The Black Leadership Initiative
The first ten years

An evaluation of the impact made by the Black Leadership Initiative over ten years 2002 - 2012
Elizabeth Walker and Mick Fletcher
As the evidence and feedback from contributors to this research report show, BLI has provided considerable support, direction, guidance and development for black and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and their peers for the last 10 years.

This celebratory report, highlights the commitment and incredible work undertaken by the organisation to develop and grow BAME talents, increase the number of BAME staff in senior management positions and to empower and support the leadership and career development needs of BAME professionals at all levels in the organisation.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this research report and BLI for its commitment and passion to achieving race equality within FE and skills. We believe there is still a long way to go to make race equality a reality and to ensure it is embedded fully in organisational thinking, culture and practice.

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and now LSIS have continued to support the work of BLI, and with LSIS’s services ceasing at the end of July 2013, we hope the sector would work directly and confidently with BLI in continuing our vision to increase the diversity of senior leaders in the sector, to grow and develop a diverse talent pool and to make equality and diversity central to how each provider plans, thinks, behaves and delivers its services to learners, employers and their communities.

Rob Wye
LSIS’s Chief Executive Officer
This evaluation was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and carried out by Elizabeth Walker and Mick Fletcher on behalf of the Policy Consortium.

**The Learning and Skills Improvement Service**
LSIS is the sector-owned body which aims to accelerate the drive for excellence in the learning and skills sector, building the sector’s own capacity to design, commission and deliver improvement and strategic change.

**The Policy Consortium**
The Policy Consortium is a group of experienced senior professionals, all with extensive track records in further education and skills, who work together as independent consultants to provide high-quality support including specialist research, for providers of education and training, sector organisations, government agencies and other clients with an interest in these areas.

**About the authors**
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**Acknowledgements**
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The authors would also like to express their appreciation to LSIS, Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) and Network for Black Professionals (NBP) for the provision of documentary and other evidence which has informed this research.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

This report, commissioned by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), provides an evaluation of the cumulative impact of the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI) over the 10 year period from its establishment in 2002 until 2012. The role of LSIS with respect to BLI is described in Section 1.5 below.

The Black Leadership Initiative offers continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to the post-16 education sector and to the schools sector.

The overall brief of the BLI is to address under-representation by introducing practical measures to improve career development opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) sector staff, particularly those in leadership and management roles. A range of interventions have been developed by the BLI including secondments, work shadowing, mentoring and career development programmes. This report draws on documentary evidence and primary research to evaluate progress to date, and to consider the cumulative impact of the initiative.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology was multi-stranded, drawing on multiple data sources. It comprised:

- A contextual review of relevant reports, of BLI documents and records, and of comparative initiatives
- Field research including 10 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in a range of roles, including: programme beneficiaries, host organisations, mentors, representatives of funding bodies and sector bodies
- An assessment of value for money, drawing on BLI activity, workforce and funding data.
- Participant observer\(^1\) evidence from one of the report authors who is a BLI mentor and a former member of the BLI Steering Group (see “About the Authors”).

Data sources were primary and secondary, as follows:

**Primary data – the key stakeholder interviews**

The interviewees have all had substantial involvement with BLI. They have occupied a number of roles with respect to the initiative, including those of mentor, mentee, funder, steering group member, shadow host, shadow beneficiary and programme organiser. Most interviewees have occupied more than one role over the years of their involvement with BLI – often they have occupied several roles. These BLI stakeholders are current or former senior leaders / principals of Further Education (FE) colleges, or senior leaders / CEO’s of sector bodies, including funding bodies and government departments.

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\(^1\) Participant observation (for example Goffman, 1959) refers to a research methodology in which the researcher also has a role in the situation.
Secondary data
The detailed list of data sources is provided at the end of the report. The secondary data of particular relevance as evidence sources for the findings reported here include planning documents, activity reports, programme evaluations and wider evaluation reports.

1.3 Comparative research

There is evidence of under-representation of BAME staff in leadership positions across a range of public sector areas. In the Higher Education (HE) sector, for example, Bhopal (2013) finds that BAME academics continue to experience racism, confirming little change since findings reported by the Equality Challenge Unit in 2009, and Carter, Fenton & Modood 10 years before that in 1999.

In the local authority context, Andalo reported in 2012 that “Just four out of 152 directors of adult services are BAME and it is thought that the picture is similar in children’s services”.

Toto take a third example, and one which is very significant given the numbers involved, Kalra et al (2009) comment that “The National Health Service is the largest employer in the UK but, despite decades of equal opportunities legislation, its senior management workforce does not reflect the diversity of either the NHS workforce or the UK population”.

The recognition of the issue of under-representation has led to the development of positive action initiatives in a wide range of public sector contexts.

The brief comparative review presented in this section identifies some specific examples. These examples feature a range of initiatives such as positive action recruitment practices, graduate placement schemes, mentoring programmes and leadership development programmes in a number of sectors, including:

- Civil service (for example a scheme to coach and support BAME candidates for the application process for the Fast Stream, a civil service recruitment process which creates a fast track to management) (Civil Service website, 2013)
- Health (where former Chief Executive, Nigel Crisp, challenged every senior executive in the NHS to mentor someone from a BAME background) (Kalra et al, 2009)
- Local authority (for example an initiative in Birmingham to encourage the participation of people from BAME backgrounds in civic life with an eye to developing the next generation of civic leaders) (Birmingham News, 2013)
- Higher education (Imperial College London’s Diverse Leaders Development Programme looks at how difference can be used as a strength in the context of career development) (Imperial College, London, 2013)

More details of specific examples are provided in Table 1.

Between them the initiatives identified offer a range of activities comparable to those offered by the BLI. Evaluation information, where it exists, suggests that these initiatives are generally well
received and successful in providing positive experiences in line with their intended purposes.

However extensive searching for comparable initiatives, illustrated by the examples in Table 1, has discovered that:

- Initiatives tend to be of a short-term nature, and not sustained over long periods, although there are exceptions (for example, see Operation Black Vote and Imperial College Schemes in Table 1)
- Current initiatives are often of relatively recent origin, which is unsurprising given the preceding point
- Initiatives are relatively small scale in terms of numbers of participants and range of activities
- The focus is usually on supporting individual BAME staff rather than developing organisational awareness
- There is no readily available information about costs, evidence of value for money assessment or evaluation of impact.

It appears likely therefore, that the BLI has covered a wider range of activities and been in existence for a longer period than any or most other UK BAME positive action schemes. However, since evaluation evidence in other sectors is so limited, and since it has not been possible to identify evidence of impact on addressing under-representation, or any detailed consideration of value for money, firm conclusions are difficult to draw.

One interesting point which does arise from this comparative review, is the issue of the extent to which any initiative focuses on supporting individuals, or takes an organisation-wide approach. The starting point for positive action initiatives is often a focus on supporting individual BAME staff, and this can be a huge catalyst for change, as evidenced by this BLI evaluation. However, there is a view that this focus really needs to be complemented by a strategic approach at organisational level to comprehensively addressing under-representation. Evidence provided by Kalra et al, (2009) reviewing interventions in the health sector is noteworthy in this context:

Findings – The literature review found that there were a range of initiatives which could be implemented by public organisations such as the NHS to increase the presence of BAME staff in senior management positions. Most of these interventions were largely focused on the individual. Much more progress on institutional or organisational change needed to be made before the NHS could be perceived as a model employer in this area. The literature review also indicated that there is little published research on such initiatives within other European Union countries.

BLI evaluation evidence suggests that this is an issue of importance for BLI. It is considered further in Section 4.7 and Sections 6, 7 and 8 below.
Table 1 – Positive action initiatives – illustrative public sector examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme (organisation/sector and purpose)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Scale and timescale</th>
<th>Strengths, benefits and impact</th>
<th>Areas for further development</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Organisation: Virtual Staff College   | • Focus on residential events  
Sector: Social Care with a focus on children’s services  
Aim: to help BAME staff work towards promotion (Andalo, 2012) (Virtual Staff College website, 2013) | • First cohort in 2011 with a follow-up in 2012  
• 30 participants in each cohort | • Participants highlighted the valuable opportunity to meet and network with other BAME managers  
• Supported by the Association of Directors of Children’s Services which highlights its value in children’s services where diverse leadership is important to embed cultural sensitivity  
• Develops the awareness of the challenges of being a BAME leader in children’s services and builds capabilities to overcome them | No information available |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme (organisation/ sector and purpose)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Scale and timescale</th>
<th>Strengths, benefits and impact</th>
<th>Areas for further development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation: NHS</td>
<td>Creating a professional network of (aspiring) BAME clinical champions • One-to-one mentoring to help support self-care and health and wellbeing of participants</td>
<td>40 participants attended the first meeting • Set up in 2010, first meeting in December 2011</td>
<td>To our knowledge, the scheme has not been evaluated. Furthermore, their website appears to no longer exist.</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector: Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheme: clinical leaders network’s REAL initiative (Race Equality Action Leadership)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aim: to increase capabilities and influence of BAME clinicians with a particular focus on improving networking and capabilities to secure senior roles (NHS Clinical Leaders Network)</td>
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<th>Strengths, benefits and impact</th>
<th>Areas for further development</th>
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</table>
| Organisation: Civil Service            | • Six to nine week internship  
• Option to apply for coaching  
• 25 hours of coaching on interview technique, presentation, test taking and writing skills | • For the coaching, 10 BAME interns in 2009; 15 in 2010 | • Recognised with the Rate My Placement Best Diversity in Work Experience Award 2012 (winner)  
• National Council for Work Experience (Public Sector) Award 2012 (highly commended).  
• The Coaching Programme was highly commended for the Mentoring Award category of the prestigious Race for Opportunity Awards 2012. | No information available |
| Sector: Civil Service                  |          |                     |                               |                             |
| Scheme: diversity internship and coaching programme |          |                     |                               |                             |
| Aim: to level the playing field for candidates from diverse backgrounds to support them in applying for the Fast Stream |          |                     |                               |                             |
|                                           |          |                     |                               |                             |

