



Coalition of Racial Equality and Rights

78 Carlton Place

Glasgow

G5 9TH

22<sup>nd</sup> August 2016

Dear Baroness McGregor-Smith,

I'm writing to you with regards to your ongoing review on the *Issues Faced by Businesses in Developing Black and Ethnic Minority Talent*. The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) works to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland. We have a long history of capacity building, research and campaigning activities in order to tackle racism in Scotland.

Most recently we worked closely with the Scottish Government to develop the new Race Equality Framework for Scotland (2016-2030) which sets out over 100 cross departmental goals to advance race equality in all policy areas including health, housing, education and employment.

Whilst many minority ethnic groups have high educational attainment, and in most cases out-perform against their white counterparts we are still not seeing these achievements translated into meaningful and equal employment opportunities.

We welcome your review as the continued discrimination of BME people in the workplace violates existing equalities and employment legislation, as well as robbing individuals of the equal life chances they have been promised in law. However we feel unable to contribute to your open consultation due to the narrowed questions which would inhibit us from presenting the full picture. We have particular concerns that this consultation does not seek to gather any personal experiences from BME people who have joined, or who have tried to join the workforce.

Whilst it is important to understand the practices in place which continue to inhibit progression for BME people, without also including the evidence that we have available on work place discrimination and institutional racism it's unclear how your report will support individuals as well as businesses.

Research commissioned by the Department of Work and Pensions in 2009 found that candidates that appeared to be white issued roughly nine applications before getting either a response or a positive phone call. Minority candidates or those with a foreign sounding name had to issue 16 applications before gaining a positive response or interview.

We are eager to contribute to your review however, as we believe that racial discrimination within the work force is one of the many indicators we have demonstrating how BME people continue to face inequality in Britain. Please find enclosed with this letter CRER's 2014 research *The State of the Nation: Race and Racism in Scotland – Employment* which highlights key statistics and offers an insight into the complications of collecting and using employee information on ethnicity which we hope will support your research.

## If you don't challenge racism—who will?

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Additionally, in January this year the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee published their findings on the barriers facing BME people seeking employment. Amongst their findings the Committee reported that, “initiatives such as —unconscious bias training are not the solution and can serve to mask underlying negative attitudes towards people from an ethnic minority background.” Their inquiry and concluding report *Removing Barriers: race, ethnicity and employment* may prove useful as part of your Review – which we have also enclosed.

We look forward to engaging with you throughout your review, and would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information as required.

Kindest regards,

Jatin Haria  
Executive Director  
Coalition of Racial Equality and Rights

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