



**BAME LABOUR  
SUBMISSION TO  
THE LABOUR  
PARTY  
DEMOCRACY  
REVIEW**

**BASED ON THE BAME PLUS  
NATIONAL CONSULTATION**

# **BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) Labour Submission to the Labour Party Democracy Review**

## **1 Introduction**

This is the initial BAME Labour Submission to the Labour Party Democracy Review. BAME Labour intends to respond to this Review in line with the timetable set out for responses.

1.1 In November 2017, BAME Labour launched a BAME Plus national consultation which has generated huge attendances, responses and demands for a more inclusive, progressive and representative Labour Party. Further regional consultations have been organised and supplementary responses will be made. BAME Labour hopes that there will also be opportunities to discuss or clarify points in this submission with the Democracy Review team.

1.2 BAME Labour is an affiliated organisation to the Labour Party. It is a hybrid structure – a standalone and self-organised structure within the Labour Party. This is the result of an historic political settlement when the Labour Party in the 1980s rejected the formation of an inclusive Black Members’ Section – similar to the Women’s Section in the Labour Party.

1.3 BAME Labour is the established collective voice and representative structure for BAME members in the Labour Party. This was supported by CLPs and affiliated trade unions. Affiliated trade unions have been an integral part of BAME Labour since its inception. It should be made clear on definition and terminology that BAME originates from the term Black – which is a politically inclusive term to represent those who experience discrimination and racism on the basis of being non-white.

1.4 The Labour Party should reaffirm its commitment to the following core principles:

- 1) The principle of Black self-organisation.
- 2) The principle of gender-balance, ensuring gender-parity between women and men.
- 3) The principle of fair representation ensuring that groups are fully-represented in its structures, policy-making and decision-making.

**BAME Labour supports these principles for other equality strands.**

## **2 Membership**

2.1 Membership of BAME Labour should be for eligible members, who are politically Black and non-white.

2.2 Members who stand for elected office in BAME Labour should be fully paid-up members of the Labour Party and also fully paid-up members of BAME Labour.

This applies to members who stand for BAME Labour office from affiliated trade unions whose members pay the political levy.

2.3 Members must Opt-In to BAME Labour and be fully paid-up members of BAME Labour. This mechanism should be retained.

2.4 People who are not fully paid-up members of the Labour Party should be allowed to join as they can do now as registered supporters. However, they should not be allowed to hold elected office as representatives of BAME Labour.

***Eligibility for holding elected office in BAME Labour must be full Labour Party members and fully paid-up members of BAME Labour.***

### **3 Administration of BAME Labour Membership**

3.1 BAME Labour's membership is held by and administered by the Labour Party. BAME Labour is composed of individual members and trade unions affiliated to both the Labour Party and BAME Labour. BAME Labour has 4,000 members. The administration of BAME Labour's membership needs to be improved and made easier to renew membership.

3.2 The Labour Party needs to employ dedicated full-time staff to deal with the administration and servicing of its BAME Labour membership; allocate financial resources to fund the organisation of BAME members' participation, conferences and meetings.

3.3 It is disappointing that the Labour Party has allowed the denigration of BAME Labour's membership without holding to account those who seek to propagate misleading information that brings the Labour Party and BAME Labour into disrepute.

### **4 Ethnic Monitoring, BAME and Diversity Audit**

4.1 The Labour Party does not monitor the ethnic origin of its membership and it is difficult to ascertain the ethnic composition of the Labour Party. This is inadequate. Labour should implement as a priority a CLP audit of its membership, office holders and representatives, updated annually, to close the democratic deficits gaps and to ensure that BAME members can elect BAME representatives for the NEC, regions, policy commissions and other bodies.

4.2 Appropriate mechanisms must be implemented to ensure that the National BAME Secretary can communicate with members in line with Data Protection regulations.

## **5 Guaranteed BAME Representation in all Decision-Making Structures**

5.1 BAME Labour wants to place on record its support for the recent progress in increasing female and BAME representation in the Shadow Cabinet. This should not be seen in symbolic terms but should represent a transformative and substantial change in Labour's approach to BAME, Women, Disabled, Young and LGBT+ representation. Labour needs to close the democratic deficit gaps in representation of the equality strands.

5.2 Guaranteeing fair-representation of BAME members in its policy-making, decision-making and representative structures will be a key test of the inclusive and progressive approach to the Labour Party's Democracy Review. BAME representation in the Labour Party is inadequate. The status quo is not good enough.

5.3 BAME representation on the NEC is outdated and tokenistic of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century era. This needs to improve. Labour needs to increase guaranteed BAME representation across all groups, equality strands and policy-making. This model should also apply to the Regional Labour Party Structures and within Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs).

### **5.4 National Executive Committee**

***The composition of the Labour Party NEC should be increased to 4 BAME seats on the NEC with gender parity.*** This demand includes a call for improving and guaranteeing BAME representatives on the NEC, Policy Commissions, National Policy Forums, Annual Conference, Regional Committees, Regional Conferences, Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) and Campaign Forums. The Executive

Committees of Regions and CLPs must include BAME Officers. BAME Officers and representatives should be elected by BAME members at CLPs and have voting rights on the Executive and Campaign Committees.

5.5 Constituency Labour BAME Officers and representatives should be elected either by BAME members at CLP meetings or via their relevant CLP BAME forum, and have voting rights on the Executive and Campaign Committees.

5.6 A minimum number of branch delegate positions to CLP General Meetings should be allocated to BAME members.

5.7 BAME members should have, and also elect, their own branch-level BAME Officer.

5.8 BAME members must be represented in both Branch and Constituency Officer positions.

5.9 BAME forums must be set up in CLPs where BAME members are present. Every effort must be taken to encourage and promote diversity in constituencies.

