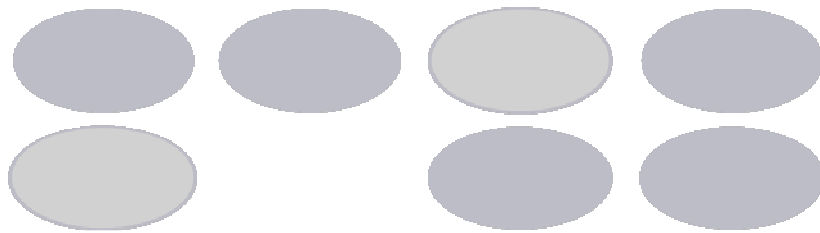


Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice

THE UNIFIED VOICE OF MERTON'S MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES



Working strategically to increase the influence, representation and active engagement of all Merton's Black Asian Minority Ethnic Voice and their communities in the decisions and policies that affect them.

Merton Black Asian Minority Ethnic (MBAME) Voice

Steering group terms of reference

Introduction

MBAME Voice has been formally established in response to the need for an independent representative body to look at key local issues and their impact on minority ethnic communities who make up over 35% of Merton's population.

" Too often in the past we have devoted too much time and energy in analysing the problems and not enough time in developing and delivering practical solutions that connect with real lives"

Key aims and objectives

- To advocate on behalf of **Merton's BAME** communities in their dealings with public sector agencies and other statutory and non-statutory organizations.
- To provide a unified and strategic voice within the Borough ensuring that the **BAME** communities are actively involved in strategic decision making and that services provided meet the needs of these communities.
- To identify commonalities, but recognise the need to work through the issues a particular community might have.
- Reach out to newly settled minority ethnic communities and assist them in setting up structures and gaining access to services as well as delivering good quality services to their Users.

We also aim to promote and encourage mutual co-operation, assistance and the sharing of resources, expertise and information between its members.

2. Priorities for Action

Specific areas of interests within the **BAME** communities are in the following eight thematic groups that were identified in the **BAME** Strategic Plan.

1. *Children and Young People*
2. *Community Safety, Crime & Disorder*
3. *Education and learning*
4. *Employment, Skills and Enterprise*
5. *Health, Social care and Well-being*
6. *Housing, Regeneration & The Environment*
7. *Older People*
8. *Stronger and Sustainable Communities*

Leadership and Management

The steering group will be formed as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It will have a board of directors with overall responsibility for the focus and work of the organisation. The board members will comprise one selected representative (with a deputy) from each registered **BAME** organisation and represent a range of **BAME** communities within Merton. It will appoint representatives to the various local Strategic Partnerships, the JCC and other bodies within Merton and be linked to the Involve Network. The Board will meet at least four times a year, hosted in turn by a representative group. The Board's tasks will be principally to:

- Ensure that **BAME** voluntary sector groups are made aware of policy decisions and initiatives which will have an impact on their communities
- Give **BAME** organisations the opportunity to analyse issues, agree priorities with others and more crucially, have the power to instruct representatives to take the key priorities forward to the relevant bodies
- Identify, monitor make representations where necessary when **BAME** communities/individuals are disadvantaged
- Work in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organizations to advance equality of opportunity, promote cohesion and act as a reliable resource to public agencies.
- To improve communications, raise the profile of **BAME** groups in Merton and be the primary focus for improving community cohesion in the borough.

An overall Chairperson and Vice-Chair will be elected. In the absence of the Chairperson or Vice-Chair another Member will be nominated to chair the meeting.

- Thematic groups shall be formed from organisations whose primary work falls within particular themes. E.g. Young people education and Learning, Employment Skills and Enterprise, Strong Sustainable Community/Crime and Disorder, Older people and Wellbeing.

Invite guests from key agencies and influential local people could also be invited to attend. Chairpersons will be nominated for each of the thematic groups.

Sub-groups which shall meet as and when required to look in more detail at issues affecting the **BAME** community in each thematic area and relay suggested action to the Board.

The board will ensure that the day-to-day running of the organisation is done effectively by independent administrative support and identify ways of securing future funding.

Meetings of the steering group officers will be held every three months or as becomes necessary, to look at issues around the eight identified thematic groups. Any agreed action will require the full agreement of the Board.

Funding

The Board will facilitate funding streams at local, national and international levels. Core funding will be requested from Merton Council and strategic partners, being the host Borough (time based) and from local commissioning agencies. The board will be proactive in bringing in funds to assist with various projects and activities e.g. Training to meet the specific needs of the different **BAME** communities and for the various community annual events e.g. Black History Month, (Oct) Gypsy Roma Traveller month (June), Refugee Week (June); Holocaust Memorial Day (Jan), other Merton cultural events.

Membership

Practicing **BAME** groups or organisations and their communities will be encouraged to become members of the steering group and supported in any contributions they might wish to make to the board's programmes and activities.

Review

The steering group will review and update its terms of reference as well as the **Merton BAME** Strategic Plan annually to reflect developments which might arise.

Governance

An Annual General Meeting will be held to elect board members.