

GIVING US A VOICE

Meeting the needs of people with learning disabilities from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities

Valuing People Now, the Government's three-year plan for better services for people with learning disabilities, says that the agencies that plan and deliver health and social care services must pay more attention to the needs of the people who are most likely to be left out.

One of those groups are people from black, asian and minority ethnic groups or "BME communities", even though more families need services than ever before. People with learning disabilities from BME communities often face what is called "double discrimination" – not having the same opportunities as others because they have a learning disability *and* because they are from a black or minority ethnic community.

But it is difficult to provide services that meet the needs of people with different cultural backgrounds if people do not know whom they need to be speaking to. Carers from BME communities report that they often feel ignored or bewildered by "the System", and Statutory services still struggle to engage effectively with ethnic minority communities and families.

ARC, BILD and Mencap, the learning disability charities, are bringing people together for constructive dialogue in 9 regional summit meetings around England as part of an 18-month project funded by the Department For Communities and Local Government under its Tackling Race Inequalities Fund.

Whether you are a person with a learning disability or family carer from a BME community, or a policy maker, commissioner or service provider, these regional meetings will give you the opportunity to talk and learn from each other in what we hope will be an ongoing discussion.

The contributions that people make at these meetings will help us to design a national "Charter for Inclusion for People with Learning Disabilities from Ethnic Minority Communities" which local authorities and providers will be invited to sign up to.

The regional meeting in your area will be in Birmingham at The Best Western Westley Hotel on 12th January 2011.

For further information or to register your interest, please contact project worker Philip Ware on 07763 016958 or email philip.ware@arcuk.org.uk