

MINUTES OF ETHNICITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING

9 FEBRUARY 2004

Venue: Bury Employment Support and Training, 24 Ribchester Drive, Bury BL9 9JT

ACTION

Welcome:

Asghar opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. This was followed by brief introductions, a chance for Tracey and Zerqa to formally introduce themselves.

Asghar confirmed the minutes of the last focus group meeting.

There was a brief discussion on the aims and objectives of the focus group, mainly;

- **Why do we need a focus group?**
- **Who will be involved?**
- **How will we do this?**

1. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

- What do feel your main barriers have been in seeking employment?
- Have you overcome these, if so, how?
- How could these be avoided in the future?
- How could Bury EST and other external agencies help in overcoming your barriers?

2. KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

What do you feel your main barriers have been in seeking employment?

- Lack of work experience in the UK.
- No references from anyone in the UK.
- Qualifications not accepted/recognised in the UK.
- Language (not being able to speak English fluently or English being a second language).

- Lack of confidence.
- Personal circumstances/cultural barriers (not being able to be allowed to go outside, having to look after relatives).
- Health issues ie mental health.
- Lack of knowledge of services available in the UK (where to go and look for the right job).
- Wanted to start university but did not know where to look. I was also given the wrong information due to communication reasons, therefore was unable to enrol on a suitable course, even though I held an overseas degree.
- Epilepsy.
- Lack of knowledge regarding interview techniques, CV building and IT skills.
- Physical disability.
- Nervousness.

ACTION

Have you overcome these barriers, if so, how?

- Through Bury EST have been able to gain work experience.
- Enrolled onto English classes.
- Undertaking an IT class.
- I have got an ECDL certificate.
- Bury EST and my present employer have helped me in gaining confidence.
- I am now working with a CPN to help overcome my barriers relating to my mental health.
- Through short work skills courses at Bury EST I feel more relaxed in a group and more motivated.
- I still need to improve my social life in terms of getting out more.
- My epilepsy issue is not going to disappear overnight. I am still struggling in finding work, therefore I have not overcome my barrier.
- The only way I would overcome my barrier is if I was to find a job which would not be physically demanding because of my physical disability.
- The focus group is a good way to make new friends, helping to get over my confidence issue for the future.

How could Bury EST and other external agencies help in overcoming your barriers?

- More information as to WHERE to look for a job ie websites, newspapers, Asian newspapers.
- Help/advice on applying for jobs online.
- Information on language and IT classes in the local borough.
- Information regarding ethnic CPNs and ethnic translators within local hospitals or GP surgeries.
- I would like to see the work skills course running again to help with CVs and covering letters.
- I would like to speak to someone from an epilepsy group.
- I would like to speak to potential employers, more specifically from the NHS.
- Information on asylum issues.
- Information regarding university enrolment.
- Information on translating/recognising qualifications.
- If possible speak to someone for the JobCentreplus.

ACTION

3. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| • Asghar to provide information on how to look for jobs online. | AA |
| • Asghar and Zerqa to provide information on language classes. | AA/ZA |
| • Asghar to look at inviting a DEA for next focus group meeting. | AA |
| • Asghar to provide information about NARIC. | AA |
| • Asghar and Zerqa to speak to Fred to try and invite someone from Primary Care. | AA/ZA |
| • Asghar to seek information on asylum issues. | AA |
| • The group to look at formalising an action plan at next meeting. | |
| • Asghar, Tracey and Zerqa to set up next focus group. | AA/TP/ZA |