(Civil Service website, 2013)
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<tr>
<th>Scheme (organisation/sector and purpose)</th>
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<th>Scale and timescale</th>
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<th>Areas for further development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Organisation: Operation Black Vote working with Birmingham City Council  
Sector: Local Authority  
Aim: to increase the BAME representation among civic leaders by equipping and motivating participants  
(Birmingham Press) | 8-10 non-consecutive day workshops over a six month period consisting of observation and training sessions | 40 participants in the Birmingham scheme in 2013  
Operation Black Vote has run shadowing schemes for over 10 years | Helen Grant MP, first woman of African Caribbean woman to become a Conservative MP is a former participant  
12 political accolades including the Local Government Chronicle Award and the Channel 4 Political Award in 2008 | No information available |
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<tr>
<th>Scheme (organisation/sector and purpose)</th>
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<th>Scale and timescale</th>
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<th>Areas for further development</th>
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</table>
| Organisation: Imperial College London   | • Four modules including a two day residential workshop  
• Half day briefing for participants’ managers.  
• Coaching and mentoring following completion of the course.  
• The programme has been running for approximately five years  
• Accredited by the ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management)  
• Serves as the model for STELLAR HE, a national pilot programme across the higher education sector  
• Improves understanding of effective leadership and management practices  
• Builds capacity to identify and attain promotion opportunities  
• Develops career management strategies  | No information available |
<p>| Sector: Higher Education                |          |                     |                                |                               |
| Scheme: ‘ILead’: The College’s Diverse Leaders Development Programme |          |                     |                                |                               |
| Aim: to tackle the under-representation of BAME (black, Asian and Minority ethnic) staff in more senior posts |          |                     |                                |                               |
|                                          | (Imperial College, London website) |                     |                                |                               |
|                                          | (Civil Service website, 2013)     |                     |                                |                               |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation: Stellar HE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector: Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aim: to address issues of institutional race discrimination, level the playing field, and provide equal access to promotion, professional development and increased retention of talented staff in the sector (Imperial College, London website)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Six interactive workshop sessions</td>
<td>• This first Stellar HE programme ran from March to September 2010</td>
<td>• Developed perception between managers and participants for: awareness of personal weaknesses; confidence in acting authentically; and opportunities for internal visibility</td>
<td>• Further developing confidence and competence in addressing the inequities and challenges they face, in optimising and using their diversity as a value adding strength, and in skilfully navigating the culture of their respective universities</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Range of leadership diagnostic tools including the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)</td>
<td>• 16 participants were accepted on the first programme</td>
<td>• Noted by participants for achieving a more long term impact than other schemes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Case studies and simulations</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengths of the programme include being custom designed; combining technical and experimental learning and inclusion of managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Individual Critical Business Projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Executive coaching sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Includes work with participants’ managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scheme (organisation/sector and purpose)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Organisation: Black Leadership Initiative Sector: Education Aim: To address the under-representation of BAME staff at leadership levels in the FE sector | - Secondments  
- Mentoring programmes  
- Shadowing programmes  
- Career development and job skills events  
- Conferences  
- Study visits | Operational over an 11 year period since 2002 and ongoing | - Evidence of addressing under-representation at principal level  
- Greater networking  
- Raising BAME profile and changing expectations  
- Capacity building through professional development  
- Career progression  
- British Diversity Award 2005  
- Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012  
- Cited by the Department of Communities and Local Government as a model of good practice | - Consideration of the need to extend reach  
- Further developments should include development of the original focus and more partnership working |
1.4 Context and rationale for the establishment of the Black Leadership Initiative

In the year 2000, a Commission for Black Staff in Further Education (CBS) was established:

following recommendations from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report in 1999 to work in partnership with the sector to:

- Challenge racism
- Break down barriers for black staff
- Raise the achievement level of all who work and learn in further education (CBS, 2002).

The CBS and the Network for Black Managers (NBM), now the network for black professionals (NBP), established that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff are significantly under-represented at all levels in colleges, and particularly at management level. The CBS found that:

- Black staff are under-represented in individual colleges and at local and regional levels compared with learner populations
- Black staff are under-represented at management and senior management level
- Only 1% of principals are black (CBS, 2002).

The Commission’s research also highlighted the perception amongst BAME staff in the sector that they were under-valued and faced a glass ceiling preventing their progression into management positions. The CBS identified concerns about:

- The undervaluing of relevant experience and of overseas or non-traditional qualifications
- The ‘glass ceiling’ and its negative effect on progression and retention (CBS, 2002).

At this time, the NBM had been working with key stakeholders – the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and Association of Colleges (AoC) – to develop a mentoring programme and to offer positive action places (funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)) on a senior leadership CPD programme. At the same time, the Commission had been approached by two college principals with a proposal for a secondment programme aimed at Black, Asian and Minority staff. Consequently the Commission tasked the NBM to merge the various proposals into a positive action project, resulting in the Strategic Initiative for the Development of Black Staff, later renamed the Black Leadership Initiative.

Figure 1 provides a summary overview of the context and development of BLI.
The BLI is described in Figure 1 as being ‘hosted’ by AoC and then CEL, in the period 2002-2005. This term has been used to reflect the status of BLI as a semi-autonomous organisation which is accountable to its own steering group as well as to the host organisation. BLI funding and activities are agreed on an annual basis with the host organisation, which holds the funding contract with the public funding body (LSC and then the Skills Funding Agency (SFA)).

1.5 The role of CEL and LSIS

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) was launched in October 2003 within Success For All a government policy initiative. CEL’s overall strategic purpose was to foster world class leadership within the Learning and Skills Sector. One of CEL’s five initial strategic aims was to “improve the diversity of sector leaders” (Leading the Way, 2004). To achieve this aim, CEL identified a range of positive action programmes and services, including a number focusing specifically on BAME leaders. Leading the Way (CEL 2004-2006) identifies BLI and the network for black managers as key delivery partners in the achievement of this strategic aim, and in 2004 BLI became a semi-autonomous body located within, and funded via CEL, but retaining its own steering group. In 2005, BLI moved from being a part of CEL to being a part of NBP. During the
period 2004 – 2008 a range of positive action initiatives focusing on BAME staff were funded via CEL. These included all of the BLI programmes and services (see Sections 2 and 3 below); a number of programmes developed and delivered in association with the network for black professionals, including the High Fliers leadership development programme, the Introduction to Governance programme, and career development advice and guidance interventions; and the First Steps to Leadership programme for first line BAME managers. In 2008 CEL merged with the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) resulting in the establishment of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), with which BLI has continued to work, and via which it has continued to receive funding.

The positive action initiatives offered by BLI/NBP and LSIS are set in the context of a broad and diverse LSIS leadership development portfolio which provides for leaders and managers at all levels through a wide variety of face to face and virtual development opportunities. This portfolio encompasses provision which addresses all diversity strands in both mainstream and positive action provision, recognising the ongoing need to address equality and diversity issues as leadership development as the sector develops and changes.

The positive action programmes and services offered by BLI and CEL/LSIS have developed in parallel and there has perhaps been less direct integration at an organisational level than was first envisaged. However the evaluation evidence (see Section 4 below) suggests that, from the perspective of individual participants, the positive action programmes together with other mainstream leadership development opportunities have complemented each other and provided professional development pathways to support staged career progression.

1.6 The role of the network for black professionals

The NBP was set up in 1998 to provide a voice and support and networking opportunities for BAME staff in the FE sector. It contributed substantially to the work of CBS and was the leading organisation in the development and establishment of BLI. The network and BLI have always worked closely together in developing ideas, working on joint activities, and lobbying and awareness-raising. In 2005 BLI became part of the NBP, and currently remains so.
2. The Black Leadership Initiative

2.1 BLI Purposes

As is the case with any new initiative, different stakeholders have different expectations and experiences of BLI. For this evaluation, the purposes of BLI have been distilled from a number of source documents and from interviews with a sample of key stakeholders. BLI’s purposes are therefore identified as follows:

**Overall strategic purpose**
To address the under-representation of BAME staff at leadership levels in the FE sector

**Specific purposes**
- To set up professional development experiences for BAME leaders so as to provide access to high quality development which they would not otherwise receive
- To accelerate learning and development so as to raise career aspirations and increase access to career progression opportunities
- To establish and promote networking opportunities for BAME staff
- To raise the profile of BAME staff at leadership levels within the FE sector
- To raise awareness of the issue of under-representation and the challenges experienced by BAME staff
- To develop a strategic approach to the recruitment retention and development of BAME leaders by developing initiatives to complement other leadership development provision

2.2 The major elements of BLI

The initial BLI catalyst came from a number of sources, among which the work and findings of the Commission for Black Staff in FE played a major part. The early choice of secondments and high level mentoring was made in the knowledge (CBS report 2002, p.78) that BAME staff were likely to be similarly or better qualified than their white counterparts, but to have less opportunity to access more senior leadership experience. This underpinned the thinking about the specific activities developed by BLI when it began its work in 2002.

During the BLI pilot phase, high quality senior level work shadowing and Ofsted inspection shadowing also came to be recognised as having the potential to provide powerful professional development opportunities.

