

# ELREC Newsletter



## **Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council**

*Promoting Racial Equality and Fighting Racial Discrimination*

In the last issue, we asked that you contribute to our forthcoming 35th Anniversary Annual Report special edition, by providing us with a statement, photo or other memorabilia. We are awaiting your contributions and would be grateful if you could please send them to us before 15 September 2006.

**Professor Braj P Sinha, Chair**

**Issue 9  
September 2006**

**ELREC  
MANAGEMENT  
BOARD**

## **Editorial**

Welcome to the ninth issue of ELREC Community Newsletter which aims to bring our readers news and information about our work as well as the latest developments in the race equality field.

Meeting to seek our members permission to amend the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board was delighted that the proposed changes were unanimously approved by the members present. The new governing documents are available on

line on ELREC website.

We want to say a big thank you to City of Edinburgh Council and Trust, Bield and Hanover Housing for making our event possible.

### **Community Safety for Equalities Group**

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, the Black and Minority Ethnic Community Safety Group will widen its remit to cover all equality strands. The new group will include two representatives from each equality forum and focus on action for tackling hate crime and community safety issues for vulnerable groups. The first meeting for this group is scheduled for 21 September 2006, 2-4, City Chambers.

### **ELREC 35th Celebration**

We were absolutely delighted with the support our members and partners have shown on the night of our 35th Anniversary celebration event held on 12 June 2006 at the City Chambers. Following the welcome by our Chair Professor Sinha, we had short speeches by our well wishers such as Cllr Dougie Kerr, Professor Geoff Palmer, Deputy Chief Constable Tom Halpin, and Area Procurator Fiscal Frank Mulholland etc.

The atmosphere was informal and everyone enjoyed the performances organised and performed by young people across the Lothians. The participants also had an opportunity to show off their dancing skills later on in the evening.

Before the party, ELREC held an Extraordinary General



**Get the most out of  
YOUR  
Scottish Parliament!**  
Parliamentary awareness  
and information session  
for ethnic minority groups.  
Tuesday 17 October 2006  
1:00 to 3:00pm

**By Nina Giles  
Director**

**Honorary President**  
Prof Geoff Palmer OBE  
**Chair**  
Prof Braj P Sinha  
**Vice Chair**  
Foysool Choudhury MBE  
**Secretary / Treasurer**  
Amjad Chaudhry  
**Company Secretary**  
Steve Kent  
**Ordinary Board  
Members:**  
Shah Noor Chowdhury  
Emma Crawshaw  
Van Dundas  
Mark Kennedy  
Shami Khan  
Susanne Munday  
Ijaz Nazir  
Naren Sood

### **Inside this issue:**

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Complainant Aid Development</i>	2
<i>Community Development</i>	3
<i>Youth Zone</i>	4
<i>Lothian &amp; Borders Police</i>	6

## Complainant Aid

### *Good News!*

The Complainant Aid Service at ELREC has recently achieved settlements in 2 Employment Tribunal cases involving race discrimination. One case was settled for £30,000 and the other was settled the day before the tribunal hearing was due to start for £5,000. Both claimants have expressed their satisfaction with the outcome achieved.

#### **Justice more important that financial gain in race discrimination employment tribunal cases**

Employment Tribunals in Great Britain awarded more than £1 million compensation in race discrimination cases in 2005. This was an increase of 59% on the previous year. With interest, the total payout came to £1,234,757. The number of cases involving race discrimination rose by 13% from 54 cases in 2004 to 61 cases in 2005. The average compensation awarded to successful claimants was £19,366.

A recent report on the experience of claimants in race discrimination employment cases highlighted the problems of bringing such cases and identified that the main motivation for claimants was the pursuit of justice and not financial gain. The report, published by the DTI's research branch explored the perceptions and experiences of 40 claimants.

Some of the key findings highlighted in the May edition of the Equal Opportunities Review included:

- The majority of claims involved overtly racist behaviour, followed by unfair incidents. These unfair incidents were attributed by the claimant to racism even when it was not obviously the case.
- Claimants found it difficult to get representation and many had to resort to representing themselves. A range of sources were utilized for advice and support. These included race equality organizations, citizen advice centres, trade unions, local law centres and solicitors. Many of the claims that were settled were ones where the claimant was represented. Interestingly, settlement left many claimants feeling dissatisfied as they would have been prepared to continue.
- Claimants were rarely motivated by financial gain although they did want compensation for loss of earning. Their motivation for bringing their cases was that they felt that employers should be told they had been wrong and made to change their behaviour.
- Claimants found that their expectations of the length of the tribunal proceedings, the amount of work involved, the depth of legal knowledge required and the need for representation were significantly different than

their actual experience encountered during the tribunal proceedings. They reported that the process was not "user-friendly" and should be less formal and less emphasis should be placed on legal terms and knowledge.

