

# LIVING IN THE MAR- GINS

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An interim report on the impact of  
local government social care budget  
cuts on BME communities

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**EMBARGOED** until: 00.01am on Monday 5th March 2012

## LIVING IN THE MARGINS

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Living in the Margins is a timely, six month social media influenced campaign, led by The Afiya Trust, to alleviate health and social care inequalities for black and minority ethnic (BME) families and community organisations in a climate of cuts.

The Afiya Trust, a national charity working to reduce inequalities in health and social care provision for people from racialised communities, is launching the Living in the Margins campaign on Monday 5 March 2012, to:

- Highlight the disproportionate impact of public sector cuts on BME communities and families
- Highlight why race equality is a live, urgent and ongoing concern in social care service delivery nationally
- Reduce the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to BME service users, which often results in adverse social care and healthcare outcomes
- Provide BME families with the support and advice they need to hold local government and central government to account with regards to the delivery of health and social care services
- Supply primary research that demonstrates that social care and healthcare inequalities for the BME voluntary and community sector and BME families have been, and will continue to be, exacerbated by current and future public spending cuts.

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A key foundation stone underpinning the campaign is to establish the impact of the cuts over two financial years (2010/2011 and 2011/12) on BME-led voluntary and community sector organisations and service providers to BME communities. To do this, we had to determine whether local authorities were undertaking Equality Impact Assessments and taking proper steps to comply with relevant public sector equality duties.

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## LEGAL DUTY

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The first modern public sector equality duty was the Race Equality Duty (RED) which was introduced as part of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, in part to address the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. The Race Equality Duty came into force in 2001, and was the first of three public sector equality duties that came into force between 2001 and 2006 – the other two duties were the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty. These duties required public bodies to give 'due regard to' and take a proactive approach to the elimination of unlawful discrimination, the promotion of equality and good race relations. Public bodies had a legal duty to conduct what are called Equality Impact Assessments until April 2011. These impact assessments were designed to assess the impact of policies, practices or other action or activities on the promotion of equality of opportunity. A positive impact is an impact that will improve equal opportunities, have a positive impact on an equality group or characteristic and/or will improve relationships between members of different equality groups.

In April 2011, the new Public Sector Equality Duty replaced the old duties and was extended to cover six new areas of equality in addition to race, disability and gender equality. The Race Equality Duty was in force for 2010/11. The new Public Sector Equality Duty was in force from April 2011. In September 2011, the new specific equality duties came into force which require public bodies to publish information by 31st January 2012 and annually thereafter to demonstrate that they are complying with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

To determine whether the public sector cuts are impacting disproportionately on BME voluntary and community groups, The Afiya Trust approached all 153 local authorities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, requesting details of cuts to BME services and communities in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Between November 2011 and February 2012 we received 118 responses from local authorities with responsibility for adult social services.

This interim report is based on the responses to four of the 12 questions fielded. Those four questions were:

- Did your department conduct a race, disability or general Equality Impact Assessment before the Adult Social Care Committee (ASC) or relevant council decision making body<sup>1</sup> decided the ASC revenue budget for the voluntary and community organisations for 2011/12?

- Does your department collect data on how many BME voluntary and community sector organisations it funds by way of revenue grants, service agreements, contracts or other funding agreements?

- How many BME voluntary and community sector organisations did your department fund by way of grants, service agreements, contracts or other funding agreements in: a) 2010/11; and b) 2011/12?

- What was the revenue funding allocated to BME voluntary and community organisations by your department by way of grants, service agreements, contracts or other funding agreements in: a) 2010/11; and b) 2011/2012? Please provide the relevant committee reports for 2010/11 and 2011/12.

## OUR INITIAL ANALYSIS FOCUSES ON:

- Whether Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken.
- Whether local authority Adult Social Services Departments kept data on the number of BME voluntary and community sector organisations that were funded by grants, service agreements, contracts or other agreements.
- How many BME voluntary and community sector organisations were funded by local authority Adult Social Services Departments.
- The level of funding allocated to BME voluntary and community sector organisations, what has happened to this funding and the funding levels between 2010/11 and 2011/12.<sup>2</sup>



Chinese elders at the Hackney Chinese Community Services Centre

<sup>1</sup> We note that some financial decisions may be made by Council Cabinets hence the use of the term other decision-making body.

<sup>2</sup> Although we recognise that the financial data is provisional, it does reflect our best assessment of the financial data provided by local authority Adult Social Services Departments in response to the 12 questions set under our Freedom of Information Act 2000 request.