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2 The use of the term “the FE sector” has varied over the lifetime of BLI. It has been used to mean FE colleges and also to refer to the wider Learning and Skills sector. The FE Guild’s definition of the Learning and Skills sector describes it as encompassing “all colleges, independent, local authority and third sector providers working in what is commonly known as the Further Education sector and deriving some funding from the Skills Funding Agency” (FE Guild 2013). In this context it is important to note that the remit of the Black Leadership Initiative was to address under-representation primarily in FE colleges. Although there has been some broadening of this remit as the initiative has developed, for example the School Ofsted Shadowing Programme, the remit with which BLI has been tasked to date has focused on colleges of further education.
In addition to the three substantial programmes, the relatively well resourced pilot phase (2002-4) developed a number of specific events designed to: facilitate networking (for example, regional events); support career progression (for example, jobskills, career planning, high fliers); raise awareness of under-representation and inequalities (for example, HR professionals seminar). There have also been BLI conferences which address all three purposes.

BLI’s work can therefore be broadly described as follows:

- Substantial initiatives involving participation over a period of time and comprising:
  - Secondments and related activities
  - Mentoring and related activities
  - Shadowing and related activities
- Specific events including conferences, skills development and career planning events
- A number of profile raising and funding support activities.

Figure 2 provides an overview of BLI involvement over time. It includes activities for which BLI has led on development and delivery and activities which have been led by NBP and with which BLI has been involved, for example the First Steps programme, networking events and master classes.
3. Findings

Data Sources
Evidence from the primary and secondary data sources outlined above (section 1.2) has been used to identify the purposes, nature, scale, perceived impact and critical success factors for each of BLI’s major programmes of activity. The findings are presented in this section.

3.1. Leadership Secondment Programme

Purposes
• To enable BAME staff to gain experience in a more senior role which matches their capabilities.
• To contribute to enhancing competitiveness at interview and so contribute to increasing the pace of change with respect to under-representation.

Description
Colleges, national and local government organisations, and other sector organisations make leadership positions available for secondment for up to one year. BAME leaders apply for these secondment opportunities, and are matched to jobs which provide the experience they need (for example; line management, budget control, industrial relations, senior team membership). Secondees receive an assessment CPD interview and career planning guidance on entry and exit, structured mentoring, support and supervision, development opportunities during the secondment, a constructive exit interview and a reference from the host institution.

Scale of Activity
Discussions with a large number of potential host organisations, comprising mostly colleges and LSC offices.
Eleven secondments during BLI’s early years (2002 – 06)
Total of 29 secondments into senior leadership positions over extended periods.

Perceived Impact
• Raises the profile of BAME staff.
• Highlights challenges faced by BAME staff and the issue of under-representation.
• Provides senior level experience and track record.

Critical Success Factors
The 2004 LSC Evaluation of BLI suggests that the following are all needed to make the secondment experience effective:

• Careful matching between secondee and position is critically important
• Thorough induction and agreement about what work the secondee was to take on
• Some element of work-shadowing
• Mentoring in the work placement
• Good relationship with the host and releasing colleges
• Commitment from the releasing college to supporting and developing the secondee on
their return

- Consideration of practical implications, for example travel, childcare and provision of appropriate support.

3.2. Mentoring Programme

**Purposes**

- To establish a high quality mentoring experience for BAME staff to provide a sounding board, develop and provide access to networks and development opportunities and develop skills through the use of coaching when appropriate.
- To provide high quality training for senior volunteer mentors to develop skills and to raise awareness of issues of under-representation and the career progression challenges facing BAME staff.
- To provide effective induction for mentees to enable them to make effective use of the mentoring experience.
- To provide ongoing support to mentors and mentees, including offering mentor refresher events.
- To complement participation in other development experiences, for example secondments and leadership development programmes.

**Description**

A programme consisting of mentor training/induction, mentee induction, a careful matching process and the establishment and ongoing support of mentoring partnerships, typically of several months’ duration. Mentors are carefully selected, trained and assessed; and carefully matched with mentees. They have sector experience at a senior level. Those being mentored are BAME staff in leadership positions who apply formally for the programme and participate in a mentee induction. The training provided for both mentors and mentees are important components of the mentoring programme. They introduce a structured approach to underpin the mentoring process.

**Scale of Activity**

67 mentor training and refresher events involving 660 volunteer mentors
38 mentee induction events involving 446 mentees

**Perceived Impact**

- Provides a structure for clarifying career aspirations and developing action plans to achieve career progression.
- Provides a structured mechanism for reviewing progress with action plans and staying focused.
- Opens doors and develops networks.
- Develops skills.
- Provides an opportunity for confidential discussions to enable mentees to better understand, address and resolve work related issues, and in so doing, develop their strategic thinking and operational leadership skills.
- Raises awareness, especially for majority ethnic mentors, of issues of under-representation.
• Develops mentoring and coaching skills.
• Raises profile of BAME staff in participating organisations.
• Raises awareness of BLI in participating organisations.

Critical Success Factors
• Experienced mentors at appropriate levels
• Careful matching between the mentor and the mentee
• High quality training for mentors and briefing for mentees
• Clear objectives for each mentoring relationship
• A positive mentoring relationship with a high level of rapport
• Mentor providing space as needed for the mentee to think things through
• Mentees taking the opportunities seriously and carrying out the agreed actions
• Realistic approach by both parties
• Ongoing support from BLI for the mentoring relationship

3.3. Ofsted and General Shadowing Programmes

Purposes
• To support the further leadership development of BAME leaders through an opportunity to shadow an Ofsted inspection or senior leader (general shadows).
• To enhance the career prospects of BAME leaders within the sector through providing them with a rich opportunity.
• To provide a development opportunity of benefit to individuals, their employing organisations and the sector.
• To understand more about the leadership development needs of BAME leaders through the evaluation of their experience.
• To achieve greater diversity in the sector leadership population.

Description

Ofsted shadowing programme
A programme consisting of a briefing day and two inspection shadowing experiences, with accompanying support.

Each shadowing programme begins with a briefing day for applicants to the programme. This includes presentations from an HMI giving an overview of the inspection shadow programme, an explanation of the process and the opportunity to practise the skills required for inspection. Participants are encouraged to further practise some of the skills needed for Ofsted inspection when they return to their employing organisations. A cohort of ‘shadows’ is then selected from the individuals who attended the briefing day. Candidates for the programme would normally be in senior or middle management positions and have the potential and the ambition to achieve principalship, headship or senior leadership positions.

Each shadow is allocated a lead inspector, to act as mentor and manager of the shadowing experience. A set of inspection documents is made available to the participant prior to the
inspection, providing background information and data.

Participants are expected to shadow two inspections. During each inspection participants observe a wide range of inspection activities which typically include observing lessons, meetings and feedback sessions, interrogating data and listening to discussions that lead to judgements being made. Shadows practise the necessary skills such as compiling evidence forms and writing reports, and discuss their learning and reflections with their HMI mentor.

An electronic diary of learning points is kept by each shadow. Following each of the two inspections they shadow, a written evaluation is produced by the HMI mentor which is designed to provide individual feedback for the shadow on their performance. Shadows are encouraged to practise and improve their skills between the two inspections.

**General shadowing programme**

A programme consisting of shadowing of senior leaders in a range of organisations. These have included, for example executive directors of local Learning and Skills Councils; principals of FE colleges; government ministers; and senior leaders in other sector bodies.

**Scale of Activity**

- 34 Ofsted briefings involving 548 BAME participants
- 338 Ofsted shadowing arrangements in FE colleges.
- 37 general shadowing arrangements with senior leaders.

**Perceived Impact**

- Provides strategic insight and strategic perspective, develops analytical skills, data interpretation, finance and operational management skills.
- Develops confidence and awareness of own abilities.
- Raises career aspirations.
- Contributes to career progression.
- Raises the profile and credibility of BAME staff in all participating organisations (those where participants work in both initial and any subsequent promoted roles), and all the organisations where shadowing occurs.
- Increases the diversity of inspection teams where they include shadows.
- Raises the profile of BAME staff within Ofsted and in other host organisations.

**Critical Success Factors**

- Timing needs to be right so that the participant can make the most of the experience
- Lead inspectors, the inspection team and the host colleges need to understand the purpose and appreciate the value of BAME staff participation
- Host organisations need to be carefully chosen and committed to the scheme
- For general shadowing opportunities participants should have options about where they do their shadowing
- Thorough briefing for all participants
- Participants need to have a realistic understanding of the commitment involved
3.4. Conferences and other events

Purposes
The events are diverse and wide-ranging, and different events are reported to have different kinds of purposes.

Some events, for example jobskills, career planning and high flier events are intended to provide skills development with a particular focus on raising career aspirations and supporting career progression. Some events are intended to introduce the BLI positive action initiatives and raise awareness of under-representation and related issues, for example LSC Directors’ Briefings and HR Directors’ Forum. Other events have been arranged to contribute to building and consolidating networks, for example networking and dissemination events, often held with the NBP. The study visits arose as a result of BLI’s development of international contacts, and served to inform the thinking and development of BLI’s work.

Description
A range of events including annual conferences, seminars, workshops, network events and study visits. Annual conferences have adopted a theme for the keynote speakers and workshops have been skills-based and issues-based. Other events have included jobskills workshops and career planning seminars; a high fliers programme; an LSC Executive Directors’ briefing; an HR Directors’ forum; NBP/BLI networking/dissemination events; leadership development events led by NBP, for example First Steps and Masterclasses and international study visits. A more specific list is given below.

