



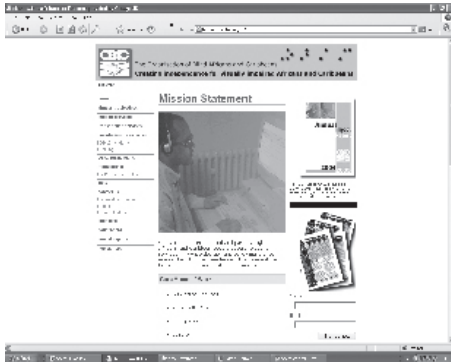
**ORGANISATION OF BLIND AFRICANS & CARIBBEANS**

Creating independence for visually impaired African and Caribbean people

# Annual Review & Impact Report 2005-2006



2005 - 2006



# OBAC's mission, core aims, values, aims and objectives

## Our Mission Statement

'OBAC exists to ensure blind and partially sighted African and Caribbean people access relevant services, influence decision and policy makers, to enable them to overcome barriers that prevent them becoming active members of the community'.

## Our Core Aims

- Supported Services
- Work
- Poverty
- Immigration

## Our Values

- Integrity
- Respect
- Taking responsibility for each other mistakes
- Transparency
- To be nice to each other professionally, socially and culturally
- Understanding and accepting individuals for what they are and what they can become

## Aims and Objectives

- To support and advise visually impaired African and Caribbean people on matters affecting their lives.
- To represent visually impaired African and Caribbean's to mainstream and voluntary service providers so that their interests are promoted and protected.
- To offer training and education to enable visually impaired African and Caribbean people to take up opportunities in the areas of employment or self-employment.
- To provide a focus for visually impaired African and Caribbean's for mutual support, networking and social activities.

# Contents

Chair's Report	4
Director's Overview	5
Review of the Year Overview of activities of 2005/2006	6
Collaborative and partnership work	16
Information, Management & Administration	19
Future Developments	21
List of Management Committee members, Staff and Volunteers	22
Acknowledgements	24

## Chair's Report

I am delighted to report that it has been a particularly positive year for OBAC with much progress being made in relation to our five-year strategic plan. Again during the year of reporting, we reviewed our strategy and business development plan at our annual 'Away Day' and the outcomes is the review of our personnel practices, communication process, representation, policy and finance.

I am proud to report that the work of the management committee has been critical to the success and development of OBAC, the agenda for the management committee meetings have been focusing on a wide range of subjects and issues which impact on the lives of the members we serve and represent, thus ensuring that we do not lose sight of our overall aim of 'creating independence for blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbean people'. I acknowledge there is still a lot of work to be done before we achieve our vision or dream, but I am confident that we will continue to develop gradually to achieve our broader strategic objectives.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank other management committee members for their work, the staff, volunteers and members who have continued to use our services believing that OBAC can make a difference to lives. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the good work of one of our long-standing committee member who passed away during the year Ms Yetunde Oyediran, it was a rude shock to those of us who knew her so well and I must say that the management committee do miss her.

**Dafton Robinson**  
**Chair, OBAC Management Committee**

## Director's Overview

I have pleasure in presenting OBAC annual review and impact report 2005/2006. The report gives an outline, measurement and performance of our core areas of work during the year and will focus on how we have delivered our services, the value for money, improving services to users/members, maintaining high standards and the development of the organisation.

Again, we have continued to work in achieving objectives within our current strategy and business development plan and also carried out an annual review of the strategy, which involved all stakeholders. I would like to report that the year has seen significant progress in the areas of our work and further more presented a number of opportunities for OBAC, which we hope, this will result in a number of developments in terms of service provisions for the members and service users.

Although OBAC acknowledges an increase in the number of newly referred blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbeans to the organisation, this can be seen as advantageous in terms of reaching out to more people and on the other hand the organisation has to think about its resources and funding to deliver at the standard we advocate within its limited resources. The report clearly demonstrates that when a client walks through the door in most cases it is not just one but rather multiple interventions are required. Again, for an organisation such as ours that is required to compete for Contracts or Service Level Agreements the unit costs may be higher in comparison to our major competitors working in the field.

I would like our stakeholders reading this report to think about the impact of OBAC and its service provisions in trying making a difference to blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbean people living in the United Kingdom. I can also say that based on the increased levels of service take up, OBAC services is much acknowledged and recognised by everyone who accesses our services.