Most claimants reported that the experience of bringing a claim increased the distress that they felt prior to commencing proceedings and therefore had a negative impact on them.

#### **Race Discrimination and Harassment Practitioner's Forum**

ELREC is committed to widening the expertise of advisors with the aim that more advisors will feel comfortable providing tribunal advocacy to persons wishing to bring race discrimination claims.

The next meeting of the forum will take place on **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September from 10:00 am till 11:30am at the Offices of Anderson Strathern Solicitors, 1 Ruthland Court, Edinburgh, EH3 8EY.**

Jill Bell, Director of Discrimination at Anderson Strathern has kindly agreed to host the session which will focus on tribunal advocacy. The topic will be "Cross-Examination Tips and Techniques." Jill promises an interactive session based on real life examples so that you can have a real feel for the ups and downs of cross examination.

If you wish to attend please contact Christine Maitland Francis, Complainant Aid Officer.

*By Christine Maitland-Francis  
Complainant Aid Officer*

## Community Development

### Islam? A clash of civilizations?

Under the Race Relations Act 1976 (RRA), public authorities have a statutory general duty to promote race equality. The duty is made up of three distinct parts: to work to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity, and to **promote good race relations**. Looking at recent events in London, it is clear that we have to work even harder to promote anti-racism as once again the actions of a small minority have had a severely negative impact on the rest of minority communities.

The recent homegrown plot in Britain to blow up transatlantic flights is intensifying the fear that the country's 1.6 million Muslims are rejecting Britain for Islam. It is instilling fear within the public that the majority of Muslims are willing to kill to make a point. What it is also doing is alienating Muslim communities, creating racism and hatred. A recent YouGov survey for the Daily Telegraph has found that 53% of Britons felt that Islam posed a threat to Western liberal democracy – up 21% from 2001. It is clear that the media have instilled more than just fear into the British public but mass hysteria and hype.

Internet blogging is the new way of saying what you really mean by posting comments on the internet. On doing a recent thorough search on the internet through media articles (not blog sites) what I have found most alarming are the comments that people are submitting at the end of an article written for mainstream newspapers. These comments are from people as far as China

and from as close as Edinburgh and the Lothians. I am dismayed that people are jumping on the bandwagon in this current media frenzy in condemning Islam and Muslims. Of course I condemn all acts of terrorism especially terrorist acts that use Islam as a scapegoat. What I don't agree with are politicians and members of the public who use the term 'Islamic terrorists', 'Islamic extremists' and 'Islamic fascists' just to name a few. Without stating the obvious....not everyone that follows Islam is a so called terrorist, extremist etc. And extremists, fascists and terrorists aren't specific to Islam or just Muslims are they? Mention Islam or Muslim in a sentence and terrorism, extremist or radical subsequently follow. Distinction needed? I think so.

**'Racially profiling' passengers?** 55% of the YouGov sample have said that they would like to see passenger profiling introduced with 43% Scots agreeing. The poll also showed more support than last year that security services should now focus intelligence-gathering and terrorism-prevention efforts on Muslims. We are giving the public a stereotypical image of a terrorist based on ethnicity, religion and country of origin and then we wonder why passengers are refusing to get on planes when they see darker skinned people speaking Arabic. Result? Getting escorted off the plane and innocent civilians losing their dignity and the right to a summer holiday like everyone else. So someone's answer to 'Speed up the process by just strip searching all the dark skinned

people and let the white people through' and then end it by saying 'I'm not a racist' doesn't quite work. Mind you one other party has come up with an apparently workable (?) solution of 'banning all Muslims from our skies' but then surely we are stripping away a human right to travel by choice? The alternative as someone else puts it is to 'have Muslim only flights'...if this isn't segregation, alienation, racism and discrimination then I don't know what is.

