

## Where will meetings be held?

If we are holding focus groups then we will hold them in various places across the county to make them as accessible as possible.

## I don't want to attend meetings, is there another way I can get involved?

There are a variety of different ways you can be consulted – it's up to you to choose the method you would like us to use:

- Postal questionnaire
- E-mail
- One to one meeting
- Telephone interview

We also hope that in the near future members will be able to access and respond to consultations via our website.

## What about expenses?

We value your input and so we have a voucher scheme. Current rates for 2009/10 are £5 per completed postal questionnaire, £20 for attendance at a focus group and £25 for attendance at a full panel meeting.

## Can children attend?

It can be distracting if children are present at consultations and prevent full and frank discussion of the topics. Many of the agencies are also not insured to have children in their venues and for these reasons we ask you not to bring children under the age of 16 (including babies) to consultations.

## I want to get involved – what do I do now?

Fill in the enclosed form and return it to us. The form can also be downloaded off the website at [www.chawrec.org.uk](http://www.chawrec.org.uk)

You will then be added to our database and informed of any upcoming consultations. If at any time you wish to be removed, just let us know and we will remove your details.



# Black and Minority Ethnic Consultation Panel

**Your chance  
to be involved**

## Is race equality important to you?

## Want your views heard?

## Want to make a difference to how services are run?

### Then join our consultation panel for people from BME communities....

### What is it?

The BME Consultation Panel has been set up by the Racial Equality Council to make sure that there is an effective consultation mechanism for agencies. The Panel is made up of Black and Minority Ethnic people from across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington areas who have agreed to get involved and respond to consultation requests.

### Why should I get involved?

Because it's an opportunity for you to have a say in issues that affect not just your life, but those around you too. If people from BME backgrounds don't get involved then policies and procedures won't necessarily reflect the needs of those communities.

### Which agencies are consulting?

We currently work with a wide range of agencies, such as the local authorities, the fire service, the police and other criminal justice agencies. All agencies that engage the panel however are required to sign up to a common framework which complies with good practice.

### When is it?

There are consultations throughout the year with different agencies. After you have registered with us, we will advise you when there is one coming up, or if you want to know when the next one is, please get in touch.

## Why do I have to fill in a questionnaire?

The more information we have the better we can match you up your profile to consultations. So for example if we had a focus group on disability issues for Chester residents we would be able to pull out those people who lived in Chester and had expressed an interest in disability issues. It also means that we can identify where there are gaps in the panel in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability and residence.

## But I don't understand government jargon!

You don't have to. All the agencies are committed to an agreed framework for consultation – which includes any information being written in plain English, with a basic summary of the issues being provided and a variety of formats including translations.

## Who can be involved?

It is specifically only for people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The reason for this is because people from BME groups tend to be poorly represented in standard consultation methods used by public sector agencies. You can join as an individual or to represent a group- just be clear when you are being consulted what capacity you are acting in.

## What do we mean by BME?

We mean people who are from a Black or Minority Ethnic background. That in everyday terms means anyone who isn't from the White British majority. This includes white minority groups too like Eastern Europeans and Gypsies and Travellers.

## What commitment is expected of me?

The commitment you make is up to you. You will always be notified of any upcoming consultations, but you might not want to participate every time - so your involvement depends on you!