

# **West London BMER Advice Network**

## **Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference of the West London BMER Advice Network are as follows:

### **1. To promote access to good quality culturally appropriate advice services to all Residents of West London<sup>1</sup>, through:**

- 1.1 Ensuring that BMER-led legal advice is available to all BME communities in West London
- 1.2 Developing closer working relations amongst partner organisations to ensure communities have good access to legal advice across West London.
- 1.3 Expanding BMER-led advice services in parts of West London that are currently under-resourced.
- 1.4 Promoting training and development of BMER advice and information workers.

### **2. To promote, foster, develop and encourage closer working relationships amongst partner organisations, through:**

- 2.1 Developing strong a partnership of BMER organisations to meet the needs of West London's diverse communities.
- 2.2 Disseminating and sharing information between BMER-led advice providing organisations working in West London, establishing a strong referral and signposting network both internally within the network, and with external organisations.
- 2.3 Bringing together and engaging BMER advice giving organisations to share experience and expertise.
- 2.4 Contributing to building capacity of the BMER- led advice giving sector to deliver sustainable services.

### **3. To provide a voice for the BMER-led<sup>2</sup> advice sector in West London and assist and influence policy and decision-making where it affects the work of the sector, through:**

- 3.1 Promoting BMER communities' interests and needs to the Statutory Sector, funders and policy makers.
- 3.2 Promoting the role, value and diversity of BMER-led advice work across West London
- 3.3 Making the case and advocating for BMER legal advice services in West London.
- 3.4 Developing links and fostering better understanding of the roles of the BMER-led advice providing organisations working in West London.

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Mark West London comprises the London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow.

2. BMER-led is defined as having a trustee board/MC of at least 80% BMER members

## **4. Membership of West London BMER Advice Network**

4.1 There shall be three tiers of membership

4.1.1 Tier 1 Full membership

Full membership of the partnership shall be open only to BMER – led advice providing organisations with the Advice Quality Standard (AQS) based in West London.

4.1.2 Tier 2 Associate membership

Associate membership shall be open to capacity building organisations and such other organisations that support the aims and objectives of the Network

4.1.3 Tier 3 Provisional membership

Provisional membership shall be open to BMER-led advice providers who are **actively** working towards obtaining the Advice Quality Standard

4.2 Members are accountable for their participation in the West London BMER Advice Network through the normal reporting structures of their organizations. Their role in the network, however, is not only to represent the interests of their own organizations, but also to advance the interests of the BMER advice sector as a whole in establishing a closer working relationship with local government and regional bodies.

4.3 To endeavour to ensure that diversity issues are addressed, in terms of client groups, and in terms of areas of law, The West London BMER Advice Network will map out these areas and move to fill any gaps in knowledge or experience of members.

4.4 Prospective members that express an interest in joining the Network will be sent the Terms of Reference and asked to make a written application to the Chair. Such agencies will be asked to make a presentation on their work to a network meeting before they are accepted as members.

4.5 Second Tier Organisations (STOs) or other organisations working with BMER advice providers that fall outside the criteria in 4.1 above may be invited to attend meetings in an advisory capacity

## **5. Operation**

5.1 Full member network meetings shall be held a minimum of 4 times a year. Minutes of each meeting will be produced and distributed electronically.

5.2 West London BMER Advice Network will develop an annual work programme with the agreement of members. The work programme will be flexible and can be amended as necessary throughout the course of its duration and as relevant issues arise.

5.3 There will be a Chair of the West London BMER Advice Network. Members will elect who they wish to see serve as Chair at the first meeting in every year.

5.4 The Chair will lead meetings and will be responsible for representing the network to external agencies. The Chair will be responsible for setting the agenda for meetings in conjunction with the members, as well as helping to create the annual work plan.

5.5 The venue for the West London BMER Advice Network meetings will be rotated amongst the membership to promote increased knowledge of other member services.

## **6. Facilitation of West London BMER Advice Network**

6.1 The Chair shall co-ordinate meetings in the following ways:

- publicise meetings;
- co-ordinate agenda items;
- produce and circulate agenda;
- circulate discussion papers and other items as appropriate;
- produce and circulate minutes of meetings;
- room booking;
- facilitate funding bids for administration of the network and annual work programme

6.2 Members of the network shall, as necessary and where appropriate:

- organise speakers;
- host meetings on rotating basis;
- contribute agenda items, discussion papers, other items of interest;
- actively contribute to taking forward agreed tasks identified in the annual work programme;
- contribute to consultation responses;
- disseminate information to their organisations and/or networks;
- co-operate in needs analyses, funding bids and campaigns.

6.3 The Address for correspondence shall be:

West London BMER Advice Network  
C/O Hayashen, 105a Mill Hill Road, London W3 8JF  
E mail: westlondonbmeradvicenetwork@caia.org.uk

## **7. Representation and attendance**

7.1 Representation of the West London BMER Advice Network and its work activities by any individual member to other bodies, including local or regional government, at seminars, conferences, etc, should only be made with the prior agreement of other members of the network.

7.2 Members are expected to work in a strategic, dynamic and co-operative manner, based on mutual respect, equality, and transparency, for the benefit of the network rather than just representing or promoting the views or interests of their own organisation.

7.3 Any organisation that fails to attend, or send apologies for three consecutive full member meetings may have their organisation asked to step down from the Network.

### **Formally approved on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013 by following founding members**

- *Bosnia and Herzegovina Community Advice Centre*
- *Centre for Armenian Information & Advice*
- *East European Advice Centre*
- *Havelock Family Centre*
- *Iraqi Association*
- *Iranian Association*