York Racial Equality Network (YREN)
“Working in harmony for a just society”

Presentation to
York University
Staff Race Equality Forum
19th March 2012
History – Background YREN (1)

- Started as a self help group in 1992
- Particularly united around issues of education for black and minority ethnic (BME) children in schools and pre-school
- Recognised the need to develop dialogue with agencies and groups to develop their anti-discriminatory policies and procedures
History – Background YREN (2)

- Instrumental in producing

‘Contact 93’: Black and Ethnic Minority Residents in York

– report of a 12 month development and outreach exercise

(Citizens Services Group, York City Council, Community Affairs Publication)
History – Background YREN (3)
The ‘Gatherings’ self funded (1993-1995)

- Provided opportunities for isolated individuals, friends and families to meet occasionally.
- Informal discussions took place in order to identify key race equality issues affecting York citizens (positive and negative).
- Action plan produced in order to disseminate information and create dialogue with appropriate bodies including community groups.
History – Background YREN (4)
Constitution

Formed 1994 – 1995

- Main areas of work:
  - Quarterly support meetings
  - Monthly meetings for members including group representatives
  - Youth Group
  - Parent and Toddler Group
  - Quarterly Newsletters
“York Building Bridges Forum”

Aims:

- To challenge racism, prejudice and discrimination in York.
- To develop local service provision that was responsive and appropriate to the needs of BME groups and individual citizens.

Disbanded 2005
Current Context (1)

- York – third fastest growing population.
- York BME at 4.9% (2001 Census).
- York BME at 11% (2009 JRF Study).
- In part due to continuing expansion of University and HE facilities within York.
- Also: seasonal work (tourism, agriculture).
- More people settling in York.
Current Context (2)

A JRF Study (2010) found:

- 92 different ethnic and national origins, and
- 78 different first languages
  in York.
Partnership-Coproduction Work (1)

- Without Walls Partnership Board (Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)).
- Inclusive York Forum Executive Group (Without Walls LSP) (Interim Chair).
- Equality Advisory Group, CYC.
Partnership-Coproduction Work (2)

- York Compact.
- Review of City Hate Crime Strategy.
- North Yorkshire Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) Selby and York IAG (Chair).
- North Yorkshire and York Infrastructure VCS Chief Officers’ Group.
Current Initiatives (1)

Case information support and assistance provided to victims of:-

- Racial harassment.
- Victimisation.
- Discrimination.
Current Initiatives (2)

The Voice

Providing a conduit for BME individuals, community groups and organisations to reach and have equal access to statutory, voluntary and private agencies and services.
Current Initiatives (3)

Information and support provided to BME individuals and groups by:

- Enabling and empowering individuals and groups to identify and access service provision.
- Advocating on behalf of community groups.
- Representing the interests of communities in York at key partnership meetings.
Current Projects: York BME Citizens’ Open Forums (1)

Aims and objectives:

- To give BME groups and individuals opportunities to express and discuss any issues affecting their lives.

- To inform the service providers, statutory, voluntary and private organisations, of the needs/issuses identified at the Open Forum.
Current Projects: York BME Citizens’ Open Forums (2)

• To provide opportunities for consultation between statutory and voluntary organisations and the BME population.
Current Projects: Active Elders Social Group

• Usually meets on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month.

• Opportunities to eliminate isolation and share cultural richness.

• Provide information about and gain awareness of services available.
Current Projects: Rural Voice

Supporting voluntary and community groups in remote rural areas of North Yorkshire by:

• Improving access to local services.
• Signposting groups to specific training and resources.
• Giving voluntary and community groups a means to influence the local, regional and national policies which affect them.
Current Projects: Enabling and Empowerment Outreach Pilot (1)

- Available to BME (not exclusively) individuals and groups.
- Prime aims are to:
  - identify gaps in services.
  - enable access to the previously excluded.
Current Projects: Enabling and Empowerment Outreach Pilot (2)

- Chance for service providers to hear empowered views of previously under-represented communities.

- Opportunities to address CYC Ward Priorities, improve community employment and volunteer prospects.
Current Projects: Equalities Forum

- Still in early stages.
- Local forum for professionals in the field of equality.
- Coordinated by YREN.
- Open discussion of experiences and the sharing of common approaches and actions.
- Opportunity to feed into strategic work within the City.
Current Projects: YREN Events

• YREN 20\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Events: Number of events planned to celebrate this occasion, including partnership event to be held in St Sampson’s Square, York on 25\textsuperscript{th} May 2012.

• York International Shared Meal: Annual event held in celebration of One World Week: 27\textsuperscript{th} October 2012.
Other Services Available

The provision of race equality research, information and resources to:

- Individuals.
- Community and informal groups.
- Organisations.
YREN is not

- a tick box exercise.
- a token BME representative at meetings.
- a talking shop.
- everything to everyone.
- on
YREN Challenges 2012 (1)

- Communication.
- Identification of specialist infrastructure organisational resources – Voice.
- Funding for Community Engagement and Development Officer.
- Refresh of York Hate Crime Strategy.
YREN Challenges 2012 (2)

  - Enabling Growth.
  - Creating the Environment for Growth.
  - Sharing Growth.
YREN Challenges 2012 (3)

- Formal development of Equalities Professionals’ Forum.
- Other agencies’ recognition of YREN’s position and principles – marketing.
- Office/Community accommodation.
YREN Long Term Challenges

- Securing funding in the ongoing financial climate.
- Raising BME/YREN strategic profile within York and the sub-region.
- Developments in the governance, management and roles of Third Sector Organisations – Big Society.
YREN’s Motivation (1)

The Equality Act 2010 placed a general duty on public authorities to have due regard in carrying out their functions to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.
YREN’s Motivation (2)

- Legislation such as the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, were consolidated by the Equality Act 2010.

- In addition to the above, YREN is wholeheartedly committed to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.