Scale of Activity
The following are activities which have been led by BLI, or in which BLI has been involved as part of its work within NBP.

Two national BLI conferences
63 career planning and jobskills workshops, involving 797 participants
13 Masterclasses, involving 340 participants
327 participants in International Competencies events
346 First Steps participants in 20 events
2 High fliers events with 19 participants
1 Next Steps event with 9 participants
2 Governor training events, involving 24 participants
5 Data Analysis events, with 57 participants
17 Networking events with 603 participants
HR directors event
Study visits to South Africa and USA
Perceived Impact

- Raises the profile of the issue of under-representation both nationally and internationally.
- Introduces positive action initiatives in general, and BLI’s activities in particular, to senior key staff in colleges, and a range of sector funding and development bodies.
- Provides focused skills development and career guidance which has raised career aspirations and increased the capacity of BAME leaders to successfully achieve promotion.
- Contributes to accelerating the development of networks of BAME professionals and the participation of BAME staff in other professional networks.
- Contributes to changing expectations.
4. Impact

In addition to activity and programme evaluation data, this section draws on interviews with the 10 key stakeholders described in Section 3, and participant observation evidence, as described in Section 1.2.

4.1 Impact – Extent of activity

Over the period 2002 – 2012, the BLI has designed, developed, implemented and supported, or in other ways been involved with, the following activities:

- 29 secondments into senior leadership positions over extended periods
- 67 mentor training and refresher events involving 660 volunteer mentors
- 38 mentee induction events involving 446 mentees
- 37 general shadowing arrangements with senior leaders in colleges, sector and funding bodies and government departments.
- 338 Ofsted shadowing arrangements in FE colleges
- 34 Ofsted briefings involving 548 BAME participants
- 20 BLI conferences
- 63 career planning and jobskills workshops, involving 797 participants
- 13 Masterclasses, involving 340 participants
- 327 participants in International Competencies events
- 346 First Steps participants in 20 events
- 2 High fliers events with 19 participants
- 1 Next Steps event with 9 participants
- 2 Governor training events, involving 24 participants
- 5 Data Analysis events, with 57 participants
- 17 Networking events with 603 participants
- HR directors event
- Study visits to South Africa and USA

As well as engaging and being otherwise involved with approximately 4,580 BAME participants over the 10 year period, the activity of BLI has involved the voluntary participation and engagement of several hundred senior leaders, including college principals, CEOs of national agencies and others in influential positions. These senior volunteers are both BAME and white.

Feedback from the documentary and interview evidence supporting this research suggests that activities are overwhelmingly perceived to be of high quality and to achieve their objectives. Much of the feedback about improvement comprises requests for longer events with more time for skills development and addressing of the issues raised.

In addition and in recognition of its activity, BLI has received a number of awards including the 2005 British Diversity Award and The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award in 2012. BLI was cited as a model of good practice by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
The impact of BLI’s activity

4.2 Impact – Secondments

Secondments were developed as a direct result of early thinking about the critical importance of senior level experience, responsibility and track record, in being able to demonstrate achievements and credibility both in applying for senior posts and throughout the selection process; accompanied by an understanding that there were significant additional challenges for BAME applicants.

Eleven secondments were carried out during BLI’s early years, 2002 – 2006. The evidence suggests that substantial positive impact resulted for the individuals concerned, with progression to more senior posts following the secondment experiences. One secondee commented as follows:

*I arrived with quite low confidence but found the induction process one of the best I have experienced. Although a little overwhelming at first, all the elements have now become clear. I was impressed that they did not treat me as a secondee but as a full member of staff. They have provided me with help and time for my professional development. I found my post demanding and challenging, and in many ways a culture shock, but the college has always provided help when I asked.*

A senior national stakeholder considered secondments to have been

*a brilliant opportunity and thought that
certain colleges were excellent.*

However, although these secondments had the potential to contribute to changing expectations about the ethnic profile of senior leadership teams, interview responses suggest that they were also perceived by some colleges to be high risk, as they were new and experimental, and had not been tried before.

*Everyone was keen to get secondments right, and because they were high profile, there was caution – they were seen as high risk.*

In addition, the BLI pilot phase demonstrated that each secondment would necessarily absorb a substantial amount of resource to enable it to be effective (BLI Pilot report, LSC, 2004); and even given the availability of this resource, other limiting factors such as geographical distance, would contribute to practical difficulties. A stakeholder interviewee suggested that:

*Where someone had more flexibility so that they could move freely, secondments could be a great success; but often there were problems because of logistics and costs of travel and childcare, with no good opportunities near the current place of work – and close colleges were less likely to offer, partly because of confidentiality.*
Secondments have continued to be offered, arranged and supported by BLI, but have involved relatively small numbers of participants, partly because of the substantial resource involved. This has included significant but initially underestimated time to develop contacts and set up each secondment.

4.3 Impact – Mentoring

The most direct value of the mentoring activity comes from the impact of participation in mentor training, mentee induction and mentoring partnerships. Those being mentored have described the value of mentors acting as a sounding board:

My mentor was a principal who had come up through the non-academic route, so he had very relevant experience and I could completely relate to him.

It was good to have a mentor so that I didn’t have to solve all the problems on my own.

It’s a safe place to try out ideas and talk about issues.

Mentoring gives you a chance to articulate your thoughts.

What was really good was having someone to talk to who has lots of experience – a non-threatening person to ask about technical as well as ethical questions.

mentors as helping with thinking about priorities and career directions:

I was able to reflect on ways to increase my career potential.

Before working with my mentor, I was not even getting shortlisted – he was able to identify key things to sort out with my CV to help me get a foot through the door;

mentors as supporting personal development through coaching and other structured approaches to focusing conversations:

I had moved to a more senior role and was learning on the job – having a mentor who was experienced in the same role helped me to realise that there were aspects of the role I was taking for granted – such as those to do with funding and staffing.

Having a mentor made a big difference, helping me to reflect on where I needed more skills which I could build up.

My mentor helped me to reflect on general issues in ways which I can apply in other roles;

and mentors opening doors to new experiences and networking opportunities:

Mentoring can have an amazing effect when it works well – it really opens horizons.
Mentoring can provide independent support to isolated BAME staff.

Mentors also identify a range of benefits from their voluntary contribution to the BLI mentoring programme. Mentors report that they have improved their skills in supporting development:

*Mentoring gives you a whole new set of skills;*

and that they feel supported by BLI:

*BLI provided a framework and continuity of support for mentors – you’re not on your own, and that’s very helpful.*

In addition to enabling them to be effective in BLI mentoring partnerships, mentors also identify their mentoring experience as increasing their effectiveness in a wide range of professional contexts:

*As a mentor I hear up and coming ideas*

*Mentoring helps me to keep my feet on the ground*

*My mentor picked my brains too – so he got some free consultancy.*

The high quality mentor training has also raised mentor awareness of the issues and challenges which characterise the experience of BAME staff:

*As a mentor and through mentor training, I have gained greater insight into the issues facing BAME staff in the sector.*

Given the senior and influential positions occupied by many of the mentors, this raised awareness can have a significant impact on sector thinking, as illustrated in the following comment:

*The mentoring programme has provided a vehicle for BAME leaders to participate in broader discussions with senior sector stakeholders.*

### 4.4 Impact – Shadowing

Early thinking about more widely accessible opportunities for gaining senior level understanding led to the development of a work-shadowing programme. This has taken two forms: general shadowing of a range of senior level posts in government departments/agencies, other sector bodies and colleges, and specific highly structured college and school inspection shadowing as shadow members of an Ofsted inspection team. The evidence demonstrates that these experiences have had a major positive impact for the individual participants:

*BAME staff CV’s were thinner some years ago, but shadowing experiences and follow-up activities have strengthened them*
Shadowing helped me develop my career as an internal inspector.

Both general and Ofsted shadowing have provided rapid and powerful insights into strategic thinking and responsibilities, and top level decision making and ways of working, as shown in the following comments from interviewees:

**General shadowing programme**

*Shadowing a college principal led me to think, “I could do this job”*

*Shadowing challenges you to step out of your comfort zone*

*Shadowing someone with a different style really gives you insights into different ways of doing things. Whether you think “I could do it like that”, or “I would never do it like that”, it’s really good learning*

*It’s really valuable to shadow your peers and your superiors in other institutions*

*Shadowing is a short cut route to seeing other people’s work – it’s a really quick way of learning.*

**Ofsted shadowing programme**

*Ofsted shadowing clarifies thinking and understanding, and ability to assess quality*

*Ofsted shadowing encourages participants to become more confident and more ambitious – several BAME principals have participated in this scheme*

*Ofsted shadowing has developed skills in prioritising, judging what is good and less good and making evidence linkages – overall it gives a better understanding in the round.*

In addition the comprehensive Ofsted pre-shadow briefing events, and the structured approach to reflection on learning and insights gained, have enabled Ofsted shadows to maximise the potential of shadowing. Comments from interviewees include:

*The lead HMI provides written feedback to the shadow*

*The briefing day makes sure that everybody is at the baseline*

*The diary of learning points really consolidates learning*

*There is a real emphasis on questioning techniques.*

The shadowing programme has also raised the awareness of participating organisations, and particularly of those being shadowed. There is some evidence that learning can occur in both directions, with those shadowed, particularly in the general shadowing programme, drawing on
the job role experience of the BAME shadow to provide new thinking to address current work issues:

Those being shadowed report an increase in their own knowledge and benefits for the quality of their provision

The learning from shadowing cuts both ways.