So is **British foreign policy 'fuelling extremism'**? According to the hundreds of people throughout the world who posted a comment on this website the answer is yes and it is from both non Muslims and Muslims. However what was also recommended by one person and echoed by many others was that 'Muslims should conform to the British way of life or move out.' Others have claimed that 'Muslims hate us' and 'if they don't like it leave.' Leave? Move out? Where? It's a bit difficult when you are born and bred in this country especially since Britain's Muslims are predominantly young with half aged under 25. Of course there are many arguments now that British Muslim young people are angry and disaffected therefore leading some young males into terrorist acts such as suicide bombers as of those in 7/7. But surely it is not just Muslim young people in Britain that are struggling with their personal, cultural and national identity? Anyone who has worked with *any* young people knows that this is atypical of young people

*Continue on page 7*



## Latest Happenings In The Youth Zone

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Fay Benson, new Youth Development Officer started her post on 21 August. Below is her intro.

I would like to start by thanking everyone in the ELREC office for being so welcoming and making me feel so at home. After only being here for just over a week I already feel part of the team. I went on holiday for a couple of weeks before starting and had lots of time to think about this new job and came up with lots of ideas for things I wanted to do. After being here a week and particularly after meeting the young people, these have slightly changed but have not diminished. I hope to build on all that has been achieved so far in making the Youth Zone such a fantastic facility for BME young people by making it a more dynamic and pro-active space that continues to provide young people with all the information and support they need, whether that concerns jobs and further studies, volunteering and extra curricular activities or health and relationship issues. I think a key part of this will be to attract more new members who will inject fresh vitality into the centre with alternative attitudes and expectations, while complimenting the solid base that has already been established.

In order to do this I would like to increase awareness about the

Youth Zone in schools and other places used by BME young people through poster campaigns and various other forms of publicity. I will work hard to liaise with all related agencies and organizations, not only so we can spread the word about the Youth Zone, but also so that we can create a vibrant network that is directly relevant and responsive to the needs of young BME people.

While I think that trips and events are very important and would like to arrange a big one in the near future I also think it would be nice to get involved in some more long-term projects in the local community. After going to several Diversity Trainings with the police I have noticed that the need to emphasize the importance of racial equality within mainstream education, starting at the most elementary level, has recurred again and again. To this end I think it would be wonderful if the young people at the Youth Zone could plan and deliver a peer education programme concentrating on diversity, equality and tolerance. Peer education is highly effective in introducing different view points and encouraging young people to think differently as they respond very well to those

**Youth Zone .....The place to Be and Be Seen!!.....**

**Thursdays 3 to 7 pm**

**Fridays 1 to 5 pm**

**Drop in and see....**

they can identify with.

In the same vain I would like to realise an idea that has been circulating for a while but is perhaps even more pertinent in the current climate and hold a forum for all young people in Edinburgh at which they can discuss issues of culture, race, ethnicity and the negative stereotypes that are all too often portrayed in the media. I think it is both vitally important and hugely productive to allow young people access to unbiased information, encourage them to question things and empower them to break down these destructive images themselves. Last week I attended a workshop run by young people at the Scottish Executive discussing faith and peace and was very impressed by the critical and original ideas and comments it produced, making me even more keen to pursue this.

Lisa, Tommy and Maurice have done an amazing job in the Youth Zone to date and I'm very excited to be joining them and working together to meet all these objectives as well as many others that I'm sure will present themselves.

**By Fay Benson  
Youth Development Officer**

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESTALRIG UNITED AGAINST RACISM FUN DAY

On Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006, ELREC hosted a fun day at Craigentenny Castle. The event was based around anti-racism with the aim to bring together children and young people in the Restalrig, Lochend and Leith areas to understand and fight racism. Shasta, Anjam and Maurice as part of the Restalrig Community Relations project have been working closely with the young people that the outreach workers befriended through their streetwork in Restalrig over the past few months. The fun day was a great success where 20 children and young people from a range of cultural backgrounds came together to enjoy activities such as a Multicultural football match, henna tattooing, hair braiding and hip hop dancing lessons.



Some of the comments of the day from the young people were:

*"Brilliant, had a good time"*

*"Today was brill"*

*"Lovely day thanks"*



We would also like to thank Kebab Mahal, Madras Cottage and Bellvue Cash & Carry for helping out with some of the food and drink for the event. And a big thanks to Sami for his hip hop dancing lessons which were a BIG hit with the young people.



