

## Cohesion Guidance for Funders

16<sup>th</sup> March 2008

### Background

In June 2007, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) published *Our Shared Future*, setting out ways in which local authorities could help to build strong communities by promoting cohesion and integration locally. It was reported that funding can promote cohesion by creating social capital – bonding between people of similar backgrounds, bridging different groups within communities and linking wider communities. As part of mainstreaming cohesion, the Commission recommended that existing spend on VCS provision of services and activities should be assessed to see whether it was building integrated and cohesive communities, or whether it was inadvertently divisive.

As part of its response to this report, the Department of Communities and local government has produced the Cohesion Guidance for Funders which it is now consulting on.

The proposed guidance to Funders will be based on five guiding principles:

1. There is a clear link between equality and cohesion. There is also a need to work with particular groups to tackle evidenced need amongst particular communities or groups experiencing inequalities.
2. All groups need to consider how to promote cohesion and integration as well as meeting diverse needs.
3. Building relationships between people promotes cohesion
4. Funders should balance bridging activities etc and activities which support single groups only.
5. Local context and specific local needs will drive decisions.

### Recommendations:

Annex D of 'Our Shared Future,' recommends that 'the presumption should be against Single Group Funding unless there is a clear reason for capacity building within a group or community.' The Cohesion Guidance therefore makes the following recommendations:

- The community or group being supported has a clear need for services outside the mainstream.
- The grant is the only way to offer the skills and knowledge for the delivery of services.
- The funding is being awarded in a way that builds cohesion.

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- Organisations seeking single group funding must set out how they will build their own capacity and identify objectives for becoming more outward-facing.
- Organisations seeking single group funding must also set out how activity supporting a particular group currently not adequately supported by mainstream provision could also work with mainstream services to build their abilities.
- The Commission found that 56% of people surveyed believed that other groups were getting preferential treatment, the report recommended that if Single Group Funding is awarded, the reasons behind that award should be clearly publicised to all communities in the local area.

### **Implications for the BME Sector**

**Funding:** The report defines Single Group Funding' as that 'awarded on the basis of particular identity, such as ethnic, religious or cultural' and recommends that single group funding be the exception rather than the rule by both government and external funders. This puts the funding of frontline organisations working with particular groups from a single identity, at risk and will have a direct impact on BME-VSC funding.

#### **Problems with publicity:**

It further recommends that when single group funding is awarded, the reason behind these awards should be publicised in order to counteract the view that certain organizations or groups are receiving preferential treatment over other. Publicising funding awards may be more divisive. Further, this may draw attention to groups not seeking publicity.

#### **Sidelining of Issues:**

BME communities work with other communities on an issue based level. For instance, they look at social-care issues that are not touched by the mainstream. These issues may be sidelined though mainstreaming.

#### **Appendix to mainstream:**

Smaller BME organizations may be in the danger of becoming mere appendices of large mainstream organizations. They may be approached to do specialist work, without the benefits of core funding.

More information regarding the Cohesion Guidance for Funders may affect the BME VCS may be found here:

[http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/cic\\_threatens\\_bme\\_groups\\_survival.html](http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/cic_threatens_bme_groups_survival.html)

#### **Next Steps:**

The document is currently open for consultation, which runs till the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2008. See below for a link to the response document.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/cohesionfundersconsultation>

Voice 4 Change, on behalf of the National Equality Partnership, is organising three consultation events, aimed specifically at organisations that work for single groups. See link below for further information and booking forms.

[http://www.voice-em.org.uk/news\\_events/index.asp](http://www.voice-em.org.uk/news_events/index.asp)

The final strategy and summary of consultation responses will be published in Summer 2008

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### **Voice EM**

Voice EM is a registered charity that works with and supports BME organisations throughout the East Midlands.

It aims to advocate, help, resource, develop and enable the Black and minority ethnic third sector to play a meaningful role in the economic, social and cultural development of the East Midlands.

### **Author(s)**

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### **References:**

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/681891>

[http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our\\_shared\\_future.pdf](http://www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future.pdf)