

## **Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide: Community Development Workers for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.**

Gateway Reference: 4211

Interim Guidance has now been published that provides a framework for local health and social care systems to introduce Community Development Workers (CDWs) for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities into the mental health workforce in accordance with the Department of Health target to employ 500 CDWs by December 2006. [The Guidance is available from DH Publications, reference 265796.]

The aim of introducing CDWs is to enable greater understanding and ownership of the issues facing people from BME communities so that real improvement takes place in the commissioning and provision of mental health services across the full age range. CDWs will work to ensure full participation and greater ownership in the development of effective health and social care with BME communities themselves recognizing their experiences and reflecting their aspirations.

As there are a number of issues that require further detailed work and clarification, mainly around the education and training pathway, this is interim guidance. These and other issues such as learning from the experiences in setting up CDW Early Implementer sites will be covered in the revised guidance scheduled for publication later this year.

The guidance is not prescriptive, rather it provides a framework for development that recognizes the Shifting the Balance of Power initiative and the importance of local decision making/. It provides sufficient key information to allow PCTs, working with their local stakeholders, to recruit CDWs now, taking a global view across the SHA patch to include not only a mental health but also a broader public health perspective to this work. The role of a CDW is a brand new one and it must not be seen as simply re-badging of any existing workers simply to fit the role.

Further information can be obtained from the NIMHE Development Centres. Race Quality Leads (RELs) identified in Appendix G of the guidance.

The development of CDWs is part of a much wider programme of work aimed at tackling the inequalities faced by BME users of mental health services. The overall programme of work was set out in the consultation document Delivering Race Quality: A Framework for Action.

The document can be accessed both on the DH and NIMHE ([www.nimhe.org](http://www.nimhe.org)) websites.