Both general and Ofsted programmes have raised the profile of BAME staff in leadership positions and contributed to changing assumptions and expectations:

Shadowing has meant more black staff being seen in positions of authority. This has provided role models and is helping with cultural change

Black staff might not be so often regarded as just appearing suddenly in senior positions – perceptions are changing

Shadowing gives BAME staff a platform and adds a different dimension to Ofsted inspection.

They have also contributed to the development of effective networking and access to sources of senior level expertise:

The briefing brings together a group of like minded colleagues all striving for promotion, working in the same sector and addressing common issues – so the briefing provides a basis for networking support as well as clarification

The principal I shadowed planned his diary to give me a wide range of experiences which we discussed as they happened.

As with the mentoring programme, the involvement of senior leaders in significant roles has increased the potential for programme impact:

Shadowing can get senior teams to think differently

Ofsted shadowing involves briefing the lead inspectors, to make sure they understand its purpose, and this has an impact.

4.5 Impact – Conferences and other events

It is difficult to generalise about the impact of BLI conferences and other events, since they encompass a wide range of activity. However, drawing on the participation and evaluation data, and key stakeholder interviews, it is possible to make the following observations:
The substantial number of short events have increased the accessibility of BLI activities and offered participation opportunities to a larger proportion of BAME staff. One interviewee commented:

**BLI events have allowed lots of networking and working with other black staff.**

Much of the focus in short events is on career planning and/or job skills. Both types of development experience are reported to be highly motivational, raising career aspirations and contributing to improving the chances of promotion and longer term career progression:

*The BLI residential career development event was very useful – I’ll never forget those 3 days in Birmingham, they were so important in my career development. The trainers knew their stuff, and the event gave us space to reflect.*

*The High Fliers’ event put us under pressure to prepare and deliver presentations at short notice, which is what you have to face in real selection situations – it’s a very good technique to develop skillsets – overall the high fliers’ event built my networks and my confidence.*

*Events involving BAME principals are important because you sometimes see a role model who is not a typical principal – it shows you there’s a route, a ladder up.*

*First Steps was a really good programme with real learning.*

The relatively high total participation, the quality of the experiences, the high profile speakers at conferences, and the international contacts, have all contributed substantially to raising both the profile of BLI and the awareness of BAME under-representation and related issues. This is illustrated by the following interviewee responses:

*The high quality of the events and the high quality of training has led to really effective development of skills and understanding.*

*The high profile BLI events have been very good for the sector.*

*The conferences have been brilliant – very good skills training sessions in break-out groups, professional debate about BAME issues involving black and white professional staff, and international perspectives.*

*The international study visits have made an impact on BLI’s work. The American visit led to the development of the First Steps taught programme, and the South African visit developed thinking about BAME staff in senior leadership positions.*

The networking opportunities provided by these events have contributed to the building of strong professional networks which in turn develop thinking and provide both support and opportunities for new experiences:
The event showed us how to promote ourselves, be visible, and support each other.

BLI events and celebrations are always good for networking.

4.6 Cumulative impact

The cumulative impact of BLI can be seen, then, to be coming through very strongly in the common themes arising from impact identified for particular programmes. These are as follows:

Networking: The cumulative impact of BLI has resulted in extensive building of a network, drawing particularly on its relationships with the NBP. There has been a complementary way of working which has led to a substantial senior professional network, and networking also at other leadership levels for BAME staff. This is interesting and important in replicating a network which exists for the majority ethnic population and which is so much taken for granted as to be invisible. One interviewee said:

BAME staff are all aware that their white counterparts have networks.

The success of BLI and NBP together has been in achieving an effective parallel to that majority ethnic group networking system; and this has contributed to achieving progress in addressing under-representation, where such progress has occurred:

Without BLI networking, the route to principalship would be longer and harder.

Raising profile and changing expectations: The raising of the profile of BLI and the shift in expectations, such that it is less common to see it as singular and rare that BAME staff should be in senior leadership positions, has been very much a result of the cumulative impact of BLI activities over the years. Senior leaders have suggested that BLI has made a huge difference in this regard:

There is now a propensity to consider BAME staff for principal and other senior leader positions in a way which wouldn’t have happened without BLI – so that FE is just as good as other sectors or perhaps even better

It’s no longer a shock to see a non-white principal, and governing bodies are more likely to appoint them.

Both BAME participants and BAME and white mentors and other contributors to BLI have reported that there has been a change in the daily lived experience of a norm that sector leaders are, and will continue to be, white – and a related change in the consequent assumptions, expectations and stereotypes:

BLI has made some impact on challenging white perceptions

BLI has raised the profile of BAME staff in a way which just wouldn’t have happened without this initiative.
Colleges now have a better understanding of the need to promote BLI.

At a national level, BLI is described by several stakeholders as ‘punching above its weight’ in terms of high level impact and awarenessraising with respect to under-representation. Relevant comments include:

- **BLI has played a strategic role in raising the profile and visibility of black staff in key roles by working with individuals and colleges to address under-representation.**

- **The awards which BLI has achieved, and the honours awarded to BAME leaders in FE, have helped to raise the status of BAME staff in the sector.**

- **Having BLI as a concept and a reality is fantastic – people’s eyes light up when they hear about it – it’s a signal that the issue of under-representation needs to be taken seriously.**

- **By addressing the nature of prejudice and power and the issue of lack of diversity, BLI has contributed to the wider equalities agenda, and the challenging of inequality in all its senses.**

**Professional development**: The evidence suggests that BLI participation provides access to very powerful high level professional development. This accelerates the learning and performance of BLI staff, by developing a wide range of skills – examples include strategic insight and analysis; data analysis; interpretation and benchmarking; leadership skills; decision-making and operational management; and budgeting and resource management. The cumulative impact of such development results in increased leadership capacity which benefits individual BAME leaders, their employing organisations and the sector as a whole:

- **BLI has contributed to increasing the FE leadership talent pool through the provision of very effective professional development, so as to realise under-used potential.**

- **The majority of BAME principals have been involved in BLI programmes.**

**Career progression**: Much of BLI’s activity is focused on career progression. This is achieved for example through opening doors to new thinking about career options and opportunities; through high quality application, recruitment and selection briefings, and skills workshops; through specific individual feedback on current performance, and perceived potential and development needs; and through opportunities to understand senior leadership roles at close quarters. Research evidence consistently indicates that BLI activities are highly successful in contributing to raising career aspirations and supporting career progression:

- **BLI has raised the expectations of BAME staff – it shows you can get through the maze if you know how – with BLI you can put your foot on the ladder and start stepping up.**

- **Where there are senior BAME staff, this has shown staff throughout the hierarchy that there is a career path.**
BLI has scoped people’s ambition

Nearly 80% of BLI participants have progressed in their careers following their involvement.

So we have:
- A powerful impact on the careers of participating BAME staff
- An accelerated increase in sector leadership capacity
- An effective professional network with good reach and participation across colleges, leadership levels, academic, business support and other roles, and teaching staff, especially in particular contexts
- A substantially raised profile of BAME staff, issues and challenges
- A shift in expectations with respect to the ethnic profile of senior and middle leadership teams
- Evidence of progress in addressing issues of under-representation, particularly with respect to college principal positions and in particular contexts.

4.7 Limitations

Despite some progress in addressing BAME under-representation in college leadership positions, there is clearly still a long way to go (See section 7.1 below.). This section identifies a number of areas in respect of which BLI’s impact has been to some extent limited.

Reach throughout the sector
The engagement with, and impact of, BLI has been far greater in some colleges than others:

BLI has lots of traction with some institutions, but it is limited in others.

During the course of this research a picture has emerged almost of BLI or BAME ‘champion’ colleges, where participation in BLI is high and there is substantial progress in addressing under-representation:

Where colleges are already interested in addressing under-representation, BLI can have a high degree of profile and visibility.

In many areas, however, engagement is more limited, and all stakeholders were of the view that wider reach and engagement is needed. Comments include:

To some extent BLI are preaching to the converted, and their impact could be wider reaching

The work with mentors is really great, but it needs spreading out across the sector

There are BAME staff in rural colleges who are very much in the minority, and they need more BLI support
Secondments, shadowing and mentoring have reached a breadth of audience, but really we are only scratching the surface.

One relevant consideration here is that the level of BLI activity and related reach has reduced as the level of resource has declined. One stakeholder commented that:

BLI activities have contracted a bit – they really need to reach throughout the sector,

and the data in Section 5.2 on Value for Money suggests that lower resourcing may constitute a limiting factor in the potential impact achieved across the sector.

Levels of leadership
In terms of BLI’s overall strategic aim of addressing under-representation at different levels of leadership, the data (see section 5.4) suggests very little progress below the level of principal. This issue was commented on by most of the stakeholders interviewed, as illustrated by the following comments:

There has been some success at second and third tier, but there is still a lot more to do

There has not been very much impact on leadership below principal level

There has been some effect of BAME promotions rippling down the institution, but it could go further

We’ve not seen a massive increase in BAME middle managers

There are many first line managers who haven’t moved on – when I meet black management staff the vast majority are first line or middle managers, and there are very few in senior management positions – we seem to be stuck with these statistics.

Resource constraints have been identified as a limiting factor in this context:

There have been limited resources to extend BLI activities across all leadership levels.

The lack of progress with respect to addressing under-representation within the inspectorate was also commented on by two stakeholders, in the context of considering the potential learning for Ofsted arising out of the substantial Ofsted shadowing programme:

Getting a more diverse profile of Ofsted inspectors is a very slow process

There has recently been a reduction in the number of BAME HMI’s, so there is much more work to do here.
Stand alone vs integrated provision
The need to address under-representation of BAME leaders at all leadership levels raises the issue of the extent to which there could have been more integration of BLI activities with the mainstream leadership development programmes for leaders at a number of levels, developed by CEL/LSIS, and where relevant by NCSL (in respect of the Schools’ Ofsted/BLI/NCSL inspection shadowing programme).

