

Children Matter East Conference

18th October 2011

Notes from MENTER workshop – unmet needs of BME young people

Main Points:

- Commissioners to consult with the BME sector, communities and leaders as well as all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- Schools to engage with local BME community groups and leaders, involving parents, carers and community members in school aims and activities
- Mentoring African and Caribbean boys and young men is essential particular where father deficit is experienced or where involved with the Criminal Justice System (CJS)
- Mainstream organisations like schools, social services and health care need to involve/recruit BME sector organisations and pay volunteers expenses to enable engagement in improving service delivery
- Promoting BME volunteering with no cost to the volunteer is positive particularly for young people wanting to get work experience to add to their CV

Discussion Points:

The funding cuts are having a big impact on the BME sector, communities and young people in the East of England. MENTER has seen a drop in small BME voluntary youth organisations over the last year. There were 34 BME youth specific organisations as MENTER members and only 6 of those reported they are still in operation, during August 2011. There are larger BME organisations with youth projects still in operation while over seventy percent of BME youth specific organisations have disappeared.

Nationally rising unemployment within BME communities and forty eight percent of all unemployed young people in England being from a BME background highlights the impact of the recession and funding cuts. Further work is needed to tackle race inequalities. Current evidence shows BME communities are being impacted and marginalised by the new children and young people service delivery structures being implemented.

The challenge to integrated services for young people is having a BME voice. A solution would be for commissioners to consult with BME sector on how to best support continuation of BME organisations and act on their findings to ensure marginalised BME groups are represented at Health & Well-being Boards.