## INITIAL FINDINGS\*

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- Over 75 per cent of local authorities responded to our Freedom of Information Act requests.
- Just under a quarter of local authorities, (23) per cent, failed to respond as of mid-February 2012.
- The overall funding trend was down for BME voluntary and community sector organisations, with the biggest cuts occurring in the Greater London area – 74 per cent of London local authorities that responded reported cuts.
- In England around £3m was cut to BME voluntary and community sector in social care funding in 2010/2011 - £1.5 million of this was in London alone.
- One in five of the responses received did not declare whether Equality Impact Assessments had been conducted.
- An alarming one in five of local authorities said that they did not collect the data on BME voluntary and community sector organisations' funding.
- Some local authorities indicated that they did not and would not conduct equality impact assessments on the adult social care budget. Whilst in some cases this appeared to be because the equality impact assessment was conducted corporately in other cases the rationale for this approach was unclear and it was unclear whether or not the local authority was complying with the previous or current public sector equality duties.
- A significant number of local authorities (nearly 30) suggested that written approval would be required if we wished to reuse the information gathered through the Freedom of Information Act request. This raised concerns about whether local authorities should or could seek to fetter the future use of such public information.



Kabba Koroma, of Family Services

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the severity of the recent and planned austerity measures, and the worrying provisional findings from the Living in the Margins campaign research, The Afiya Trust wants to ensure that the BME voluntary sector and BME families are no longer forced to live in the margins. We are committed to improving the social care, health and wellbeing of BME communities, and to working alongside central and local government to implement strategies that lead to better health outcomes for the most vulnerable in society.

Our provisional recommendations are based on the role that central and local government can play to achieve better health and social care outcomes for BME communities, users of adult social services and families, and for the voluntary and community sector organisations that support them.

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- The Department for Communities and Local Government to review the guidance to local authorities on best practice on funding cuts, and to ensure that all local authorities undertake Equality Impact Assessments with clear evidence that the impact on BME communities has been factored into all decision making processes and final council budgets.
- The Department of Health to develop a race equality strategy and action plan around the development and implementation of the Dilnot<sup>3</sup> recommendations.
- Personalisation to be implemented at 100 per cent by all local authorities by 2013. The Department of Health needs to conduct Equality Impact Assessments through the implementation process to ensure that BME families, service users and carers are supported and benefiting from the autonomy that personalisation promotes.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Establish a network to support local authorities to develop best practice around race equality to minimise the impact of the cuts on BME communities.
- Develop best practice guidance to ensure all local authorities are carrying out the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Establish a team of peer reviewers to support council leaders, elected Mayors, councillors and cabinet members to develop robust processes around the cuts and Equality Impact Assessments, and to produce an action plan to support BME communities.
- Have a roundtable meeting between BME national and regional organisations and senior leaders in local government to develop a joint approach around localism and race equality.

<sup>3</sup> Launched on 20 July 2010, the Commission on Funding of Care and Support was an independent body tasked by the government to review the funding system for care and support in England. It was chaired by Andrew Dilnot.

## METROPOLITAN, COUNTY COUNCIL AND UNITARY LEVEL

- Produce an annual impact report on race equality and to support final council budgets and decision making processes based on robust Equality Impact Assessments and engagement with BME communities and third sector organisations.
  - Review the impact of cuts on the implementation of the joint strategic needs assessment and the likely impact on BME communities.
  - Shadow Health and Well-Being Boards to assess the impact of cuts on BME communities and the level of disinvestment in BME third sector and grass roots community organisations.
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# LIVING IN THE MAR- GINS

## CAMPAIGN VISION

- Living in the Margins is the first campaign of its kind in the UK working to reduce inequalities for BME families and voluntary and community organisations.
- This social media influenced campaign will lobby local and national government, work with the BME voluntary and community sector and BME families to tackle the adverse affects of race specific health inequalities, in a climate of cuts.
- As BME families have historically encountered barriers in accessing equitable health and social care services and outcomes, the campaign aims to provide them with the tools to challenge the cuts in their communities and protect the services they need.
- To fully engage with the target groups, the campaign will be social media influenced as BME communities are more likely than the majority population to rely on digital and social media, and mobile technology.
- We aim to use the information generated by the campaign to lobby government to amend the legislation around health and social care delivery to tackle the inequality that BME families and organisations will face in light of the cuts.



Andrew Holman of Inspired Services and Richard West

**For more information on the Living in the Margins campaign, visit:**

**Website:** <http://www.livinginthemargins.org>

**Email:** [info@livinginthemargins.org](mailto:info@livinginthemargins.org)

**Twitter:** @litm\_campaign



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