To what extent should there have been more joint working on the development of a strategic framework with closely integrated provision, compared with a parallel development of a complementary provision? Those interviewed confirmed that parallel development is what has actually happened; and there are mixed views about the relative benefits of these two approaches. There is a view from some stakeholders that there would be merit in greater integration, and that the lack of this has limited BLI’s impact:

*In theory BLI has plugged into other management development programmes, but the internal connections haven’t always been made, so there have been missed opportunities to capitalise on BLI’s work*

*Partnerships with BLI have been limited. It has been more of a stand alone initiative – it would be good if the work with other leadership development programmes were to be more open and integrated*

*BLI is more stand alone and could link up more with other programmes – for example, the way the early senior leadership programmes did when they were offered by LSDA*

*Integration between BLI programmes and mainstream initiatives has failed at a systemic level*

*There hasn’t always been a strong focus on diversity across all the mainstream leadership development programmes – where there is a more monocultural approach on mainstream programmes, integration is more limited.*

By contrast, other stakeholders – particularly, but not exclusively – those who have been BLI programme beneficiaries as well as contributors, have expressed the opinion that distinct but parallel and complementary provision has worked well:

*I have taken part in both BLI and mainstream programmes and I’ve found them to be complementary and contributing to each other – there was nothing at odds*

*BLI has a particular focus; other leadership initiatives do other things – it’s horses for courses*

*BLI’s programmes have been highly complementary, although there has been little direct integration with mainstream programmes*

*BLI has worked for me in conjunction with other mainstream programmes*
BLI has been part of some good strategic partnerships, and its activities have complemented mainstream provision.

**Awareness raising and focus**

Impact in terms of raising the awareness of white staff has been varied:

*BLI* is not always challenging the attitudes and perceptions of white staff – the majority of white staff don’t know about BLI.

Research evidence, including participation patterns and key stakeholder interview data, shows that some regions and some colleges have levels of awareness and understanding which are similar to those obtained in 2002. They have been unaffected by, possibly indifferent to, the work of BLI, and/or have not seen its relevance; and they have not challenged their own practice and assumptions with respect to ethnic diversity:

There is still stereotyping – assumptions are made about BAME staff being in particular occupational and curriculum areas, with other areas being seen as white and male

There has been some impact on the perceptions of white Ofsted inspectors, but it has not been sufficient

When I shadowed the college principal I was the only black face, and the college staff were not as welcoming as they could have been. I think a mutual exchange would have added to their learning.

All stakeholders interviewed did consider that BLI had made some impact on the perceptions of some white staff. Relevant comments include:

*BLI has made some white people aware of the racism in the sector*

*BLI focus has been on supporting black staff, but there has also been some challenge to white perceptions at senior levels.*

The question of focus is an important one – the stronger focus for BLI has generally been seen by stakeholders to be on supporting BAME staff, and to be at an individual rather than organisational level, as illustrated by the following comments:

There is learning for the white staff involved with BLI, but it leaves the organisation when they move on

*BLI has had more impact on participants and less on employing organisations.*

It was further thought that a more direct and substantial impact on the perceptions and understanding of white staff, and on recruitment practices, would need a development of an additional dimension and would not be without its challenges. Indicative comments include:
You can’t force white staff to change their attitudes – they have to be willing to think about the issues

BLI’s focus has been on individual development – challenging recruitment patterns would need a focus on organisational barriers

The impact on white staff is more indirect – this has not been the focus of BLI, and it won’t happen without the support of governors and principals

If you’re going down the road of using the tools of intervention and challenge and conflict resolution, you need a substantial network of support – interventions need the resources to be able to follow them through in a way which is managed and meaningful.

**General**

Future development of BLI will need to consider the extent to which the limitations identified in this section may have resulted in missed opportunities to have more of an impact in addressing under-representation more comprehensively. This point is reflected in the report recommendations in Section 7 below.
5. Value for Money

Value for money is notoriously difficult to assess. This evaluation draws chiefly on data about funding, participation and progress in addressing BAME under-representation over the lifetime of BLI. In addition, drawing on the primary interview data, the views of key stakeholders are presented.

5.1 Participation in BLI

The table below summarises participation in BLI events and activities for the 10 years over which the programme has operated. A crude count of activity suggests some 4,500 interventions or an average of 450 per year. The data does not allow a precise identification of the number of individuals involved since some may have participated in more than one activity; but it can be said, for example, that over the seven years the programme trained nearly 600 mentors and 450 mentees, and organised or contributed to just under 800 places on the career development programme. According to the BLI one in five college principals and chairs of governors have been trained as mentors and these data make that a credible as well as a very significant claim.

It is not easy from the data to generate a number of days of participation. However it is clear that activities such as mentoring and shadowing involve far more than one day’s activity. The figure for participation therefore represents a minimum figure.

Table 2 – Numbers participating in BLI and related activities

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>04/05</th>
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5.2 Value for Money

The annual expenditure on the BLI programme can be set alongside these levels of activity, although these figures need to be interpreted with great caution. In particular the high level of expenditure in 2007/08 – almost three times the average for other years - does not correlate with a comparable peak in activity, though it may suggest a lagged effect - a high degree of activity in one period stimulating greater involvement in subsequent activities. The relationship is shown in the figures below (expenditure is plotted in £000s).

Chart 1: Overall participation and funding

If the 2007/08 figure is included, the average cost for each participant in an activity over the period is £1,228; if the cost per year is taken to be the average of the other years - £472,000 – the average over the whole period comes down to around £945. The true figure is probably somewhere between the two.

A figure in this range is consistent with the types of activity undertaken; the setting up of secondments or mentoring relationships at a senior level requires careful briefing of both parties and selection of participants as well as complex logistics.

These headline figures are also consistent with the cost of comparable activities undertaken by other organisations, giving some assurance that BLI activities represent value for money. One interviewee, for example, indicated that a comparable programme of shadowing cost £1,000 per participant. The BLI Director has compared the cost per participant favourably with other
leadership programmes.

Data on outcomes from BLI rather than participation is hard to identify, although the number of BAME principals is both a reasonably robust figure and an outcome identified at the outset as critical. Including funding, participation and the number of principals on the same graph gives a very rough comparison between inputs, outputs and outcomes. There seems to be some broad relationship between participation and the number of BAME principals since the lines rise (and perhaps fall) at similar rates.

Chart 2: BLI Funding, outputs and outcomes

This chart also suggests that there may be a lagged effect of the expenditure on BLI programmes. It is perhaps demonstrated more clearly if the spike in 2007/8 is smoothed by reassigning some expenditure to the previous and subsequent years. It seems reasonable to suppose that activity aimed at helping people prepare for promotion should show its main impact one or two years later. Where numbers on programmes are not constrained it would similarly be reasonable to anticipate a cumulative effect whereby early participants encouraged greater take up by succeeding cohorts. It is not clear however how far numbers involved in any one activity were constrained by funding and we can therefore be less confident of this interpretation.

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4 Figures for 2013/14 are as at April 2013
5 The reader will need to take a view on whether such a reassignment is legitimate
It has not been possible to find approaches to measuring the value for money of positive action programmes in the literature, and there are reasons to suppose that they would not be found by more thorough searching. Several comparable programmes elsewhere in the public sector are, for example relatively recent (see Section 1.3 Comparative research). One way of looking at value for money however is to try to assess the impact on individuals and their organisations in financial terms. According to a study of participants in 2007\(^6\) over three quarters of those interviewed had subsequently been promoted and reported pay increases averaging between £2,000 and £10,000 per year. This presumably reflects the fact that they were that much more valuable to their organisations. Taking an average increase in pay/value of £5,000 and assuming that the individuals remain in post for an average of 10 years the direct organisational benefits of those promoted as a consequence of BLI training might be costed at £50,000 per individual.

To put this figure in context the overall benefit from 100 such successful training interventions would amount to £5 million over a decade. That can be set against the fact that our best estimate of the total spent on BLI over a comparable period is no more than £5.5 million and the number of individuals affected well over 100. The number of mentees for example, is four and a half times that figure and the numbers on the career development programme almost eight times. This leaves considerable margin for error to take account of those who did not gain promotion and those who left the sector.

\(^6\) http://www.nbp.org.uk/files/file_manager/19/116_BLI_Study_April_07.pdf
5.3 Indirect benefits and leverage

The calculations above of course only take account of the direct benefits accruing from the BLI programme having identified or developed a more highly skilled leader. There are other benefits of the initiative that cannot be measured in quite the same way. It is hard for example, to attribute a value to the involvement of senior managers as mentors, although the diversity agenda will clearly have benefitted from their increased awareness of the issues involved. If, simply for the purposes of illustration, one were to assume that as a result of their increased awareness one extra person per mentor were to achieve a promotion, the impact of nearly 600 trained mentors could similarly be measured in millions. To be more specific, if 600 mentors each contributed an average of 10 days of their time to the programme then at a cost of £1000 per day, which is not an unreasonable charge-out rate for college principals, this aspect of the programme could be seen as leveraging in £6 million. Similar calculations could be done for those who planned and provided work shadowing opportunities or supported secondments. The point about such calculations is not to provide a precise figure but to illustrate an order of magnitude, and they suggest that on this measure BLI seems to have provided good value for money.

