HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

If you live in Edinburgh and the Lothians, are from a diverse/minority community and are interested in getting involved in public life and the democratic process, this is an opportunity for you to take part in a new project which seeks to improve community engagement.

To receive regular updates and information on this project and if you wish to receive invitations of future events then please register your interest by contacting ELREC.

Contact
If you are interested in receiving further information about this project, please contact Mizan Rahman, Equality Engagement Officer

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ELREC has launched a new initiative to increase the engagement of underrepresented minority communities in public life and the democratic process across Edinburgh and Lothians. This project is funded by the Scottish Government.

**AIMS OF THE PROJECT**

- To identify the actions that can be taken to increase democratic participation and representation of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community in public life
- To engage and work with public and private sector stakeholders to positively advance the participation of BME community in public life and the democratic process
- To implement the identified actions to increase participation and representation of BME communities and women in the democratic process and public life

**BACKGROUND**

**BME Community in public life**

In the Scottish Parliament, only 1.5% of the Parliament's 129 MSPs are from ethnic minority communities, well below the 4% of Scotland's population that is non-white.

In the 2012 Local Government Elections, only 32 candidates were from non-white backgrounds across the 14 local authorities. Almost half (13) of them stood for Glasgow City Council. In this election, a total 17 BME Councillors took up office out of a total 1223 seats in Scotland. This represents 1.4% of the total Scottish BME (4%) population.

Out of 32 local authorities 7 have BME representation. The City of Edinburgh Council, home of the second largest (8% BME) non-white population, does not have any BME Councillors, while Glasgow hosts 7 out of 17 Councillors in Scotland. In total, there are only 4 BME women Councillors in Scotland.

After the 2015 General Election, 43 BME MPs were elected which equates to 6.6 % of the House of Commons MPs, compared with about a 14% BME population in the UK.

Representation from diverse/minority communities is rare within many other public bodies such as community councils, public appointments and governing bodies.

**PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

- Study and research
- Promotional events
- Dialogue with BME 'role-models'
- Facilitating Mentoring/apprenticeships
- Support and advice
- Information service