic individuals also subject to NRPF. Scottish Government will need to integrate its responses to equalities sector on the provisions of its legal duties covering colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin as we move forward.

- **Paul Quigley (Call it Out) CIO** are a campaign group challenging anti Catholic bigotry and anti-Irish racism in Scotland. There is a continual problem of the Irish community not being recognised as a minority ethnic community. The community has been concerned by the National Records of Scotland COVID / Ethnicity / Mortality report that indicated the largest number of deaths within a minority ethnic community were in the White Irish census classification. Despite concerns raised by the NRS about the veracity of their figures the community nonetheless feels they have questions that as of yet have not been answered appropriately. They have asked for a meeting with the Minister to allay fears inherent within the report, consider how best to mitigate these concerns moving forward and ensure Irish community issues are understood better moving forward.
- **DB** reiterated that it has been a core recommendation of the EMNRN recommendations that the Minister and SG meet with this community to respond to and calm any concerns within the community. This remains a core recommendation and is the basis of a credible human rights-based approach. “Nothing about us without us”. In addition, it is clear that the Race Equality Unit is having to deal with a significant workload and set of diverse issues off the back of inequalities enhanced by the pandemic. The SG should consider bolstering the number of staff to ensure they have the capacity to do everything that needs done.
- **CMcK:** Government acutely aware of increase of issues and have increased the Race Equality Unit with new staff.
- **Margaret Lance (MC) Women in Scotland** – Outlined that WIA have been supporting asylum seekers and refugees throughout the pandemic particularly those with NRPF. MC informed members that Mercy Baguma had been a client of WIA and that they have been left devastated by her passing. Outlined generally that the asylum system is failing people on a daily basis. It is failing to treat them as human beings, with dignity, respect and leaving them in destitution and despair. Furthermore, asylum seekers are scared to get COVID tests done in case their data is shared with the Home Office.
- **CMcK:** Expressed sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mercy Baguma. The SG position is that we want full devolution of Immigration powers to build a human asylum system

- **Talat Yaqoob (TY):** Need to ensure the wellbeing of Migrant workers, requirement for labour inspections and interventions where necessary from SG. Asylum system is continuing to fail and we must test the devolution boundaries to see where we can ensure continuous, state support for those subject to NRPF. Expresses solidarity with Amy of IYS who made excellent point. (In addition Talat coordinates PASS THE MIC – a new platform supporting Women of Colour to facilitate their expert participation - <https://passthemicscotland.wordpress.com/> )
- **Ruby Zajak (Lickity Spit):** Highlighted the important of back to school resources and the use of parent club. The need to ensure children and young people’s voices are heard and used to inform covid responses moving forward.
- **Noelia Martinez (Citizens Rights Project)** Organisations providing support to citizens needing to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to stay in the UK after 30/06/2021 are concerned about a widespread lack of awareness amongst many local authority staff of the EU Settlement Scheme, and the need to ensure that eligible children apply for settled/pre-settled status before the deadline, to stop them becoming undocumented immigrants with no right to continue to live in the UK. Some councils do not hold a record of the nationalities of children in their care. It is therefore extremely likely that if a local authority is not aware of their nationality, they will not be taking steps to ensure that they acquire valid immigration status for the EU/EEA/Swiss children in their care. Most of the children concerned are unlikely to possess valid national identity documents from the relevant EU state, which the UK requires them to have to commence the application process. These looked after children will often have more complex cases due to their chaotic life circumstances, so therefore obtaining their identification documents may prove difficult or even impossible. An added difficulty is that during the current situation caused by the Covid-19 most of the consulates and embassies have been closed for lengthy periods, and therefore processing documents for children in care may be a lengthy process itself.
- **RS** NHS Lothian and Borders have developed good practice in individual staff risk assessment. This can be shared across other sectors and highlighted.
- **Suzanne Munday (MECOPP)** SM suggested that given the range of issues identified by the network on health messaging and communication that it may be beneficial to coordinate further engagement and responses. MECOPP have significant expertise in this area and can coordinate a subgroup.
- **RO** – Thanked Minister for her time and continued commitment in responding to the needs of diverse communities. Reiterated that it is key Governments COVID response and Race Equality does not become framed by a Black vs White binary analysis, like in the US, as this suppresses the similarities and



variations within and between ethnic groups within the Black and White classifications. COVID has highlighted this even more with East and South East Asian communities coming forward to express their specific rights. The Equality Act has space for analysis on Colour, Nationality, Ethnic or National Origin and all communities can be heard in this space. This was reflected in BEMIS input to ERG on data and health and need to disaggregate all ethnicities to understand experiences.

### **Minister Response**

- Thanked all members and communities for their continued work in their communities. It is invaluable and hugely appreciated by SG.
- Data collection and systemic issues were the two papers submitted to Government by the ERG on Covid / Ethnicity. Government is considering these and will respond to the ERG in due course. This response will help shape out next steps. Communities will be central to this.
- A human rights taskforce has been initiated to consider further incorporation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Underpinning next phase of human rights-based approach after the incorporation of the UNCRC.
- Work is underway to identify a lead official on race equality from each policy area.
- Urgent response to the 2 Sisters Chicken Factory outbreak within the Fair Work context. Ongoing situation.
- A new digital programme to be rolled out to tackle digital poverty and lack of connectivity. This will help respond to issues of BME digital exclusion.
- Would welcome opportunity to return to the network at a future date for update on progress both SG + community perspective. (est. Late Oct / Nov)
  
- DB thanked the Minister for her time and input. Highlighted that the increasing amount of evidence and asks being generated by the network and subgroups is a significant task and that we should aim to open up direct channels of communication between subgroups and relevant officials and directorates so we don't need to centralise all communications via present EMNRN chair. We can keep each other informed. DB to liaise with Ian Turner of Race Equality Unit to facilitate.

**Meeting ends**