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FEBRUARY 2021 UPDATE OF THE BLACK FURTHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP GROUP UK

Dear supporters, stakeholders, friends and signatories

I am pleased to bring you our February Update.

BFELG Inaugural Conference in Partnership with Google for Education

Our Inaugural Conference '**Making the most of an ethnically diverse Britain: the role of Further Education**' took place last Tuesday 23 February.

Sir Kenneth Aphunezi Olisa OBE, businessman and philanthropist delivered the opening message to the Conference. As Her Majesty's personal representative in Greater London, he is the first British-born black Lord-Lieutenant in that role's 500 years history. Sir Ken compared the journey from talent to fulfilment to water flowing through a leaking pipe. Wastage along the way due to negative circumstances is harmful to the individual, a matter of social justice, and also weakens the nation's prosperity and competitiveness. He noted that the BFELG had identified with his analogy and expressed confidence that our work would show the preventability of the destructive consequences of the metaphorical leaking pipe.

In the Keynote presentation that followed, **Amarjit Basi** and **Robin Landman OBE**, BFELG Executive members, pursued the theme of missed opportunities and made recommendations.

Delegates comments and responses during the event and subsequent communications show that the Conference was a huge success and achieved its objectives.

David Russell, CEO, Education and Training Foundation (BFELG Partner organisation) said:

- *'It was a great opportunity for ETF to be a part of it. I thought it was a cracking conference, with a really motivating mix of "head-work" and "heart-work". I look forward to our next steps together.'*

Dr Marlene Ellis:

- *‘Lovely powerful music to start; Great imagery; Wonderful’*

Dr Maxine Room CBE, Managing Director, MG Consultancy London Ltd:

- *‘It has been a revelation. Well done all concerned putting together that which has never been seen the like of. A lot of inspiration and perspiration with hard work and expertise. Thank you.’*

Other comments from delegates and members include:

- *‘What a conference... I have never left a conference speechless...’please lend me your eyes” - so many take-aways.’*
- *‘Brilliant conference.’*
- *‘Thank you very much for a thought provoking, insightful and very informative conference today. A well done to all who contributed (and) made it possible.’*
- *I would like to be able to share the information I have gathered today and the Toolkit with my organisation... I would be delighted to feedback on your inaugural conference and show my senior leadership team and board members what the BFELG have achieved in such a short space of time. Your passion and dedication have provided me with momentum and energy, so many thanks.’*

Overall, feedback and suggestions from the Conference confirm that there is a genuine desire across a significant proportion of the FE systems in England and the devolved nations to tackle systemic racism at every level. We have already started to explore how we might best respond to requests for support and new opportunities for further engagement with senior leaders, governors, and organisations in a systematic, innovative and sustainable way. In this regard, we firmly believe that Partnerships and Allyships will be key and we will share our emerging plans in the coming weeks.

Registered delegates will be able to view the Conference recording using their unique event joining link until Friday 19 March.

Launch of BFELG 10 Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit 23 February 2021

The Launch of our 10 Point Plan Diagnostic Toolkit which followed the Conference was equally successful. The event included a demonstration of the Toolkit and resounding endorsements from senior leaders of the following partner organisations that have been using the 10 Point Plan or who have trialled the *Toolkit* including:

- **Mike Gaston**, Principal/CEO, HSDC (Havant & South Downs College)
- **Martin Rosner**, Chair of Governors and **Mandeep Gill**, Principal/CEO, Newham Sixth Form College (NewVIC)
- **Peter Mayhew-Smith** CEO, South Thames College Group

We have since been inundated with enquiries which confirms our view that the Diagnostic Toolkit if utilised properly will enable organisations across the breadth of the further education and skills sector to undertake a comprehensive audit of their antiracist practice and could be a driver for real change. With support, it will enable

organisations to set their own objectives, declare their priorities and focus on contextualised actions that will bring about long-term, sustainable transformation

At present, we are still finalising critical issues such as IP and Licensing Agreements. for the. Our preference would be to incorporate use of the Toolkit in a Corporate Affiliation agreement.

In the meantime, here is a link to view the Diagnostic Toolkit Launch event <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmiipdPPQbo>. Unfortunately, you will need to scroll/forward 14 minutes 30 seconds from the start of the video to find the recording. For further information on the Toolkit please contact us at exec@blackfeleadership.com.

Open letter to address systemic racism in further education 5 August 2020

7 months ago, we published our Open letter to Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson, Prime Minister, RT Hon Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, funders of further education colleges, regulatory bodies and further education membership bodies.

The number of signatories to the Open letter (attached with an updated list of signatories) has continued to grow almost daily from 40 on 5 August 2020 to 440 as at today 28 February (397 on 29 January 2021). If you have not already done so, please read our Open letter and do consider becoming a signatory. You can contact us about this or to find out how we can work together or provide support by emailing exec@blackfeleadership.com.

System level engagement

In the coming months, through our work with the DfE and our stakeholders, we look forward to playing our part in the implementation of the White Paper, including contributing our expertise and unique Black perspectives on issues relating to workforce, governance, students, apprentices and communities. We welcome the investment and reforms to strengthen access to apprenticeships and recognise the importance of employers enacting their responsibilities for ensuring ethnic diversity in the workforce. This should include, in our view, action to address the historically low participation rates of Black people in apprenticeships. Practical action is urgently needed to ensure both the development and representation of Black talent across the system and at all levels and to provide support for those communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Sectoral level engagement

As in previous Updates, we are pleased to include directly from the Association of Colleges (AoC), the paragraph below:

AoC wish to congratulate BFELG on an incredibly impactful Inaugural Conference with inspiring speakers and data which has brought inequality into stark focus. We would like to thank BFELG for the opportunity to participate and appreciated the engagement offered in the round table sessions. AoC have been working with QDP on a survey

for governance professional and governors to collect intelligence to better understand the diversity of boards and the experience of board members from diverse backgrounds, we are about to consult with key stakeholders (including BFELG) on the survey content, which is due to be sent out in March, with the final report due in June 2021. Jeff Greenidge, our Director of Diversity has made rapid progress on supporting colleges on their journey to inclusive leadership and finding good practice to share in the sector. The next AoC update will focus on his work. – Kirsti Lord, Deputy Chief Executive - Member Services, AoC.

