

## Press Release

For Immediate Release  
21<sup>st</sup> May 2013

For further details contact:  
Lopa Patel T: 07505 462 442

### **Seema Malhotra MP hosts diversity and inclusion roundtable**

Seema Malhotra, Member of Parliament for Feltham & Heston, hosted a special roundtable meeting with members of equality think tank Diversity UK on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013 at Portcullis House in London. The aim was to review progress on diversity and inclusion in the corporate and public sectors from the perspective of BAME community members and launch a new survey about their experiences of applying for Public Appointments. “It has become increasingly difficult to see diversity and inclusion being supported in every sphere, including the political environment” said Seema Malhotra in her introduction, “we in the Labour party are proud of our commitment to diversity and inclusion over the past few years, the results of which we are beginning to see though the ranks with the increasing visibility of women, those from ethnic minorities and from those with disabilities.”.

Diversity UK raised the issue of the lack of accountability and transparency in the publication of statistics, citing figures from 2009/2010 as the last accurate source for ethnic minority representation in local councils, for Public Appointments and senior management levels in the corporate sector. The Cabinet Office Public Bodies 2012 report, published in December last year, was noted as a good reference document showing that accurate information is continuing to be collected, but, is not necessarily being published. Ms Malhotra noted this as an issue and highlighted that transparency and continuity of reporting were seen as a matter of policy and priority for the Labour Party.

Diversity UK members were given the opportunity to raise individual views on improving diversity and inclusion with a number of interesting topics being debated including:

- Legislation. The need to enforce existing legislation such as the Equality Act rather than creating any new legislation.
- Enforced Reporting of statistics as a matter of duty.
- The increasing need for feedback to help potential candidates develop greater confidence in applying for senior level and public appointments.
- Members recognised that cultural and behavioural changes within organisations take a long time and suggested a continued spotlight on best practices and bad practices!
- The need to develop mentoring and peer support initiatives to encourage greater intervention at an early stage for applications to senior level and Public appointments from under-represented groups.
- A need for a non-confrontational, committed and sustained approach to breaking down barriers.
- Development of a bridge between high-level legislation and mid-level organisational diversity and inclusion policies such that initiatives are not based on a “tick box” method but allow true engagement with diverse communities.
- The need to promote the economic case of diversity and inclusion and use success stories from around the world as comparison.
- The need to develop a strong pipeline of under-represented candidates and support them throughout the long term.
- Development of a peer mentoring and support structures once under-represented minorities do break through the glass ceiling such that policies don’t regress when these individuals move on in their careers.



Diversity UK also launched its 'Beyond the Glass Ceiling: Public Appointments' survey created to gather individual's experiences of applying and interviewing for board level positions in the public sector. The survey is scheduled to run for three months and results will be reported in the autumn of 2013. Click here to read more about the survey.

### **About Seema Malhotra MP**

Seema Malhotra was elected Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament for Feltham and Heston in December 2011. She was promoted in July 2012 to be a PPS to Yvette Cooper (Equalities and Home Affairs) and also chairs the Parliamentary Labour Party Business Group. She has also been a member of the Justice Committee since February 2012.

Seema is co-founder and Director of the Fabian Women's Network and a former National Chair of the Fabian Society. From May – October 2010 Seema was Political Adviser to Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP in the Leader of the Opposition's Office, and has also been adviser to West Midlands Regional Ministers the Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP and Ian Austin MP. Previously Seema led the cross-Government programme Increasing Diversity in Public Appointments working with Whitehall, headhunters, business and community groups.

Prior to entering Parliament, Seema was a freelance business and public service adviser and has over ten years experience with leading firms Accenture and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. In 2007 she was short-listed for the Asian Women of Achievement Awards.

Visit [www.seemamalhotra.com](http://www.seemamalhotra.com) for further information

### **About Diversity UK**

Diversity UK is a think tank to research, advocate and promote new ideas for improving diversity and inclusion in Britain. It is a not-for-profit, collaborative organisation that works with a wide range of partners, bodies and key opinion formers to engage in a healthy debate about issues of age, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability discrimination. Diversity UK is an evidence-based initiative that seeks to influence policy, enhance civic engagement and improve the perception of the minority ethnic community in Britain.

Visit [www.diversityuk.org](http://www.diversityuk.org) for further information

End.