

NORTH EAST

RACE EQUALITY FORUM

INFORMATION BRIEFING

No. 1



'Race', Immigration and the General Election

A new UK-wide campaign has been launched to confront the issue of racial prejudice in the language, rhetoric and policy statements made by political parties and the media in the run-up to the General Election. Already it is clear that immigrants are being blamed for many of the country's social and economic ills. This view has been firmly challenged by the findings of research, not least research funded by the government itself (see for example <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2014/nov/positive-economic-impact-uk-immigration-european-union-new-evidence> which shows the considerable economic contribution made by migrants to the UK economy) but this kind of racist view simply gives support to those who are hostile to the presence of ethnic minorities within the UK. We are therefore reproducing their statement below which we have been asked to circulate.

We (Race Equality Matters) are sending the letter below to organisations and some individuals asking for them to endorse the election statement we have drafted. Please could you consider getting any organisations you are involved with to endorse it.

"I am sure you will agree that the exploitation of racial prejudice in the forthcoming elections is a matter of great concern. I am writing to you today to invite you to join Race Equality Matters (REM) - a group of people active in the field of race relations and equality - in a public initiative to challenge this behaviour and to encourage others to speak out against it.

We have drafted an Election Statement, which sets out principles for fair election campaigns. The Statement draws upon earlier initiatives by the former Commission for Racial Equality. We invite you to endorse the Election Statement

publicly and to encourage others to do the same.

The purpose of the Election Statement is to discourage racist campaigning and to promote fairness and accuracy in election material. To help achieve this, we are asking politicians, public bodies, organisations and influential individuals to endorse the principles in the Statement and to take the action described within, whilst acting within the law. In particular, we would like to see relevant public bodies do more to enable voters to have full and accurate information on crucial issues such as immigration, crime and access to public and local services.

Race Equality Matters (REM) will not be press releasing this Election Statement but you may wish to do so. However, those who have endorsed the Statement may send confirmation to the following email address and if a good number of endorsements are received then we may try to get publicity:

raceequalitymatters@hotmail.com

In the meantime, please feel free to use the Statement in your public affairs, parliamentary and campaigning activities, e.g. by placing the Statement on your website or using it to influence local party activists. The more it is used the better the chances of achieving our aims.”

Copies of the Full Election Statement ***Electing without Prejudice*** can be obtained by writing to the REM email address below.

Jane Lane (member of and pp Race Equality Matters)

Contact: For further information about Race Equality Matters, contact raceequalitymatters@hotmail.com

For further information, back copies of Information Briefings or Research Briefings, or to join the Network, email gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk

The North East Race Equality Forum is a Network of around 300 individuals and organisations in the North East Region committed to promoting racial equality in the context of social justice. No one organisation is necessarily committed to every idea published in the name of the Forum. The Forum is supported by the 'Race', Crime and Justice Regional Research Network, which includes researchers from each University in the region.

