

BAMER Advice Network (BAN) – London

Code of Practice for Members

I. Introduction:

BMER Advice Network (BAN) London exists to improve access to advice for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and refugee and migrant communities. The Network has been set up to consider and provide co-ordination of front line service delivery issues as well as policy issues affecting the Network's member agencies and their clients.

The Network does not have any executive powers - as far as possible the Network is to operate on an 'equal partners' basis. Member organisations of BAN assume a joint responsibility for the successful, effective and transparent management & development of the BAN. Members wish to ensure that through cooperation the outcomes for BAMER communities and for the organisations that serves them are improved.

The purpose of the Code of Practice is to give practical guidance to the individual members of BAN and to make a positive impact on the relationship among BAN members and their joint commitment to maintaining an effective network. It aims to provide a framework by setting out effective and agreed principles for joint working among members.

II. Fundamental Principles:

The following guide will help to ensure BAN members adhere to good practice and the detailed guidance in this Code is informed by the following general principles based on Nolan Report 'standards in public life' principles

- **Selflessness**
- **Integrity**
- **Objectivity**
- **Accountability**
- **Openness**
- **Honesty**
- **Leadership**

III. Shared Aims and Interests

- Accept joint responsibility for sound organization and management and appropriate resourcing of the partnership including:
 - Explore how funding can help to support and enhance initiatives where we are jointly involved.
 - Work in partnership with other agencies on initiatives to improve services for the BAMER communities
- Encourage and support new members to join ensuring fair representation of BAMER communities in the network.
- To provide a broadly based consultative partnership, that will facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison between London-based BMER-led advice providing organisations;
- To raise awareness and understanding of the work of the BMER-led advice sector;

- To proactively promote the links between the work of London BMER-led advice agencies and the work of central and local government and other statutory bodies;
- To identify and contribute to policy development and strategy formulation, where those identified issues are of importance to organizations involved in the partnership;
- To improve the information base of the London BMER-led advice agencies

IV. Responsibilities of individual member organisations

1. Working Together

a. Collective decisions

- The member organizations will inevitably have differences of opinion on issues under debate. This is healthy. After full discussion, when the network has made a decision, all members must uphold and maintain this decision. Speaking against any BAN decision in public will undermine the BAN. Hence each BAN member has a responsibility to stand by collective decisions of the BAN and to present a unified front in public.

b. Respect

- Individual members must respect each other and each other's opinions. Differences of opinion are welcomed but debate must not be acrimonious or personal. In meetings individual members must listen to each other and respond to each other politely. All contributions at meetings must go through the Chair. Where necessary constructive criticism is the most welcome form of feedback.

c. Diversity

- We are all different and represent different equalities groups. Individual members will respect and welcome this diversity. In all the BAN Partnerships work, members will treat other members fairly.

d. Mutual Support

- Individual members are carrying out a challenging role and it is important that they support each other in this task. This will involve sharing information and knowledge and enabling learning from each other.

e. Involvement and Commitment

- Individual members are expected to attend the full partner meetings and involve themselves in the work of the BAN. Regular attendance at meetings at Director/Coordinator level is an essential requirement.

f. Setting up more formal partnerships among the members

- Some member organizations may choose to work more collaboratively by developing projects/joint up bids. In such cases

- Whenever possible, such further collaborative work among the BAN members must be open to all members.
- Wherever possible member organizations will use their best to endeavor to avoid submitting more than one bid for a same funding stream.

2. Representing BAN and External Communications

Representation of BAN and its work activities by any individual attendee towards other bodies, including regional and national government, press, steering groups, advisory groups, seminars, conferences, etc, should only be made with the prior agreement of other members of BAN. Where this is not possible, agreement should be sought from the BAN Steering Group, or from AdviceUK. Member organizations must promote both the initiative and the work of BAN positively. They must also build and inspire confidence in BAN. Similarly, attendees are expected to work in a strategic and co-operative manner within BAN, using the knowledge and experience gained by the network members, rather than simply representing or promoting their organisational views.

3. Confidentiality

There will be instances where sensitive or confidential information is under discussion. A clear statement will be made if information provided by a member is of a confidential nature. Individual members must respect confidentiality and therefore not disclose such information to any other person.

4. Conflict of interest

Members of the partnership recognizes that there may be conflicts of interest amongst members; however believe that the collective interest should override individual interests. Some members may have direct financial interests in some projects or activities of the BAN. Such potential conflicts of interest are inevitable and do not constitute a problem if they are dealt with correctly and professionally. Individual members are expected to be transparent on matters concerning collaboration and disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest.

V. Dealing with Disagreements/Disputes among the members

1. Prevention of Disagreements:

Good communications among member organizations is the key to good relationships. Organizations should start talking as soon as difficulties become apparent. This can prevent problems from developing into disagreements.

2. Resolution of Disagreements:

BAN members must make arrangements for resolving disagreements among themselves. Member organizations should try to achieve early and informal resolutions of differences of opinion or their dispute. Independent persons may be appointed if agreed by disputing parties to facilitate these arrangements.

VI. Breach of Code of conduct

Individual members will adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct. If any member is found by the BAN to be in breach of the Code of Conduct they may be asked to leave the BAN partnership. The BAN must decide by a majority vote:

- whether an individual member is in breach; and
- whether this justifies removal from the network

I agree/do not agree comply with the BAN Code of Practice

Organisation Name:

Print Name:

Position:

Date:

Signature:

- A register of agreements to the Code of Conduct will be kept with the Advice UK.