Once again, I would like to thank the management committee, especially the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other committee members for the hard work and continued support. I would also like to thank the staff team and volunteers who have demonstrated a great commitment to OBAC and its objectives. Lastly, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank sponsors, donors, funders and other organisations that support OBAC in its efforts in trying to create independence for blind and partially sighted African and Caribbean people in the community.

**Ibukun Olashore (Ms)**  
Director

# Review of the Year

## Overview of activities of 2005/2006

The past year has seen a general increase in the level of activity, in OBAC's core areas of work, encapsulated in our motto of 'Creating Independence for Blind and Partially Sighted Africans and Caribbeans'. Our motto is a bold statement of intent, this report will inform our diverse stakeholders of the steps we have undertaken in trying to realise our aims and objectives for our members. The report will also demonstrate how we have provided support, encourage and empowered the client group; ensuring that they are well informed of the relevant facts to enable them in making informed decisions and taking actions to resolve issues affecting their lives.

Overall during the year of reporting we continued to provide generic services offering information, advice and support in the areas of welfare rights, benefits, health and social care, befriending, reading, transcription, housing, training, education and employment, individual fundraising, research and consultation.

## SUPPORTED SERVICES

### Client Advice casework

During the year under review we had 91 new referrals, and our membership increased to 977, with 9899 interventions undertaken, which consists of 2403 client casework sessions and 7496 transcription access.

The client casework (2403) breakdown of service up take for the period, are as follows:

1. Welfare rights – 433 - covering issues around Income Support, DLA, AA, Pensions, as well as other benefits and entitlements
2. Housing – 159 - covering rent arrears, homelessness, re-housing and transfers.
3. Aids and adaptations – 130 - low vision aids and adaptations as well as adaptations to the home.
4. Health – 53 - issues around maintaining good health and being able to access the necessary social care in the home.
5. Individual fundraising – 375 - accessing fund for low vision aids and adaptations, household goods, computers, clothing, holidays etc.
6. Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit – 45 - issues arising from non-payment or incorrect payment of benefit.
7. Research and consultation – 293 - issues around accessing goods and relevant services to assist client development.
8. Initial/risk assessments – 125 - conducting needs and/or risk assessments for new clients and existing clients as and when necessary.
9. Telephone befriending – 745 - accessing and addressing the needs of those who are socially isolated due to ill health, age or disability.

The casework continued to evolve around ensuring every new referral undergoes an Initial Needs Assessment, an agreed action plan and agreed review periods over a set time frame. It is important to emphasise that the nature of the work with the client group in majority cases involves multiple interventions, for example, making telephone calls, writing letters, form filling, research and consultation, as well as representing clients at case conferences, reviews and tribunals.

The Support Services team had to ensure that our work, is very much in line with central and local government policies and strategies around, Disability, Equalities and Diversity and reflect the criteria and key provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, Dept of Works and Pension, Disability and Carers Service, Disability Rights Commission, London Development Agency, Association of London Government in relation to service provision, access and delivery. In addition we continued to deliver services within the quality assurance measures framework such as the Community Legal Service Quality Mark.

### **Impact assessment**

The essence of our work over the past year has resulted in having a positive impact on the lives of those accessing our services. Not only in terms of maximising their income, but also in terms of maximising their opportunities for personal advancement and development.

Feedback from clients have been very positive in that they were able to access the information, advice and support needed, to assist them in either pursuing their own set objectives or finding favourable resolutions to difficult long term issues.

From their perspective the view was expressed that having access to the appropriate levels of information, advice and support, meant that they were not alone in confronting any problems and that this often gave them the courage to become more active on their own behalf, whether in dealing with personal issues or business issues.

In particular those who were not initially in receipt of the correct levels of benefit or entitlements, have stated how much their lives have improved by having access to greater levels of finance and are extremely pleased at how increased income has facilitated greater independence and mobility.

### **Feedback on impact from service users**

*Service User assisted in upgrading their Disability Living Allowance Care Component and accessing the Severe Disability Premium.*

“Without OBAC’s help I wouldn’t have known I wasn’t getting the right level of benefit and I wouldn’t have known how to challenge the DWP to get my benefit sorted. The extra money has really improved my quality of life and helped to increase my feelings of independence. I am now in a position to better address my daily living needs I cannot thank you enough for your help. Thanks very much.”