*By Shasta Hanif  
Community Development Officer*

### **MEX4Y - Minority Ethnic Exchange for Youth**

The next MEX4Y Youth Practitioners Forum meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September. This will be a chance for everyone to meet and find out what is going on, but its main focus will be a website targeting BME young people collating information on all the services available for them. To find out more, please contact Fay Benson on 0131 556 0441 or [fcbenison@elrec.org.uk](mailto:fcbenison@elrec.org.uk)

**If you would like  
further  
information  
relating to the  
Youth Zone please  
contact ELREC  
office.**





## Lothian and Borders Police

### Response to the ongoing national counter terrorism operation

#### Community Impact Issues

It is with a sense of resigned inevitability that I find myself writing to you again almost a year after my response to the terrible London bombings of last July. Given the very serious nature of the counter terrorism operation that is underway I would like to brief you on Lothian and Borders part in that operation. Our response has four broad objectives.

- To protect our communities from any terrorist activity and to assist our colleagues in the ongoing investigation.
- To seek the cooperation and raise the level of alertness within our communities without causing unnecessary alarm.
- To reassure all of our communities.
- To firmly act against anyone who would use this event to further a racist agenda.

Our Safer Communities Division contacted the main black and minority ethnic and minority faith communities on Friday as the situation unfolded. Additional uniform patrols and visits to our places of worship and other vulnerable premises have been arranged. The general feeling of our community at present is that the police action nationally has been proportionate despite the additional disruption caused to people's everyday lives. So far there is little evidence of raised tensions within Lothian and Borders' communities. However there have been racist attacks against two of our Mosques over the weekend and arrests have been made in connection with one of these.

The longer the detentions and

security measures remain in place, the greater the risk becomes to community tension. This potential for tension and frustration could lead to conflict with officers or might be deflected against any of our black and minority communities. Indeed the 7/7 bombings demonstrated that the Chinese and Sikhs were as likely to be victimised as were Muslims. Consequently we are actively monitoring the impact of events across our BME communities.

In a similar vein it is a concern that our Synagogue suffered an anti-Semitic graffiti attacked earlier this month perhaps as a consequence of recent tensions in the Middle East. I recognise that our Jewish community may well feel threatened by this current activity and we are working with them to protect and reassure them.

At this time I believe that Remote Reporting needs once again to be promoted to all communities as a method of reporting crime, incidents and information in a safe environment without the need for direct police contact. This is vital in our efforts to both protect our communities from attack and to glean any concerns that people may have.

Consequently I would ask that consideration be given to highlighting this service to any black and minority communities you come into contact with. All the sites can be seen on the homepage of our website or on the following web address: [www.lbppolice.uk/takecontrol](http://www.lbppolice.uk/takecontrol)

Equally crime stoppers provides a similar service 24 hours a day. (0800 555 111) Lastly any

concerns regarding possible terrorist activity can be reported in confidence to the anti-terrorist hotline: (0800 789 321)

I have spoken directly to all of my staff and they are acutely aware that sensitive and professional policing is key to maintaining the cooperation and support of all our community and lessening the potential for raised tensions, which could ultimately undermine our operational objectives. Equally I am aware that this threat to us all requires the cooperation of all of our partners if we are to defeat this criminal threat to the quality of all that we value in Scotland.

These are difficult times for us all and our communities and the public bodies that serve them are all seeking to make sense of this and determine what their role will be. While there is no current evidence of threat against Scotland I have no doubt that we cannot be complacent in Scotland and must treat this as a very high priority issue. I am clear that Lothian and Borders will take a leading role in standing firm against this threat recognising it as no less than a criminal attack upon our society. We will stand firm against the terrorists and we will protect our minority communities from anyone who tries to exploit this for their own ends.

There is great deal of coordinated work going on across Scotland's forces and I will provide further updates as and when the situation develops.

**Paddy Tomkins**  
**Chief Constable**

## Community Development (Cont.)

everywhere and not specific to any one culture or religion. However forget one to one or group work with young people who are Muslim to get to the root of problem, lets follow the advice of someone who claims that there should be 'voluntary repatriation of those Muslims that feel unwelcome in the UK back to Islamic countries....with financial assistance to help them back.' Unfortunately this is another view that is echoed by many others.

So is Multiculturalism a complete

failure? It is if we are using the like it or just LEAVE approach. It is when people think that when 'one lives in a country permanently his/her allegiance should be with the democratically elected government and not another country'. Yes we have a democratically elected government but we are continually reminded that Muslims are a minority group, making up less than 5% of the population therefore 'majority

rules.'

