

Voice4Change England's recommendations for the BME Compact Code and the future of the Compact

About the review of the Compact

The Compact and its Codes of Practice are currently being reviewed to ensure that the Compact remains fit for purpose. Last year Voice4Change England responded to the Commission for the Compact's Compact Debate which looked at the 'big questions' around the Compact such as whether it should have a statutory basis. Alongside the Compact Debate the Commission for the Compact has been specifically reviewing the BME Code through both a legal review and consultation with the third sector. Following the debate it has been agreed that there should be an update of the Compact in 2009. It is also hoped that the Commission for the Compact will become an independent body with powers of investigation.

Voice4Change England recommendations

Voice4Change England responded to the Compact Debate providing a BME infrastructure perspective on the Compact in November 2008 (visit our website to read our [full response](#) (108KB)). However as the Compact Debate did not look at the details of individual Codes we also decided to submit recommendations to the Commission for the Compact and Compact Voice (the voluntary sector voice on the Compact) specifically on the BME Code and the process of updating the Compact.

Our recommendations draw on:

- Our submission to the wider Compact debate.
- The BME Code legal review.
- 4 consultation events on the BME Code held with the Commission for the Compact, MENTER, BTEG, BSWN and BDA.
- Voice4Change England's West Midlands Policy Roadshow held with the West Midlands Race Equality Advisory Board.

About Voice4Change England

Voice4Change England is a national body dedicated to strengthening the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Third Sector as a positive force for change and which aims to provide a co-ordinated policy voice for BME groups and organisations. V4CE is a partnership of national BME organisations and BME regional networks which has a reach of over 6000 BME organisations. We have successfully acquired a place where our responses to government policies objectively represent the concerns of the BME Third Sector. We aim to continue developing this mutual understanding between the BME-led third sector and government to ensure policies are responsive to BME communities' needs and aspirations.

Contact

For more information about our policy work on the Compact please contact Jemma Grieve at jemma@voice4change-england.co.uk or on 020 7843 6129

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** the Commission for the Compact should demonstrate good practice and ensure that the process of rewriting the Compact is Compact compliant.
- **Recommendation 2:** the Commission for the Compact should conduct a Race Equality Impact Assessment on any proposed changes to assess the likely impacts of any changes to the Compact and its commitments on the BME third sector.
- **Recommendation 3:** the Commission for the Compact should continue to work with Voice4Change England in revising the Compact particularly when looking at BME and wider equalities aspects.
- **Recommendation 4:** The Commission for the Compact should be transparent in all its processes in reviewing the Compact and provide clarity on timescales, opportunities to feed in and the roles of different actors.
- **Recommendation 5:** the Commission for the Compact should clarify how it will work with Compact Voice in reviewing the Compact.
- **Recommendation 6:** The BME Code should remain as a distinct section whether as a single document or as part of one document. It should not be 'mainstreamed' or integrated into a single equalities code.
- **Recommendation 7:** Equalities more broadly should underpin the entire Compact including the BME section.
- **Recommendation 8:** The principles and commitments in the existing BME Code should be clearer and stronger in future iterations of the Compact. They should be updated to reflect the current policy and legislative environment and to better meet the needs of BME third sector organisations.
- **Recommendation 9:** The BME Code should be updated to: better comply with equality law; emphasise the opportunities and requirements in equality law to create and deliver community (BME) specific services; and tackle multiple discrimination.
- **Recommendation 10:** Alongside changes to the BME Code itself there should awareness raising and capacity building in using the BME Code in the BME third sector and with its statutory partners.
- **Recommendation 11:** The revised BME Code needs to be accompanied by an implementation plan with clear, measurable targets.