There are however impacts that defy the most imaginative attempts at quantification. It is not at all clear how one would put a value on the demonstration effect of the appointment of a new BAME principal, whether in a predominantly white context or a very diverse inner city environment. Nevertheless there is substantial consensus in relation to the beneficial demonstration effect such an appointment can have on both BAME staff and on students.

Although it is hard to measure the value of interventions aimed at changing attitudes one can explore costs. Some insight into the value for money offered by BLI might be gleaned from comparing its overall cost with other programmes intended to address attitudes and perceptions. In 2013 for example, the government has made available £6.5 million to help institutions adjust to the introduction of FE loans – a change that affects perhaps 300,000 students. This expenditure in one year is £1 million more than the total spent on BLI in a decade.

5.4 BAME representation below principal level

Although the number of BAME principals shows a sustained improvement over the period since the inception of BLI there is no similar trend discernable in the figures for managers generally. The Staff Individualised Return (SIR) record for the eight years from 2003/04 to 2010/11 shows a roughly one percentage point increase in the proportion of managers recorded as being from one or other of the BAME groups. Although this represents a 15% increase it is probable that much of the change is down to better recording; the proportion of white British managers increased by two percentage points over the same period. The figures are shown in the chart below.
There are several possible explanations for this difference which require further investigation. One relates to the nature of the BLI itself. The early headline target for the programme related to increasing the number of college principals and much high profile activity was directed at providing the sorts of experiences needed for BAME leaders to be competitive applicants for that role. It is possible that had BLI sought to focus more on access to middle management positions it would have run a different programme with different outcomes. Whether such a change in priorities is desirable and what changes to BLI programmes might be required as a consequence is a matter for further consideration (see sections 7 and 8).

An alternative explanation however relates simply to the numbers of BAME staff in the sector and in various staff categories. Overall some 8.5% of staff in the FE sector come from BAME groups; against that figure the 7.0% in management roles constitutes under-representation but not such dramatic under-representation as the proportion of principals which was under 1% when BLI started and even now stands at only around 3%. In the light of these figures the focus of BLI on Principals seems strategically sound but also pragmatic – it is simply easier to make a difference to the figures.

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7 LSIS workforce diversity report
5.5 Stakeholder perceptions

All 10 key stakeholders were asked the question: “To what extent do you consider BLI’s activities to represent value for money?” Although there were mixed responses to this question, the majority of those interviewed considered that BLI has provided and continues to provide value for money. The views of stakeholders are summarised in this section.

Two of the 10 stakeholders interviewed expressed some concern about particular elements of the programme not always representing good value for money, as illustrated by the following comments:

*BLI can be a little expensive – I would like to see more participants for the money*

*At times the BLI resource has been quite extensive, which has meant that, for example, each mentoring relationship has worked out as quite expensive.*

One of the 10 stakeholders interviewed expressed stronger concerns about lack of value for money, commenting for example that:

*BLI funding has sometimes been higher than warranted for the level of activity, which has sometimes made BLI expensive.*

The other seven stakeholders were of the view that BLI represents very good value for money for the following reasons:

- It used the relatively well resourced early period to carry out vital development work to ensure good profile, so as to increase the potential for sustainability and impact:

  *The BLI pilot was well funded, in the sense that it was a high level of resource for the specific agreed activities, but the money was also needed to fund the initial development of the initiative*

  *BLI has been under resourced and has achieved such a lot with the money – the earlier funding was higher, but still relatively a very small amount of money – and that money went into developing new activities and breaking completely new ground, which is very resource intensive.*

- It is currently seen to achieve substantial levels of activity with a more limited resource:

  *BLI does a lot with a small amount of money.*

- Its activities are seen to have significant impact, not only directly on participants, but on the sector, through retaining and using the potential of BAME staff:

  *BLI are very good value for money – they get the maximum benefit for BAME staff with the little they have to spend*
BLI always adds value – it does a lot with a little, and punches above its weight – other initiatives don’t have half the impact

BLI are outstanding value for money – I was going to leave the sector before I became involved with BLI

I don’t know the hard numbers but as a return on investment in 12 principals – and BLI has done much more than that – if you divided the costs by the individuals, I think BLI represents very good value for money;

and through the beneficial effect of developing effective leadership:

BLI is fantastic value for money – developing me meant that I developed a department of 30 to 50 staff; there were never any questions from my organisation about my participation.

- Because of its ability to exert leverage to obtain additional resource in the form of senior time donated on a voluntary basis:

Arguably BLI is the only initiative which has had sector support with this much leverage. Lots of BLI activity has been voluntary, so the value of its leverage runs into millions.
6. Critical Success Factors

To the extent that impact has been achieved, what have been the critical success factors enabling this to happen?

- **Timing**: BLI was an initiative at the right time – building on the momentum, publicity profile and robust evidence base provided by the solid work of the CBS.

- **Context**: BLI did not develop in a vacuum – the thinking drew on the experience of existing initiatives including the activities of the nbp (for example networking), the AoC (for example mentoring scheme), and LSDA (for example positive action leadership development programmes).

- **Effective range of key stakeholders**: BLI was developed by a working group of people who represented a wide range of sector stakeholders and who had already built good working relationships.

- **Political awareness/awareness raising**: The working group, and particularly the key figures in it, have always understood the critical importance of identifying and communicating directly with key political and funding leaders.

- **Black-led initiative**: BLI is a black-led initiative, the leaders of which have substantial energy, commitment, focus and passion.

- **Continuity of leadership**: Given the rate of change in sector initiatives, it has been valuable for the BLI to have continuity of leadership over the ten year period. This has helped to provide clear direction and cumulative learning about best practice.

- **Senior contributors**: The BLI provided opportunities for participation and engagement of senior figures, not just as general supporters and funders, but as volunteer contributors to professional development events and conferences; to work shadowing or as work shadowees; and especially as mentors over extended periods. Working in volunteer roles has increased depth of understanding of, and engagement with, the issues associated with factors contributing to under-representation. This substantial amount of pro bono senior professional time and expertise has enabled BLI to exert a leverage beyond what might be expected given the resources available.

- **Other factors**: BLI is able to make most difference at college level where there is senior level support for BLI, and BAME staff at all leadership levels are encouraged to engage with BLI activities. There can be a powerful cumulative impact if this engagement is complemented by ensuring effective recruitment practices which are informed by deep understanding of diversity and commitment to addressing under-representation.
Such situations are characterised by multiple engagements with BLI in a number of different ways: for example, through leaders participating as mentors or mentees in the mentoring programme, or sometimes engaging in both roles at different times; through hosting job shadowing opportunities and through BAME staff participating in the shadowing programme; through using BLI and NBP networks to publicise and disseminate information about leadership vacancies; through using BLI to provide consultancy and/or professional development and training programmes to raise awareness and develop practical approaches to the promotion of diversity; and through supporting staff to participate in BLI conferences and other events.
7. Conclusions

This section considers the extent to which BLI has achieved the strategic and specific purposes identified in section 2.1 above.

7.1 Addressing under-representation

**Strategic aim:** To address the under-representation of BAME staff at leadership levels in the FE sector

Early in the last decade the LSC set a target of 9 BAME principals by 2009, and the focus for addressing under-representation was on the top levels of college leadership. The evidence (see Chart 2, Section 5.2) suggests that BLI has clearly made an impact in addressing under-representation at principal level.

Feedback from BLI participants, from evaluation reports and from key stakeholder interviews, all indicate that BLI participation contributes to achieving promotion more rapidly than would otherwise be the case. However, workforce statistics show very little progress with respect to the percentage of BAME staff in management positions, with the totals being 6.1% in 2003, and still only 6.9% in 2011; and little variation in the intervening years. It must therefore be concluded that, while progress has been made in some contexts, much further progress is needed.

7.2 Professional development

**Purpose:** To set up professional development experiences for BAME leaders so as to provide an effective vehicle and service to access high quality development which they would not otherwise receive.

The findings (see Sections 3 and 5) clearly show that a range of high quality professional development programmes and events have been designed, and delivered throughout the ten year period. Levels of participation and evaluation data provide evidence that the activities are popular and perceived to be of high quality. This purpose has therefore been well achieved for those BAME staff who have the opportunity to access BLI programmes.

7.3 Career aspirations and progression opportunities

**Purpose:** To accelerate learning and development so as to raise career aspirations and increase access to career progression opportunities

The BLI activities are designed to enable participants to ‘step up a gear’ in their strategic understanding, skill levels and career aspirations. Many of the activities (for example; mentoring programme, career workshops) provide opportunities for focused and realistic career and action planning. Evaluation data confirms that overall this purpose has been well achieved for those who become BLI participants.
7.4 Networking opportunities

**Purpose:** To establish and promote networking opportunities for BAME staff

The CBS full report (2002) finds that “a significant number of black staff feel marginalised, bullied and unsupported, or involved in college functions in a tokenistic way”. In contrast to this, the evaluation data for those participating in BLI events presents evidence of many opportunities to build professional and support networks. The issues have not gone away, but the complementary activities of nbp and BLI have contributed to the development of much stronger networks of BAME staff. This purpose has been achieved, although not necessarily consistently throughout the sector (see Section 4.7).

7.5 Profile

**Purpose:** To raise the profile of BAME staff at leadership levels within the FE sector

Opportunities initiated by BLI have led to substantial levels of participation of BAME leaders in high profile activities such as shadowing Ofsted inspections, shadowing senior leaders, high level secondments and attending meetings with very senior mentors. This has increased the visible presence of BAME professional staff in leadership positions, so contributing to a shift in expectations and assumptions about the likely roles of BAME staff. In addition, the conferences and promotional activities of BLI have further increased profile and celebrated achievements. The evidence suggests that this purpose has been well achieved, particularly for senior leaders in particular contexts, but that there is more progress needed, especially at other leadership levels (see Section 4.7).

