

IMB REGIONAL CLUSTERS

The 'regional clusters' is a separate initiative from the network of speakers. The aim of the clusters is to share recruitment resources, skills and good practice with a view to widening recruitment networks and attracting a wider pool of applicants from different social backgrounds. Clusters identify professional, voluntary and community organisations with a potential to provide access to recruitment networks.

Each cluster consists of four or five Boards within a local geographical area, and each has a Chair, elected from within the membership of the cluster. The clusters hold quarterly meetings and liaise via phone and/or email.

The following clusters have so far been implemented:

| REGIONAL CLUSTER NAME | ESTABLISHMENTS |
|-----------------------|---|
| Kent 1 | Blantyre House, Rochester, Cookham Wood, Maidstone and East Sutton Park |
| North West | Altcourse, Liverpool, Risley and Kennet |
| Midlands 1 | Whatton, Stocken, Nottingham and Ashwell, Leicester |
| Midlands 2 | Ranby, Lincoln, Morton Hall and North Sea Camp |
| Eastern | Norwich, Wayland, Whitemoor and possibly Peterborough |
| Kent 2 | Elmley, Swaleside, Standford Hill, Canterbury |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What's the difference between the regional clusters and the network of speakers?

A. Each project has a different vision. The aim of the regional clusters is to attract a wide pool of applicants from different professional and social backgrounds in order to diversify Board membership and thus increase the effectiveness of the Board. This is a project developed from the national five year diversity strategy. The aim of the network of speakers is to raise public awareness of the IMB which gives us a stronger combined 'voice', with the added benefit of attracting potential new members (hence complementing the work of the regional clusters).

Q. Why have the regional clusters and the network of speakers been set up as two separate projects?

A. The regional clusters have initially been established in areas where Boards have difficulty in recruiting members, and from different backgrounds, which is often the case in rural areas. The focus for clusters is on recruitment at 'Board' level, whereas the focus for the speakers is raising public awareness of IMBs on a regional level (although with the obvious advantage of attracting recruits).

Q. Why does the IMB want to raise the public profile?

A. Give the IMB a stronger 'voice', as already mentioned. The President of the National Council for IMBs is keen to apply pressure where necessary to ensure the fair and decent treatment of those held in prisons, immigration removal centres and immigration holding rooms. The name of Independent Monitoring Boards is relatively unknown with less than 10% (estimated) of the population being aware of its existence. It is important to move away from the old Board of Visitors name which many more people are familiar with. In addition, as more people become aware of the IMB, there will be less need to spend large amounts of money on advertising costs.

Q. Can the speakers work independently from the clusters?

A. Absolutely! They are two separate initiatives, designed to complement each other, not be in competition with each other. Each group will have their own responsibilities and objectives, but the link will be there should any of the clusters wish to call on the assistance of the speakers.

Q. How will the speakers assist the clusters?

A. They will represent a pool of experienced public speakers who will be able to speak on behalf of the IMB at organisations identified by the clusters.

Q. How will the speakers be linked to the clusters?

A. The contact details of each regional cluster chair and each regional co-ordinator for the network of speakers will be exchanged. In addition, the regional co-ordinators for the network of speakers will send a report of organisations contacted every 4 months to the Secretariat who will distribute this to the chairs of the regional clusters.