

**Operation Black Vote and the Government Equalities Office
Black Asian Minority Ethnic Women
Councillor Shadowing Scheme**

Women belong in the House.... and the Council Chamber too

Do you want to become a Councillor?

The representation of Black and other minority ethnic (BAME) women at every level of governance from the Houses of Parliament to local government is woefully low. Of the 646 MPs in Westminster, two are BAME women and out of 20,000 Councillors, 149 are BAME women, representing less than 1% of Councillors nationally.

Operation Black Vote in partnership with the Government Equalities Office is launching the country's first national BAME Women Councillor Shadowing Scheme. The aim of the project is to address the national deficit of Black and minority ethnic women councillors, and to ensure that BAME communities engage with the council in all areas and at all levels of local governance.

We are looking for fifty BAME women to shadow high level councillors for a minimum of six days over a six month period. The cross-party initiative will focus on giving participants first hand knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of councillors, serving officers and an insight into the Authority's systems and procedures. Our aim is that upon completion, this leadership programme will equip and motivate participants to engage in party politics. Participants will also be encouraged to become Community Ambassadors, explaining and promoting the benefits of civic engagement and encouraging others to also become involved in community affairs. The scheme will also give Councillors the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of BAME communities. OBV view this process as essential to involving BAME communities in the wide scope of activities within the decision making process.

Applications are invited from BAME women who live or work in the following areas:

Birmingham, Chilterns, East of England, Gloucester, Leicester, London (see below), Newcastle, North West, Scotland, Wales, Windsor and Maidenhead, York and Humberside
London: Camden, Harrow, Islington, Lambeth/ Southwark, Tower Hamlets

Individuals who live outside the above areas are encouraged to apply for the Solace Certificate in Community Leadership using the same application form.

The First Certificate in Community Leadership is a modular online learning package which facilitates the individual learning for each candidate. The modules will look at the skills and qualities of an effective councillor, principles of community leadership and give you an understanding of the local government environment. Basic computer literacy and access to a computer is necessary to complete the certificate.

Please contact OBV to obtain a Councillor Shadowing Scheme application on: Tel: 0208 983 5471 / Fax: 0208 983 5492/ Email: councillor@obv.org.uk or download the information from our website: www.obv.org.uk