

DRIVING FORWARD INTEGRATION AGENDA: DES BROWNE ANNOUNCES NEW ADVISORY BOARD

As part of the Government's work to ensure that migrants who settle legally in the UK can properly integrate into British society, Immigration Minister, Des Browne today announced a new board, the Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration (ABNI), to provide independent advice to the Government on its citizenship and integration programme.

The Government has overhauled the process for becoming a British citizen to make it more meaningful and to ensure that new migrants can integrate into their new communities and play a productive role in UK society. Over one thousand people a week have so far attended a citizenship ceremony - over 31,000 in total, since the ceremonies were brought by the Government in March 2004. It is bringing in tests that will ensure new citizens speak English and understand UK society. The new board recommended by Sir Bernard Crick's report on citizenship and nationality: *The New and The Old* (September 2003), will advise the Government on taking forward this work.

Mr Browne said:

"We want to encourage those who are settled in the UK to play a full part in their wider community and to take up British citizenship. I am very pleased to announce this new group which will help the Government take forward its plans for better integration to help encourage migrants to play both an active role in society and to feel a real sense of belonging in the wider community.

"Each of the new appointees has excellent knowledge of the issues and challenges that affect migrants, citizenship and naturalisation and their experience will be a real asset to the board.

"I am delighted to announce that Sir Bernard Crick has been appointed Chair to the ABNI. Sir Bernard has made a strong contribution to the Government's citizenship agenda and has played an important role in advising on the next steps towards integration."

Membership of the 16-strong Board has been drawn from leading experts in the fields of English language testing, citizenship training, employment of migrants and community development and integration.

The Board will hold its first meeting this week and will meet Mr Browne on 24 November.

Notes to Editors:

1. Biographies:

Vice-Chair

Ms. Mary Coussey is currently Independent Race Monitor to the Immigration Service, in addition to being an Equality and Diversity consultant, having carried out extensive studies, consultancy and training in relation to equal employment opportunity in the public sector. Her consultancy experience also includes work for the Council of Europe on the role of the employment services on the promotion of equal opportunities for immigrants and ethnic minorities. Formerly, she was a member of the Home Office 'Life in the UK' Advisory Group.

Members

Ms. Celine Castelino, is the Head of ESOL Development, at the Basic Skills Agency, with over ten years of experience working for the Basic Skills Agency. She advises the Welsh Assembly on interpretation matters and has most recently, she has worked on the development of the 'Citizenskills' project. She has over 20 years experience in ESOL.

Mrs. Mary Curnock Cook is currently the Director of Qualifications and Skills, at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). She has experience as a Business Consultant, and has non-executive director positions in a number of organisations in the hospitality sector.

Ms. Sally Daghlian is the Chief Executive of the Scottish Refugee Council, as well as being a Trustee of the British Refugee Council. Previous experience includes academic research, community development and adult education, with Glasgow University, the Scottish Minorities Research Unit, and the Community Development Foundation.

Sir Robert Dowling is the Headteacher of an inner city comprehensive school, catering to a wide range of needs including immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. He has over 30 years of teaching experience, and has chaired numerous committees and led several research groups in the field of education. Over the last ten years, he has specialised in leading schools that have been placed in special measures to satisfactory educational outcomes for their pupils.

Ms. Samina Khan is currently employed as County Community Education Officer / Essential Skills in Cardiff. She also has over ten years' experience as an ESOL Community Education Manager and Officer. She was also a member of the Home Office 'Life in the UK' Advisory Group and has 14 years' experience in community development initiatives with local ethnic minority communities.

Mrs. Janet Luff is Curriculum Manager for ESOL at Liverpool Community

College. She has over ten years' experience in the field of ESOL. In addition, she is a founder member of the Merseyside Refugee Support Network. She has also been involved as a member of the Skills for Life Task Force within Liverpool Lifelong Learning Partnership, establishing progression routes / access to mainstream FE/ HE courses.

Ms. Adeeba Malik is currently Deputy Chief Executive of QED - UK, finalist in the UK Charity of the Year Award 2003, and which launched the New Arrivals Economic Integration Programme in April 2003. She is also a member of the Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group, in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and a member of the Muslim Women's Advisory Group, chaired by Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Professor Elizabeth Meehan is Professor of Politics and Jean Monnet Professor at Queens' University Belfast, and Director of the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research. She has published in the field of citizenship, is a member of a Rowntree Trust Academic Advisory Panel on a project on democracy and participation, and is also a Commissioner of an Independent Commission on Democracy, organised by Think-tank for Republic of Ireland. (TASC).

Dr. R David Muir is currently a consultant in diversity training, and has twenty years of extensive voluntary and community work experience. He was formerly a member of the Home Office 'Life in the UK' Advisory Group, Chairman of the Home Secretary's Steering Group's Race and Diversity sub-group, and a Board Member of Police Training and Development Board. A leading figure in the Alliance of Black Churches.

Sir Gulam Noon, Chairman of the Noon Group, The Noon Foundation, and Noon Products Ltd, is highly experienced as an employer with regard to employment-related immigration issues. He is a Board member of a range of organisations, including Transport for London, Care International UK, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Sage Nutritional Ltd, as well as being a Trustee of the British Food Trust, and a Managing Director of Bombay Halwa Ltd.

Mr. Ashok Ohri has a background in community development, and is currently a self-employed consultant and trainer in the field. Since 1991, he has been co-director of Organisation and Social Development Consultants Ltd, which specialises in training and consultancy in equality, diversity, community development and inclusion. He was a former member of the Home Office 'Life in the UK' Advisory Group.

Ms. Maeve Sherlock is the Chief Executive of the Refugee Council. Previously she was a policy advisor to Gordon Brown, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, providing advice of a range of issues relating to employment, welfare reform, poverty, families with children and the voluntary sector. From 1991-1997, she

held the position of Executive Director of UKCOSA (Council for International Education), and from 1997-2000 was the Chief Executive for the National Council for One Parent Families.

Mrs. Jean Wilson is currently on secondment to the Scottish Qualifications Authority as ESOL Development Officer, and is currently co-chair of the National Association for Teaching English and Community Languages to Adults (NATECLA). Formerly, she was a Senior lecturer and ESOL Coordinator at Falkirk College of Further and Higher Education. She has a range of voluntary experience, including being a member of Central Scotland Racial Equality Council, and a member of Glasgow ESOL Forum.

Mr. Patrick Wintour is the Director of the Employability Forum, established in 2001 to promote refugee employment in the UK. He is also a Member of the National Refugee Integration Forum and chair of the sub-group on Training and Employment, as well as being a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society. Former Deputy Director of the Princes Trust.

Ms. Annette Zera currently works as a freelance facilitator and trainer in organisational development, with a wide range of clients including the British Council, the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, Learning Skills Council and Greenwich Community College. Previously, she was the Principal of Tower Hamlets College for 14 years, the largest provider of ESOL in the UK. She was formerly a member of the Home Office 'Life in the UK' Advisory Group.

2. The selection of Board members was by fair and open competition. Appointments are made on merit and in line with guidance issued by the Public Appointments Unit of the Cabinet Office.
3. All Board members are unpaid but travel and subsistence expenses will be met by the Home Office. The Chair appointed on the basis of seven days per month will receive a salary of £500 per day plus travel expenses and the Vice Chair three days per month at £500 per day plus travel expenses. All salaries and expenses will be paid by the Home Office.
4. The Crick report: *The New and The Old* was published in September 2003 and recommended that an implementation and assessment authority be set up.
5. ABNI is an independent advisory board and will make recommendations on the development of integration policies and programmes. It has no executive authority. The board will be expected to produce an annual report on progress.

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