

NORTH EAST EQUALITY



Equality and Diversity in the Housing Sector Employers of up to 50 staff 2012 Winner CREST (Compact for Racial Equality in South Tyneside)

CREST (Compact for Race Equality in South Tyneside) is a charitable organisation that aims to promote racial equality. Crest is a unique organisation that acts as a critical friend to a range of organisations to ensure that BME residents have a voice. It provides a useful and valuable service. They have a single overriding purpose; to assist people from all black and minority ethnic (BME) communities in South Tyneside enjoy a better life by properly gaining access to the services they need, the education and training they need and the jobs they may rightly aspire to.

Research shows that young people from BME backgrounds - particularly of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin - experience significant barriers to employment. The reasons cited are low career aspirations, discrimination (perceived and real), lack of awareness of career options and choices etc.

They have recruited and trained 17 people from the local BME community to become equality/ community champions/ advocates. Also, they have improved employability and employment opportunities for BME residents as a direct result of CREST involvement with 48 clients into employment and 205 in total registered onto the project, this is three times the rate of the BME population in the borough.

CREST operates within the ethos of equal opportunities, respecting equality and recognising and celebrating diversity. All projects are delivered in consultation with their target customers i.e. the black, Asian, and minority ethnic community members and delivery partners. This ensures that programmes that are delivered have inclusion and involvement at the heart of all they. CREST has made a real difference increasing understanding around race equality and social inclusion. Public and private sector organisations have been supported in their work and value has been



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added through the CREST presence. The CREST service has enabled a fuller understanding of BAME concerns. More importantly the barriers between communities and public services with relationships that have been eroded as people have met face to face in planning and services consultations are now being challenged successfully.

The CREST Housing Forum was launched in January 2010 in partnership with South Tyneside Homes. The main aim of the forum is to liaise with BME community groups and individuals across South Tyneside to ensure they receive the appropriate assistance in order to meet their needs. The forum has 129 members, most of whom are social housing tenants. This project has given local people the opportunity to engage in a two way dialogue with each other.

CREST offers information, advice and guidance to professionals working directly with young people from within the BAME community who have offended or are on the cusp of offending. They have established a unique reciprocal arrangement whereby CREST receives practical support from South Tyneside Youth Offending Service (YOS) in terms of office management, admin support and ICT development advice and the YOS gains from advice and guidance on best

practice when working with young offenders who, whilst British born themselves, are faced with the complex issues of coming from an immigrant family household.

Their efforts to bridge the gap between BME communities and mainstream employers and service providers has reaped rewards for many local people through increasing awareness and understanding of mainstream organisations and individuals of cultural, social, ethnic and diversity issues affecting BME people that has had a profound and lasting impact on South Tyneside and which is something they are committed to doing for many years to come.

For more information about the North East Equality Awards, please visit our website, www.equality-ne.co.uk/awards or contact Equality North East on 0191 426 4399 or email info@equality-ne.co.uk.

**...leading the way to a
fairer future...**



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