*Homeless Service User assisted in being re-housed.*

"Being homeless was very frustrating as I was unable to feel comfortable not having a home of my own and having to rely on friends for a place to sleep at night. My situation was made worse by the fact that the housing unit in my local borough did not recognise my disability as being valid and were not giving me the help that they were supposed to. Through OBAC I was able to resolve my housing issues and I am now in temporary accommodation waiting to be allocated a flat. OBAC has saved my life thanks very much."

*Telephone Befriending Service User*

"I lost touch with OBAC some time ago and was quite surprised when I was contacted by an OBAC Telephone Befriender. Having a friendly voice at the other end of the line is very comforting and encourages me to come out of my shell and talk about the things that are affecting me on a daily basis, including my sense of isolation. It has also enabled me to get access to the help and assistance that I need from the Supported Services team, in resolving some of my many problems. Keep up the good work"

*Visually Impaired Volunteer*

"Volunteering at OBAC has helped me to understand what goes on in good office practice, such as good telephone manners, developing good working relationships and the experience of working in a Black organisation like OBAC. It has also aided my mobility and reduced my isolation by encouraging me to come to OBAC on a regular basis. The most important benefit for me is that I have learnt how to send and receive e-mails, which enables me to communicate with my family and friends, in the U.K and far off places."

# Work and Poverty

In all a total of 75 beneficiaries were recruited on to all training programmes learning to confidently apply their knowledge of Access Technology in using day-to-day Information Technology applications.

- 38 beneficiaries gained 2 units of OCR New Clait (Words- processing, Database)
- 5 gained 3 units (Word processing, data base and excel) of New Clait
- 12 gained one unit (Word-processing) certificate in New CLAIT.
- 1 beneficiary gained the whole units of New CLAIT (Word processing, data base and excel) applications.
- 60 beneficiaries improved their spelling skills, writing skills, and listening and spoken communication in OCR Entry Level Certificate in Adult Literacy
- 38 of these gained Entry Level 1 certificate in Literacy
- 12 gained Entry Level 1 certificate in Numeracy.
- All Beneficiaries have improved communication skills the methodology used to achieve this is; using practises of non-discriminatory behaviours, creating a respectful environment, thus beneficiaries have to respect each others opinion.
- 60 beneficiaries have benefited from our job search training sessions. The beneficiaries have also gone through both in-house and external work placements.
- All beneficiaries have demonstrated high levels of self-confidence;
- Improved levels of self-esteem.
- Trainees had accessed to counselling, information and advice on entitlement and benefits and as a result of this they have been able to deal with issues relating to transition from having sight to losing their sight, which in some cases leads to the denial of their loss of sight, shock, isolation and rejection.

Other outcomes relating to the above include:

- (a) 12 beneficiaries have progressed onto Further Education
- (b) 8-gained Voluntary employment
- (c) 8 gained full-time employment
- (d) 7 moved into part-time employment
- (e) 16 beneficiaries developed skills and businesses for self-employment.

The links between unemployment and the experience of poverty have been well documented over the years and consequently are compounded by the experience of having an impairment or a disabling condition. Therefore for the vast majority of our client group the experience may be of two folds; one of being a disabled person and secondly coming from a black and ethnic minority background. The fact is of both cases, is that unemployment and poverty are very real and impacts greatly on their quality of life.

The training provisions is not just about achieving qualifications, but addressing the long-term conditions that are barriers for the client group in living good quality lives. Our work is therefore seen as a mechanism for combating the effects of poverty, by providing long-term solutions for the client group re-entry into the labour market.

During the year of reporting we applied and were successful in our application for the City and Guilds accreditation for the training centre, this is in addition to our OCR accreditation (Oxford Cambridge and RSA).

### **OBAC training provisions were funded through the following streams;**

#### **Pan London Learning and Skills Council**

This training project is operated under the government's 'Skills For Life' strategy and is seen as a way of addressing the skills gap currently in the labour market. The project is funded for one year and targets 25 beneficiaries. During the review period we recruited 11 students who have now completed and have recruited the final set who are currently on programme.

#### **Big Lottery**

The Big Lottery funded training project is based on the 'Work Preparation' strategy and sets out to develop hard and soft skills that enhance employability, not only in terms finding but also retaining employment. This is the second year of the project and during the period we recruited 30 students who went through our soft and hard skills training programme. 15 beneficiaries have already completed and a further 15 currently still on programme and nearing completion.

#### **London Development Agency ESF Co-financing**

The LDA-ESF Co-financing funded training project was conceived to offer additional training and support to the client group; specifically getting the client group into work (paid or unpaid), further education/training). Beneficiaries were offered careers advice, assisted job-search, interviewing techniques etc.

