

# Minutes

**24 May 2023 | 11.30am - 1.30pm**

## Present

Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor	Coventry University	(SCC)
Florence Chiwetu	Clover Fostering Ltd	(FC)
Irene Levine	IAC Adoption	(IL) (chair)
Denise McLean	Independent	(DM)
Steve O'Loughlin	Independent	(SOL)
Amreen Riaz	Adoption Matters	(AR)

## In attendance

Ellen Broomé	CoramBAAF (CB)	(EB)
James Bury	CoramBAAF (CB)	(JB)
Georgina Coope	CoramBAAF (CB)	(GC) (minutes)
Liam Hoskins	CoramBAAF (CB)	(LH)
Linda Briheim-Crookall	CoramBAAF (CB)	(LBC)

## Apologies

Bernadette Caines	Independent	(BC)
Paulette Forbes	Sheffield Metropolitan	(PF)
Singeta Kalhan-Gregory	St David's Children Society	(SKG)
Aminah Sumpton	Independent	(AS)

## 1. Welcome and introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and initiated a round of introductions.

## 2. CoramVoice Brightspots presentation

2.1 LBC presented the key findings from the Brightspots research on 'What children in care and care leavers say about their wellbeing' with a particular focus on ethnicity. The [Brightspots Resource Hub](#) is available online.

2.2 LBC invited comments and questions from members. It was noted that this survey is anonymous, so individual circumstances and experiences cannot be analysed in further detail. Qualitative feedback has also not been specifically analysed.

2.3 Coram Voice works closely with local authorities to ensure a representative proportion of their children in care participate in their research (aiming for at least a 30% response rate). Over the



past 10 years Brightspots have worked with 60 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. Responses were received from 38 local authorities for this project.

**Action: SCC to contact LBC separately to compare data sets and discuss qualitative data analysis.**

### **3. Minutes from the last meeting and matters arising**

3.1 Ellie Johnson, CoramBAAF Health Consultant, is still awaiting an update on genetic testing.

3.2 SCC to pass on any research on Roma children and families when this becomes available.

**Action: IL to send GC the link to IAC online training for distribution. BMEPAC to keep this on the agenda for future meetings.**

3.3 Direct links have been formed between BMEPAC members and three other CoramBAAF Advisory Committees: Research, Fostering and Adoption. Representatives attending these committees will be given the opportunity in future meetings to share key discussion points. The following committees do not yet have a BMEPAC representative: Health, Legal, Foster Carers, and Kinship. Connections with these committees will be considered in the future, as well as the possibility of members from other committees attending BMEPAC meetings.

**Action: GC to add feedback item to the next agenda.**

### **4. CoramBAAF EDI Events Update**

4.1 Three event ideas were suggested during the last meeting: intersectional identity, black boys' experiences in care, black girls' experiences in care and black professional experience within social work. LH summarised progress regarding these ideas.

4.2 SCC will be presenting a webinar on 20 June about children's intersectional identities. This will be part of CoramBAAF's series of RAA commissioned events to reach a wide range of local authorities. Part 1 will present the study's early findings which are underpinned by children's stories. A second follow up webinar in October will present the full findings. SCC offered to present these research findings to this group separately when time allows.

4.3 LH and SOL discussed the topic of black boys' care experience with Emma Fincham, CoramBAAF Fostering Consultant and member of The Black Care Experience Steering Group. We have planned two for early next year, though these are still in the early planning stages. Judith Denton (Founder of The Black Care Experience), Diane Benjamin (Director of Children's Services for Hackney) and Andrew Carter (Coram Board Member) are being considered as possible presenters.

4.4 It was recognised that CoramBAAF are in a prime position to host an event on black professional experiences, due to many of their members holding management or practicing social work positions. LH invited members to participate in the planning of this event, which is likely to be scheduled for early next year.

### **5. Research Project on BME Social Workers**

5.1 SCC runs knowledge exchange workshops with social workers and noticed an emerging pattern around the experiences of black and minoritised social workers, who often get into trouble for asking 'too many' questions about children's identity. SCC submitted a research proposal to the National Heritage Fund who have agreed to fund the project. This research will collect oral



histories of BME social workers practicing since 1970, with the aim of understanding how social workers have navigated their own identities (and those of their children) amidst the backdrop of changing policies and legal frameworks. This should offer an insight into how future policy and practice could improve children's lives. SCC welcomed any advice or questions from the group.

- 5.2 EB offered SCC support from the CoramBAAF information team in accessing archive records further down the line.

## 6. CoramBAAF EDI Plan

- 6.1 EB presented an update on the CoramBAAF equality, diversity and inclusion plan. The presentation included an overview of the history of EDI within CoramBAAF, as well as the intentions, ambitions and objectives of the new plan. The CoramBAAF EDI webpage can be viewed [here](#).
- 6.2 Members noted the lack of representation within the CoramBAAF presentation stock images, particularly regarding age.
- 6.3 JB highlighted the positive impact of separating CoramBAAF EDI discussions from the general all staff meeting. These discussions are regularly well attended by staff who participate voluntarily. Providing a clear structure and focus has significantly helped EDI developments.
- 6.4 EB emphasised the importance of creating a safe space for conversation where people can learn through asking questions, without the fear of causing offence. It is better to say the 'wrong' thing and learn from it than stay silent and pretend the issue doesn't exist. EB welcomed suggestions from members on future EDI developments.

## 7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 Members discussed the possibility of holding a future meeting in person.
- 7.2 EB noted CoramBAAF Members' Week (25- 29 September) would not have an in person committee day this year, but a smaller scale event for select committee members may be considered.
- 7.3 EB shared the link to a briefing paper by [Nuffield Family Justice Observatory](#) on ethnicity in care and supervision proceedings in England. An event on this is taking place on 21 June.
- 7.4 DM and AR fed back from the most recent Black Workers South Practice Forum.  
**Action: EB and IL to contact DM and SOL regarding next steps for these groups.**
- 7.5 IL noted IAC are going through a restructuring and change of management plan.  
**Action: IL to provide the group with more information on this in due course.**

**Date of next meeting: 7 September 2023**