



**APPG for BAME Business Owners  
EGM  
Minutes of Meeting on 9 November 2020  
Attendees via Zoom**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sir Peter Bottomley, MP – Co-Chair</li> <li>2) Baroness Burt of Solihull – Co-Chair</li> <li>3) Baron Dholakia</li> <li>4) Office of Lord Taylor of Warwick</li> <li>5) Abena Opong - Asare, MP</li> <li>6) Saqib Bhatti, MP</li> <li>7) Professor Monder Ram - Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CRÈME)</li> <li>8) Diana Chrouh - Special Adviser to the APPG for BAME Business Owners</li> <li>9) Arnab Dutt - Federation of Small Businesses</li> <li>10) Lina Bourdon - Federation of Small Businesses</li> <li>11) Moslek Uddin - UK Curry Connect</li> <li>12) Isabel Oswell- IP &amp; Business Centre British Library</li> <li>13) Femi Santos - Alchemy Design</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14) Ammar Mirza - Asian Business Connexions</li> <li>15) Jennifer Tankard - UK Finance</li> <li>16) Trevor Chrouh – Olympia Fitness</li> <li>17) Sue Bedward - Midlands Business Leadership Academy</li> <li>18) Shah Athar - The IBD Partnership, UK Curry Connect</li> <li>19) Isi Inyang - Vanised Ltd &amp; African Business Network</li> <li>20) Efuru Obua - Mordi &amp; Co Solicitors &amp; African Business Network</li> <li>21) Lola Owolabi - Proudtohome</li> <li>22) David Apparicio -The Chrysalis Foundation</li> <li>23) Irshad Akbar – FSB – South Yorkshire</li> <li>24) Bayo Igoh – Big Coaching</li> <li>25) Taznema Khatun - Lloyds Banking Group</li> <li>26) Esenam Agubretu - London Chamber of Commerce</li> </ol>
---	---

1. **Welcome and introductions led by Baroness Burt.** Apologies from Theresa Villiers MP
2. **Election of Sir Peter Bottomley as co-chair.**

**P. Bottomley:** Thanked Baroness Burt, Chi Onwurah and Diana Chrouh for their work with the APPG.

**3. POST-REPORT LAUNCH ACTION PLAN.**

**3.1. L. Burt:** Thanked Diana for writing the report on behalf of the APPG and also thanked members and collaborators involved in supporting the consultation and the drafting of the report.

**3.2. D. Chrouh:** Mentioned that the report had received a lot of attention and that it had been featured on the front page of the Daily Telegraph’s business section. As a result of this the APPG had been invited to participate in a number of follow up meetings and round tables with key policy makers to discuss the report’s findings. These include:

- The Cabinet Office as a part of their review of race disparities in the UK
- The Office for National Statistics to discuss data collection about BAME owned enterprises
- UK Finance have agreed to convene a round table to enable members of the APPG to meet with representatives from the banking sector to discuss short and long-term barriers to accessing finance.
- The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy with regard to wider business support
- The government minister Nadhim Zahawi has also asked for a round table to discuss the needs of BAME business owners.

**3.3 L. Burt:** Stated that the timing of the launch may be dependent on additional funding. She also reached out to the attendees for suggestions regarding the style of the launch event.

**3.4. D. Chrouch:** Recommended that the APPG reach out to stakeholders in order to collaborate over the event, and to benefit from their expertise.

#### **4. APPG ROUNDTABLE WITH KEY SECTORS AND REGION STAKEHOLDERS**

**4.1 L. Burt:** Opened the floor to the attendees to discuss their views on the needs of BAME business owners at a regional and sector level

**4.2. A. Mirza:** Suggested working with local enterprise partnerships in different regions. He stated that this would be an ideal move to build regional engagement from a strategic viewpoint. He also advocated for greater collaboration with northern MPs and the intensifying of efforts to communicate with BAME businesses in the North.

**4.3 L. Burt:** Mentioned that it was important for the APPG to refrain from opening itself up to more work than it could manage.

**4.4 I. Akbar:** Highlighted the lack of support for the BAME business community in Sheffield. He stressed the need for more effective collaboration with grassroots organisations within the region.

**4.5 M. Uddin:** Noted that a second lockdown and a new furlough scheme could lead to more difficulties for the hospitality sector. He also emphasised that BAME businesses within the sector are facing the dual threat of COVID-19 and Brexit, possibly resulting in the loss of skilled workers from continental Europe.

