

LANGUAGE.

#Sporting Equals BAME Terminology Survey Statement

There has been a growing concern and appetite for change when looking at terminology and language surrounding how we describe the communities impacted by racial discrimination. The mainstream term in use is Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). The problem with BAME, and other now outdated phrases as terminology, is that there are issues of generic and casual branding of communities. This is whilst also avoiding the varying issues impacting specific communities in more severe ways, as highlighted by the recent advocacy for change through Black Lives Matter. The term BAME also leaves room for ambiguity and confusion around ethnicity, geography, and nationality.

The term BAME collates large swathes of groups together and places recognition on some communities whilst ignoring others entirely. The emphasis of such behaviours tends to be on the physical differences of some while relegating ethnic and cultural complexities. The insinuation that any of the communities impacted by racial discrimination are simply 'minority' ethnic groups is uncomfortable for many due to the negative connotations that are attached to the word minority, which subconsciously makes ethnic groups seem inferior to white counterparts and connotes a general negative subtext. This is as well as the idea that all communities and individuals who fit into the umbrella term of 'BAME,' are impacted the same way by racism. These wide and non-specific groupings fail to recognise the multiple complex strands of diverse cultures. What we need to do is get specific and avoid the use of umbrella terminology where possible.

Systematic racism is incredibly complex and to tackle it effectively, we need terminology which is more specific to the communities experiencing racism to improve inclusivity. We believe the term BAME is too generic and allows organisations to hide behind this term to cover up underrepresentation and racial discrimination of specific ethnic groups. The only way we can begin to unpick and deconstruct the systematic racism and discrimination towards these varied communities, is by recognising specific communities, their underrepresentation, and the experience they face with racism. We must reflect on their experiences, work with them to resolve these issues and develop best practice. The first step to take is to stop using BAME and other such problematic terminology and to start looking at these communities in a more detailed way and identify them as specific groups, with an intersectional approach to identify any forms of multiple discrimination taking place. We must measure engagement from the varied communities more effectively and become accountable for the shortfalls to develop a more anti-racist approach.

We as a sector must recognise and highlight the varying and often multi-layered forms of discrimination and racism impacting communities. There are issues that would impact South Asians differently to the African or Caribbean communities, and within those communities are even more intersects of diversity that need to be recognised from ethnicity to intersectionality. We need to be willing to embrace diversity as organisations and individuals, by knowing the communities we serve and once we do that; we need to understand and accept the diversity and complexity that communities and individuals self-identify as. Without this focus on measuring specific communities, we will continue to fail to eradicate discrimination and exclusion. Being specific regarding the

communities and individuals who need support and engagement is the way forward. Sporting Equals recognised the weaknesses and hinderances of terminology and conducted a survey in October to aid in the development of best practice for our sector. Our initial consultation was to our Associate Member network base of over 200 grassroots organisations in building our response to this call for evidence. This group represents 150,000 service users and almost 4,000 volunteers. The consultation reinforced our view that communities would prefer more specific definition of their identities. However, the communities also recognised and agreed that for organisational administrative purposes, they would be happy for a more sensitive and respectful term to be adopted.

The terms which were most highly favoured by our members included Diverse Ethnic Communities or Ethnically Diverse Communities, these terms allow the terminology to have more positive and broader spectrum. This is to ensure that organisations must become more specific as a result. We are placing the responsibility of specificity on our organisations and bodies of power to adopt these phrases, but then further specify the level of detail as to which groups they are engaging and why. These phrases require more detail and specification than an acronym like BAME. Diversity is the first and foremost point of importance, we need to recognise the diversity between the communities from their cultural diversity to their experiences of racism. But we must be wary to not use these terms in a casual and dismissive way. When speaking of research, marketing, engagement, and targets we must be very clear about which specific groups we are seeking to engage. We cannot continue to casually group people consistently with umbrella terminology – there must be a justified administrative or bureaucratic reason. Following this, we at Sporting Equals will take this matter further consulting on where we should limit its usage, and we will then

develop best practice to assist in cultivating a more welcoming sector for all communities. We must remember none of us win unless all of us win and with each of these changes we get one step closer to an inclusive and equal sector for all.