7.6 Awareness

**Purpose:** To raise awareness of the issue of under-representation and the challenges experienced by BAME staff

By 2002 the work of the CBS and the NBP had begun to raise awareness of these issues and challenges. And since 2002 the contribution of BLI in this area has been very substantial, with the involvement of high numbers of white/majority ethnic staff in mentor training and mentoring partnerships; as contributors to professional development activities such as secondments, work-shadowing and career-planning events; and with the holding of conferences and awareness raising activities. The winning of a number of awards and gaining of honours, both recognises and further enhances the awareness-raising role of BLI. There has therefore been substantial progress in achieving this purpose. However awareness is still limited in some parts of the sector and there is clearly further progress to be made (see Section 4.7).
7.7 Strategic approach

**Purpose:** To develop a strategic approach to the recruitment, retention and development of BAME leaders by developing initiatives to complement other leadership development provision

The evidence is that BLI participants have frequently accessed mainstream leadership development programmes and that these programmes have complemented the BLI development experiences. Individuals have synthesised the learning from BLI and other mainstream development experiences, so, at an individual level, BLI development experiences do complement other leadership development provision.

At a strategic level, however, BLI has taken a different course, and developed a distinctive model, rather than a strategic framework in which BLI initiatives are systematically integrated with mainstream development activities. Therefore this purpose as originally conceived has been more addressed at an individual participant level rather than at a strategic level. While not uncommon for positive action initiatives (see section 1.3 above), this is an important point for BLI to consider (see section 8 below).
8. Implications and Recommendations

In the context of this report, we would make recommendations in the following five areas:

8.1 Model

One of the distinctive elements of BLI is that it has been a black-led semi-autonomous body with its own board and strategic and operational priorities and programmes. In taking forward its work, BLI will need to consider the impact of the approach taken, think through the relative merits of continuing with the current distinctive provision approach; or working to integrate its development activities more closely with mainstream development.

Among the critical success factors for BLI, which come through strongly in the research evidence (both documentary data and key stakeholder interviews), are the distinctive nature of its provision, the cumulative building of strong networks, the building of momentum, and the continuity of organisation and of leadership. These factors have enabled BLI to build on its experience and establish a high profile. Continuity of identity and branding has ensured that positive action initiatives for BAME staff in the sector have been recognised, known about, and accessible. BLI activity has been reduced as resources have reduced, but BLI programmes have still had a degree of resilience in a world of changing organisational forms, policy, funding and programmes.

Recommendation 1

It is therefore recommended that BLI should continue to offer distinctive provision and continue to build the strategic aim of addressing the under-representation of BAME staff at leadership and management levels within the FE sector. It is important for sector bodies/agencies such as EFT to work collaboratively to support and promote the BLI® model across the other diversity fields encouraging the sector to work in co-partnerships and take ownership of the diversity agenda.

However the opportunity for BAME participants and potential participants to identify and progress through coherent development and career pathways could usefully be improved. Possible options to explore to achieve this include:

- The resourcing of BLI specifically to develop capacity and expertise to offer an advisory service with this focus
- Incorporation of this capacity through providing mentors with information and other resources to include this as a strong component in mentoring partnerships

8.2 Focus

The high profile achieved by BLI, and its campaigning / awareness-raising activities have certainly contributed to a shift in expectations about the potential for, and reality of, BAME staff occupying senior leadership positions. However the major focus of the work and resources of BLI has always been on the development and fast-tracking (more an equalling rather than a fast-track, as BAME staff have through norms and stereotypes typically found themselves on
a ‘slow track’) of BAME leaders. There is a possible case to be made for a more direct focusing on and challenging of, the assumptions and expectations of key majority ethnic stakeholders. This may result, for example, in a greater impact on the ethnic profile of governing bodies; of the inspectorate; of funding bodies; of leadership at middle and junior levels and of colleges in regions where under-representation is particularly noticeable.

**Recommendation 2**

It is recommended that BLI considers the focus of its activity and explores the feasibility of extending its focus to address in particular under-representation in the areas identified in the preceding paragraph.

### 8.3 Resources

This report finds that the impact of BLI in achieving its purposes has been substantial. However the data shows that the level of activity has reduced as a result of substantially reduced funding in more recent years. There is still considerable progress to be made in addressing under-representation, and it appears that the progress in increasing the number of BAME college principals may have stalled.

**Recommendation 3**

It is therefore strongly recommended that funding for BLI be increased to provide a level of resource sufficient for it to increase the level of activity and to develop the capacity to act on the recommendations in 8.1 and 8.2 above.

### 8.4 Research

This evaluation has concentrated on the occurrence of BLI activities and their impact. However, with constraints of funding and timescale, opportunity for further research has been limited. Given that it is rare, if not unique, to have a UK-based BAME positive action programme which has existed/survived for 10 years (see Section 1.3 above, comparative research), more detailed research could provide very valuable information, for example about the following:

- The pattern and nature of progress with respect to addressing under-representation
- The cumulative impact over time of BLI participation as measured through primary research into the subsequent careers of BLI alumni and a matched group of BAME staff who have not been BLI participants
- How in detail the critical success factors have contributed to impact – in particular an identification of the context in which BLI participation is most likely to be effective, with a view to identifying transferable aspects of the BLI approach.

**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that research funders give consideration to the value of further research in this area.
8.5 Dissemination

As stated in Section 8.4, the brief contextual comparative review of other positive action initiatives (Section 1.3) has not found any initiative with equivalent longevity, profile or scale of activity; and research identifying critical success factors, impact over time and value for money is not readily available. It may therefore be the case that the research approach offered here is relatively rare in the UK context; and that the approach and the findings would be of benefit to organisations needing to address BAME leadership under-representation in the other public sectors and more widely.

Recommendation 5
It is therefore recommended that research findings be disseminated in such a way that they are, and continue to be, publicly accessible.
The FE sector is currently in a period of transition with respect to national leadership development initiatives. In August 2013 LSIS will cease to exist. A new body, The Education and Training Foundation (formerly the FE Guild), will take a lead in the ongoing development of the sector workforce. The new body identifies its purpose as being “primarily about defining, developing, supporting and enhancing the professionalism of sector practitioners, leaders, managers and governance” (FE Guild, 2013). And among its strands of interrelated work, the Foundation includes “providing a focus for the development of leaders, managers and those involved in governance” and “promoting and championing equality and diversity across the sector” (ibid.).

Given these identified areas of work, the fact that the Foundation will have a reasonable level of funding for 2013-14 and 2014-15, and their view that “open discussion and provision of background information by LSIS will be critical in ensuring important assets and services to the sector are not lost” (ibid.), it is envisaged that there will be scope for NBP and BLI to enter into discussions with the Foundation about the ongoing work to support BAME staff and address BAME under-representation in the FE workforce. This may include an extension of BLI’s remit to encompass the wider FE workforce as defined by the Foundation.

(see Section 2.1 above re the remit of BLI).

Having said this, it must be noted that the recommendations in Section 8 above are not without their challenges.

Recommendation 1 includes the suggestion that BLI develops the capacity to provide career progression expertise. The changes in mainstream professional development provision will make this a more complex task, and continuity of a positive action service, while particularly valuable in changing times, will not be easy to achieve.

Recommendation 2 invites BLI to consider a significant extension of focus in a challenging funding climate – just the kind of climate which has historically resulted in retrenchment to a less favourable environment for positive action. This is not a step to be taken lightly, but it could very usefully be part of the picture in any new thinking to position BLI for a new era.

Despite all the challenges, one of the findings that comes through clearly in this report is the distinctive black-led nature of BLI, and the role of longevity and continuity in contributing to impact. NBP and BLI in partnership with the sector and workforce they serve will need to think carefully about how to position themselves for sustainability in the current financial climate, so as to continue to build on the considerable progress and successes of the first ten years.

The wide range of activities and BLI’s lobbying has contributed to its ability to manage from the margins to the mainstream. BLI is asked to sit at strategic tables.
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Appendix A

BLI ten year evaluation interview schedule – 28Feb13

1. Can you remember how and when you first became aware of the Black Leadership Initiative (BLI)?
2. Please describe your involvement with the BLI?
3. What BLI activities are you aware of?
4. For each activity, could you briefly describe:
   a. The purpose of the activity
   b. Your reasons for participation/involvement
   c. Your hopes/expectations from participation/involvement
   d. Any immediate benefits
      i. For you
      ii. For your employers
      iii. For others – please specify
   e. Any disadvantages
      i. For you
      ii. For your employers
      iii. For others – please specify
5. To what extent has participation/involvement achieved its purposes in the longer term?
6. Specifically, what differences has it made?
7. What is it about your experience which has made a difference? What are the critical success factors?
8. Are there other factors which have contributed to this difference?
9. Can you briefly describe other leadership development activities in which you have participated.
10. How have these contributed – or – What difference have these made?
11. Returning to BLI overall, what do you see as its overall purposes?
12. To what extent do you think each of the activities has contributed to achieving those purposes?
13. How would you describe the cumulative impact of BLI over the last ten years?
14. What lessons do you think BLI could learn which would help to extend its impact?
   a. Provide for sustainable leadership development for BAME staff
   b. Provide for sustainable career progression for BLI staff
15. To what extent do you consider BLI’s activities to represent value for money?
16. Where would you go from here?