So are we really at threat by 'Islamofascists' and 'Islamonazis'? Is terrorism actually a global Islamic conspiracy to take over the world? Is Islam actually an ideology for 'hard core Islamists' to convert everyone to Islam? Lets get real here...It is not an Islamic threat, it is an **extremist** threat. As with all the intricacies of religion, the problem is not with the faith but with the people who twist it and adapt it to serve their own irrational notions. **We should never think that British Muslims have a single assignable identity instead we should be thinking of individual people who are Muslims.**

### Multicultural Zone

Recently at the Multicultural Zone, Paul French, from Lothian & Borders Fire Service came and spoke to BME people who were interested in joining the fire service and had got through to the second stage of the application process. It was very successful and the applicants provided positive feedback on the session. This has also lead to one of the persons to pass this stage and move successfully onto the next stage in the application process.

### Leith Fact Finder

The Leith BME outreach project will soon be coming to an end at the end of this month. Maurice & Anjam, our two outreach workers have been working in the area over the past few months carrying out a questionnaire collating views and opinions from BME people.

*By Shasta Hanif  
Community Development Officer*

### Finding it hard to organise tenement repairs?

Organising common repairs, like stair painting and roof repairs, can be a hassle - getting agreement on what needs to be done, finding a contractor and getting people to pay their share.

The Edinburgh Stair Partnership (ESF) can help.

We'll take the hassle out of organising your common repairs and so help you to maintain the condition and value of your property.

You remain in control - ESP only organise the repairs that you as a group of owners ask for.

We'll arrange for quotes and reliable trades-people, collect money and regularly check repairs as they're carried out. ESP can also arrange on-going maintenance such as stair cleaning, back green maintenance and gutter cleaning. And each year we'll carry out an inspection of your tenement.

Importantly, you protect an extremely valuable investment - your home.

Want to know more? Call ESP on 0131 529 5234, email esp@edinburgh.gov.uk

### What's On

**ELREC Annual General Meeting (AGM)**  
Monday 23 October 2006  
6:30pm to 8:30pm  
Committee Room 1  
Scottish Parliament

**Race Equality Forum**  
Tuesday 31 October 2006  
6:30pm  
City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

**Edinburgh Partnership in Conference**  
Monday 13 November 2006  
1:00pm to 3:00pm  
City Chambers, High Street,  
Edinburgh

**Office space is available for renting at ELREC. Monthly rental £300. For more information, please contact Elizabeth, Administrator.**

## Back Page Information



### ADVERTISING

We welcome organisations to advertise in ELREC Community Newsletter, for example:

- Promoting services
- Disseminating flyers
- Advertising
- Vacancies
- Consultations
- General marketing

This service is available for a contribution of £100.

To find out more, please contact Nina Giles on 0131 556 0441 or [admin@elrec.org.uk](mailto:admin@elrec.org.uk)

The newsletter is available on a quarterly basis.

### CONFERENCE ROOM BOOKINGS

You can book our 20-seat meeting room on an hourly basis for £10 per hour

Tea & Coffee £1 per head

Please contact the office for any bookings

### DONATIONS

**ELREC** is a registered charity in Scotland. We welcome donations however small, from individuals or organisations to help us to pursue our goal - *racial equality and justice for all.*

If you would like to share any interesting fundraising ideas with us, please give the office a ring.

### SERVICES

**Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council (ELREC)**, founded in 1971, is a voluntary body and charitable company made up of individual members and representatives from a wide range of organisations. ELREC has a remit to work across the areas of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils.

#### We aim to:

- Work towards the elimination of racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups
- Promote and organise co-operation of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations

#### We pursue our aims through:

- Individual Complainant Aid Service
- Education and Training
- Campaigning
- Publications
- Consultancy and Signposting

#### To contact us:

Edinburgh & Lothians Racial Equality Council  
14 Forth Street  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3LH  
(T) 0131 556 0441  
(F) 0131 556 8577  
(E) [admin@elrec.org.uk](mailto:admin@elrec.org.uk)  
(W) [www.elrec.org.uk](http://www.elrec.org.uk)

Charity Number: SC007896  
Company Number: 183419

### OUR TEAM

**Nina Giles - Director**

**Christine Maitland-Francis - Complainant Aid Officer**

**Shasta Hanif - Community Development Officer**

**Fay Benson - Youth Development Officer**

**Tommy George - Youth Zone Support Worker**

**Lisa Lam - Youth Zone Support Worker**

**Elizabeth Ilochonwu - Administrator**

**Anjam Sheikh - Outreach / Street Worker**

**Maurice Kazoka - Outreach / Street Worker**