**4.6 S. Bedward:** Stated that businesses based in the midlands have only received limited support. She stressed the need for BAME businesses in the region to receive targeted support in line with the tiers.

**4.7 E. Obua:** Concurred, noting that government schemes are failing to reach those who are desperately in need. She suggested a root-and-branch review of existing schemes to facilitate the creation of a more focused approach. She added that many BAME businesses do not have as much presence online. This has exacerbated many of the problems that they have faced during the pandemic.

**4.8 N. Dholakia:** Emphasised that it was paramount for larger organisations to understand exactly how to help smaller BAME businesses.

**4.9 D. Apparicio:** BAME not-for-profits that provide services to the prison system need an urgent intervention because they are unable to draw down funding for contracted work due to the lock down of the national prison system. This has been exacerbated because other sources of funding are unavailable since they require businesses to be working locally.

**4.10 F. Santos:** Mentioned that scores of employees in the architectural industry were let go as the pandemic worsened leaving contractors having to split more workload between remaining employees.

**4.11 L. Burt:** Stressed the need to focus on bread and butter issues currently affecting BAME communities, such as the eligibility criteria for access to finance. She added that the government must be persuaded to pay more attention to these issues as a priority.

**4.12 B. Igoh:** Stated that it is vital that the government use more effective terminology when promoting and advertising support measures because many people are missing out because they are unfamiliar with current modes of communication used by the government.

**4.12 T. Chrouch:** Explained that the support for BAME businesses in Sheffield is not visible enough. There are many BAME business owners who simply do not know that the support exists.

**4.13 L. Owolabi:** Noted the importance of reaching out to organisations that do not work with BAME businesses ordinarily, such as universities. She also suggested more collaboration with social entrepreneurs because they already possess strong links to their local communities.

**4.14 Dutt:** Stated that the APPG must provide guidance to the government to make sure that the findings of the report are fully understood. He added that the lack of effective communication and outreach from the government during the pandemic is the biggest issue to arise from the report. The APPG must find a way to help the government improve its communication and outreach programs.

**4.15 I. Akbar:** Suggested the use of verbal communication and videos to get the message across to BAME business owners.

**4.16 I. Oswell:** Agreed that messaging and sign posting are critical factors. She explained that the British Library's workshops have been effective in engaging with significant numbers of BAME business owners

**4.17 A. Dutt:** Suggested the use of local community radio is another vehicle to communicate guidance in various languages.

**4.18 L. Burt:** Suggested that it might be time to also actively exert pressure on appropriate organisations to communicate their plans to help BAME businesses.

**4.19 S. Bhatti:** Stated that regional chambers of commerce have helped Asian business owners to forge new connections on a consistent basis. However, he added that black business owners had not found chambers of commerce quite as helpful. Therefore, there is a great need to put strategies in place to reach and support the black community at the grassroots level. Also pointed out need for better signposting to enable black entrepreneurs to access necessary financial support to start a business.

**4.20 I. Akbar:** Agreed that some BAME business owners tend not to engage with chambers of commerce because they cannot relate to these organisations. Therefore, finding a way to take the support that these organisations can offer and tailoring it to suit specific business communities is absolutely paramount.

**4.21 B. Igoh:** Concurred, stating that it is crucial not to lump all BAME businesses/communities together. There is great diversity in terms of the terminology and platforms that are used.

**4.22 S. Athar:** Stated that in the hospitality sector some businesses have adapted to survive the lock down through for example, offering takeaways, but far more have struggled to sustain their businesses

**4.23 I. Inyang:** Advocated for more training and support concerning Brexit and Britain's incoming trade requirements. This would be hugely beneficial to importing/exporting businesses.

**4.24 D. Chrouch:** Concurred and suggested arranging a meeting to discuss Saqib Bhatti's success in engaging business communities in the Midlands, as well as exploring ideas about how to set up the framework to fit the needs of different communities.

**4.25 L. Burt:** Thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion and suggests that the group reconvene after the consultation meetings to collate findings and coordinate action plans to move the key recommendations areas in the report forward.

**D. Chrouch:** Agreed to work with APPG members to coordinate follow up and circulate minutes from the meeting.

**5. AOB.**

N/A