Engagement with Colleges

Our work with individual colleges in England continues to make progress and we have continued to provide support as requested. We are looking forward to deepening our engagement with colleges in the devolved nations in the coming months.

BFELG membership focus

BFELG membership stands at 560 up from 517 in January. Members include current and former governors, principals, senior leaders, managers, lecturers, business services staff in Further and Higher Education, local Council staff and other interested individuals.

Our February 2021 meeting of the full BFELG membership focused on:

- Celebrations
- Inaugural Conference and Toolkit Launch
- BFELG survey on Union membership

BFELG former Principals/CEOs held their first meeting of 2021 in February and discussed specific activities to support the general membership.

Articles related to the work of the BFELG and our events in February include:

In Dispatch, a newsletter of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics, an article co-authored by Dawn Ward and Stella Mbubaegbu, CBE: <https://mailchi.mp/4eb102b6ac14/wfcp-dispatch-february-issue-4191561?e=9e8c95a412>

Kate Parker TES reporter: <https://www.tes.com/news/diversity-toolkit-launched-leadership-group>

Kate Parker TES reporter: <https://www.tes.com/news/diversifying-leadership-will-improve-college-finances>

And continuing our BFELG series in FE News, Amarjit Basi reflected on the passing of Sir William Macpherson, the judge who presided over the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry:

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/63688-why-the-passing-of-sir-william-mcpherson-is-a-reason-for-fe-to-assess-its-record-on-institutional-racism>

Previous articles in the series include:

January 2021

Open letter from the BFELG to the FE Commissioner appointment panel – article by Robin Landman emphasising that the right appointment will set the tone for a more collegiate relationship between those who run the colleges and strategic decision makers: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/61732-open-letter-from-bfelg-to-the-fe-commissioner-appointment-panel>.

December 2020:

A Christmas message from the BFELG: why Johnny Mathis sounds different this year! – article by Amarjit Basi reflecting on the progress of the Black FE Leadership Group in 2020: <https://lnkd.in/g5tRY4w>

November 2020:

An excellent contribution by BFELG member, Suki Dhesi Vice Principal – Teaching, Learning & Quality/Head of Havant Campus, HSDC: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/57449-why-the-blue-eyed-brown-eyed-experiment-is-even-more-relevant-50-years-on>. Suki writes about how as part of their whole college training day, HSDC used the BFELG '[10 Point Plan](#)' to facilitate their understanding of actions required to address racism.

October 2020:

Contribution by one of the very few minority ethnic Chair of Governors in the sector, Shaid Mahmood (Luminate Education Group Chair) and BFELG member in which he calls on all FE Chairs and the sector to address the issue of further education leadership, governance and management not adequately representing the make-up of some of the communities it serves: *Further Education leadership, governance and management is at crossroads* <https://fenews.us20.list-manage.com/track/click?u=b50579c7e5d0a0937b529c7f9&id=e936159040&e=c01caee76e>

September 2020:

Contribution by BFELG member, Amarjit Basi <https://www.fenews.co.uk/featured-article/54198-black-fe-leaders-group-if-not-us-who-if-not-now-when>

And in a wide ranging FE News podcast interview, Amarjit Basi and Robin Landman OBE, Executive team members unpacked key BFELG perspectives <https://www.fenews.co.uk/fevoices/224-podcasts/55930-unpacking-the-black-fe-leadership-group-with-robin-landman-and-amarjit-basi>

Joyful Celebrations

We are delighted to celebrate the recent appointments of our members to various positions:

- Stella Agha has been appointed as a Judge of the Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Children's and Young Adult Book Awards for 2021 and 2022
- Palvinder Singh has been appointed as Principal & CEO of Kirklees College
- Wayne Wright has been appointed as Deputy Principal of Lambeth College

Appreciation

We are immensely grateful to Sir Kenneth Olisa OBE, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Greater London for his support of the BFELG.

Thank you to

- Rosemary Campbell-Stephens MBE our member and excellent compere for the Conference
- Keynote presenters, Panellists and Chairs of the Roundtable break-out sessions
- Robin Ghurbhurun, Managing Director, Further Education and Skills, Jisc, for making available the first phase report of the Jisc research *Exploring the Impact of Digital and Data Poverty on BAME learners* exclusively to our delegates prior to publication
- Kirri Gooch and her team at Google for Education' our Partner organisation, for their fantastic support for the delivery of our Conference..
- Walsall College for providing us with administration support in the days running up to the Conference.
- Education and Training Foundation, South Thames College Group, Havant and South Downs College, and Newham Sixth Form College for their input at various stages of the development of the Toolkit
- Kristin Udoh and Joanna Bako for our Conference opening music video

Thank you also to our expanding group of friends, colleagues, supporters, allies and stakeholders for your support for the BFELG. Please do continue to stay safe even as we prepare for and look forward to the nationwide easing of current lockdown restrictions.

Best wishes to all

Stella Ngozi Mbubaegbu CBE
Black Further Education Leadership Group
28 February 2021