



Delivering Advice, Information and  
Legal Representation Services

National Lottery Distribution Policy Branch  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1Y 5DH

20th August 2010

To whom it may concern

### **Response to consultation on the National Lottery Shares**

I write on behalf of the BAN (Black & Minority Ethnic [BME] Advice Network) to express our concern relating to the proposed changes in distribution of Lottery Shares. BAN is a network of over 40 agencies providing quality advice, information and support across a range of social welfare law areas to people from London's BME communities.

We believe the proposed changes will threaten vital services provided by the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to people from BME backgrounds, who are amongst the most disadvantaged in society.

We have duly considered all the available documentation for the consultation and, whilst we note there is an anticipated increase in sales and revenue and a proposal to increase BIG funding to the VCS from approximately 96% to 100%, this must be considered against the key proposal to reduce by about one fifth the money given by the National Lottery to BIG to spend on the VCS sector by about one fifth, a reduction of about £100 million in total, by 2010.

Many of our member organisations rely on BIG funding for survival, particularly as other available funding sources are limited and oversubscribed. It seems unfeasible to argue that the proposed changes will not risk having a sudden and devastating impact on core services that are already struggling in the present financial climate. To demonstrate this point, we would mention 29 of our members currently receive London Councils' funding. Yet this crucial source of funding is also under threat, with London Councils' recent announcement that it proposes to "repatriate" the majority of its current £26 million commissioning budget to individual London boroughs. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn is likely to result in a further reduction of funding for the VCS from the statutory sector.

Since our network was first established in 2004, we have been meeting regularly and now meet quarterly to share knowledge, skills and experiences and to develop partnership and policy work. This has given us a broad insight into the value and necessity of frontline organisations with a legitimate base in the community. Our concerns about reductions to VCS services working with BME communities include both threats to existing services that have taken years to develop through the contributions of communities and volunteers, and also to new and emerging services reacting directly to community need. Our key concerns are as follows.

- The BME population is disproportionately represented amongst London's socially excluded:
  - in 2007 the rate of unemployment for BME Londoners was 13%, over twice the rate for White Londoners (5%), and people from BME communities are 2-3 times more likely to be homeless<sup>1</sup>;
  - the recession has had a disproportionate effect on certain vulnerable groups and problems tend to cluster, particularly amongst the most marginalised.
  - refugee and migrant communities have an increased need for services as a result of the recession, and BME agencies have seen an increase in demand for their services, but the need is not being adequately met<sup>2</sup>.

People's problems not only have a catastrophic effect on individuals but have an impact on the public purse, e.g. benefit and debt issues can result in homelessness, which increases homelessness applications and reduces Council Tax collection; research into single homelessness in 2003 found the cost of a failed single tenancy cost between £15,000 and £83,000<sup>3</sup>.

- Loss of specialist services for people from specific ethnic/cultural community backgrounds. Such services reach out to people who may otherwise be completely isolated, without any friends or family present in the country and provide them with access to services, language support and opportunities to integrate and participate in society. Service users of such organisations are often the most vulnerable in society facing multiple inequality issues. Organisations of this nature have frequently been at the forefront of promoting understanding, cohesion and developing progressive community-led services tackling difficult issues such as crime or violence.
- Reduction in frontline expert services that are known and trusted at a community level for providing advice, information and support in relation to free, quality assured asylum and immigration advice. This is an area where restrictions on funding and legal aid payment arrangements have resulted in a reduction in provision. An example is provided by our member, Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ), which went into administration in June 2010 leaving 10,000 clients, including 900 unaccompanied minors, seeking alternative advice provision. Further cuts would threaten individuals' chances of finding good quality legal representation which, in turn, would increase the risk of return to countries where they face persecution, or of destitution in the UK. Both outcomes have serious human rights implications and rising destitution has attendant consequences for social and community cohesion in the UK.

If core services, such as those provided by BAN, are dismantled, the effect on remaining VCS services will be severely destabilising and felt for many years. More importantly, the communities that they serve will face further difficulties in accessing their rights and entitlements, and therefore further marginalisation. We urge you to consider other options to strengthen arts, heritage and sports projects without risking widespread damage to vital VCS services and their clients.

Yours faithfully

*E. du Boulay*

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<sup>1</sup> GLA (Greater London Authority), *Social Exclusion Update* (2007)

<sup>2</sup> ROTA, *The Economic Downturn and the Black Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) third sector* (June 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Crisis, *How many, how much, single homelessness and the question of numbers and cost* (2003)

## **Appendix 1**

### List of BAN members

Advice Learning Bureau  
Afro - Asian Advisory Service  
Asian Women's Resource Centre  
Asylum Aid  
Asylum Support Appeals Service  
Barnet Refugee Service  
Bosnia Herzegovina Community Advice Centre  
Carila Latin American Welfare Group  
Centre for Armenian Information & Advice  
Chinese Community Centre  
Corecog  
Day-Mer Turkish Community Centre  
East European Advice Centre (EEAC)  
East London Somali Youth and Welfare Centre  
Embrace UK Community Support Centre  
Evelyn Oldfield Unit  
Haringey Somali Community & Cultural Association  
IMECE Turkish Speaking Women's Group  
Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation  
Iranian Association  
Iranian Community Centre  
Iraqi Association  
Island Advice Centre  
Kurdish Association  
Latin American House  
Latin American Women's Rights Service  
Lewisham Refugee Network  
Limehouse Project  
London Irish Women's Centre  
Migrants Resource Centre  
Multi-Lingual Community Rights Shop  
Newham Monitoring Project  
Notre Dame Refugee Centre  
Refugee Action Kingston  
Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London  
Refugee and Migrant Network Sutton  
Refugee Women's Association  
Roma Support Group  
Sangam Asian Women's Association  
Sangat Advice Centre  
Tallo Information Centre  
Tamil Relief Centre  
Tamil Welfare Association Newham  
Welwetchia Legal Advice Centre