5.10 Regional BAME forums must also be established.

5.11 A minimum number of candidate positions on ***All-Women Shortlists should be reserved for BAME women.***

5.12 Labour is lagging behind in demonstrating a progressive and representative face to the electorate. For example, the Trades Union Congress has three guaranteed BAME seats on its General Council; has an annual Black Workers' Conference and a motion from the Conference is debated at Congress. This applies to all the Equality Strands in the TUC – Women, Disabled and LGBT+. UNISON, the public service union affiliated to the Labour Party has four guaranteed seats for Black members on its NEC. Other affiliated unions have similar representation of BAME in

its elected bodies at both a national, regional and local level, with voting rights and the ability to submit motions to the policy making structures.

## **6 BAME Labour Annual Conference**

BAME Labour calls on the Party to strengthen the BAME Conference increasing its decision making; making it a motions-based, policy making conference with delegates from CLPs and trade unions, and a formal role with the ability to submit motions to Labour Party Annual Conference.

## **7 Labour Party Annual Conference**

BAME Labour wants to see a substantial and visible improvement in BAME members attending Annual Conference and speaking as delegates. BAME participation and representation at conference is derisory. Very little has changed in three decades. The Labour Party must close this democratic deficit and guarantee increased representation for BAME members to attend as delegates.

National BAME should have at least 10 delegates; **4 BAME delegates per region** and CLPs should have at least two BAME members, with gender parity on all delegations.

Labour can learn from sister parties, for example, the Democratic Party in the USA where representation in the decision-making structures is based on the ethnic composition of the electorate or the national census.

**Labour Party Regional Structures:** these should become more representative of BAME membership and communities; include at least 4 BAME Executive Committee members; and a minimum of 10 BAME delegates from the Regional BAME forum at regional conferences, with voting rights at all levels. Regional structures are too opaque. Their role should be clear, accountable and transparent.

**BAME Labour Electoral College:** Elections for the BAME Labour Executive and Representative shall be by an Electoral College, based on 50:50 representation between individual members and affiliated organisations. Equal 50:50 representation will apply in decision-making, including at Annual Conference.

## **SUMMARY OF THE BAME LABOUR SUBMISSION TO THE LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY REVIEW**

This BAME Labour Submission to the Labour Party Democracy Review is based on the BAME Plus national consultation. BAME Labour demands implementation and support for the following areas set out below. Figures for BAME representation are for minimum levels of guaranteed representation.

- 1) Principles of Black self-organisation, gender-parity and fair representation.
- 2) Guaranteed BAME representation across all groups, equality strands, policy making and decision-making structures with voting rights.
- 3) National Executive Committee – four seats on the NEC with gender parity.
- 4) Annual Labour Party Conference – 10 BAME National delegates; 4 BAME delegates per Region and 2 delegates per CLP based on gender-parity.
- 5) BAME Officers to be elected in CLPs on the Executive and Campaign Committees with voting rights.
- 6) BAME members to elect their own branch-level and constituency level BAME Officer.
- 7) The Labour Party to ensure that a minimum number of delegates from each branch to CLP meetings are allocated to BAME members.
- 8) The Labour Party to ensure that BAME members are represented with regards to branch and constituency officer positions.
- 9) Constituency and Regional BAME Forums must be established.
- 10) The Labour Party should ensure a minimum number of all-women shortlists positions are allocated to BAME women.

- 11) BAME Labour to be composed of individual members and affiliated trade unions.
- 12) Members must Opt-In to BAME Labour and be fully paid-up members. This mechanism must be retained.**
- 13) Eligibility for holding elected office in BAME Labour must be full Labour Party members and fully paid-up members of BAME Labour.**
- 14) Equal representation 50:50 for affiliated trade unions must be restored in the BAME Labour Electoral College.**
- 15) The Labour Party should employ dedicated full-time staff; allocate financial resources to fund BAME Labour, its conferences, meetings and party organisation.
- 16) BAME Office holders to be full individual members of the Labour Party.
- 17) Labour should close the democratic gaps in representation by implementing BAME representation, based on the composition of the local electorate or on the national census. This will, at least, demonstrate a progressive approach to recognising its BAME membership and community support.
- 18) Labour should strengthen the BAME Labour conference by giving it increased decision-making powers and a formal role in making Labour Party policy. This already exists in the TUC and trade unions.
- 19) Regional Labour Party: minimum representation of at least 4 BAME EC members and 10 BAME delegates from Regional BAME forums to Regional conferences, gender-parity with voting rights. Guaranteed minimum representation in all other structures.
- 20) Women, Disability, Young and LGBT+ structures: should include guaranteed representation for BAME members on the ECs, Conferences, Regional and others structures.
- 21) Local government structures: increase BAME representation including leadership and elected roles.
- 22) Labour should implement as a priority an equality and diversity audit of its CLP membership, office holders and representatives, updated annually, to close the democratic deficit gaps and ensure that Labour is representative of its diverse membership. The Party should take immediate action to increase

BAME representation to the NEC, regions, policy commissions, CLPs and other bodies.

23) The Labour Party should organise mentoring, shadowing, networking and training events to ensure that BAME members can participate at all levels of the Party.

## **Abbreviations Buster**

- 1) BAME – Black Asian Minority Ethnic
- 2) CLPs – Constituency Labour Parties
- 3) NEC – National Executive Committee
- 4) LGBT+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender.
- 5) TUC – Trades Union Congress