#### **Impact Assessment**

The OBAC Training Programme has had a tremendous impact on the lives of those participating on the various courses and has been particularly significant in increasing their skills acquisition and abilities to function in a work capacity and environment.

They are therefore better prepared to take full advantage of any job/volunteering opportunities that are on offer, as well as being fully aware of any in-work support provisions necessary to minimise costs to employers and thus assisting them in the retention of any employment gained.

Feedback from students have highlighted the perceived benefits from participating on the programme, such as experiencing increased levels of

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confidence, increased levels of mobility, a greater sense of independence and self worth and developing a positive outlook in terms of their own personal development and future career/work goals.

In terms of those gaining employment the knowledge of in-work support, in particular Access To Work, has meant that they have been able to negotiate their own support in collaboration with their employers and the Dept of Works and Pension and consequently have a much better chance of being able to retain their employment.

In addition to this they have also stated that having access to the information, advice and support facilities available at OBAC, has gives them another tier of support mechanisms to assist them in addressing issues around staying in employment.

2005 - 2006

## OBAC Academy

Our work in this area has continued to centre around addressing the issues that cause or compound poverty for our membership and to this end we have concentrated on providing extra support, mentoring accredited, training using Access Technology and work preparation courses, to supplement our existing training programmes for those completing training but experiencing difficulties in securing employment.

This year we have been particularly successful, with two of it's graduates having successfully gained employment; one working full time in education and training and the other part time in health and social care. In addition, we offered technical support to two of the trainees who expressed the need to develop a start up business.

Furthermore, we identified additional financial support through individual fundraising from grant giving Charities, to address issues of financial hardship in regards to goods and services that have a cost element that is beyond the reach of majority of the client group who are already living on a low income.

### **Feedback on impact from service users**

#### *Student on the OBAC Training Programme*

"Since joining the training programme I have developed my ICT skills and learnt how to use Access Technology. I have also grown enormously in confidence, so much so in fact that I have made lots of new friends, have developed my social skills and am much more vocal in expressing myself and have found that I am now more daring and adventurous and willing to try new experiences. My increased feelings of confidence, has also greatly increased my mobility and I am finding that I can travel around without the fear and anxiety that I used to experience. OBAC has changed my life completely"

## Research

Our membership have also been major contributors to a research project examining the barriers to employment for blind and partially sighted people from a Black and Minority Ethnic background conducted in partnership with the RNIB, SENSE, the RNID, the Learning and Skills Council, Liverpool Association for the Blind, the DWP and the Cabinet Office, which has culminated in the publication of a report 'Ethnicity, disability and work', which it is hoped will have a positive impact on the employment prospects of visually impaired African and Caribbean people.

## Individual Fund Raising

This aspect of our operation is another method for combating poverty, by providing access to supplementary income, either as a regular pension or one off grants for specific items. These applications range from the Social Fund through to major disability charities such as Action For Blind People, the Royal National Institute Blind, the Royal Blind Society, and the Metropolitan Society for the Blind etc.

Applications in this category cover a range of needs and assist service users in purchasing low vision aids and adaptations, household equipment (cookers, fridges etc), furniture and personal items such as clothing, paying course fees, buying books and recuperative holidays, either here in the U.K or abroad.

## Feedback on impact from service users

*Service User assisted in obtaining a CCTV.*

"I hope you are all well. Just writing to thank you all and to let you know I appreciate your help and support very much, you've given me over the years and for the hard work that went into helping me receive my reading computer. It has been a great help to me. I don't know what I would do without it now. Sorry for taking so long to thank you as my health has not been so good lately. Once again I commend you all for your hard work in running this organisation for people like me. Thank You."

*Service User assisted in paying for a recuperative holiday abroad with her children.*

"I and my children had a wonderful time during our holiday abroad and although everything was not exactly perfect, this did not deter us from enjoying ourselves thoroughly. I would once again like to take this opportunity to thank OBAC for the fund raising effort, finding a suitable package holiday and especially the Management Committee and the Director for allowing the early release of the funds to secure booking. Once again a thousand thanks."

## **IMMIGRATION**

During the year under review our work within this thematic area focused on signposting and providing supporting documentation on request, for those clients/users, navigating the immigration process and trying to regularise their status here in the U.K.

The essence of our support in this area has been in terms of describing the effects of sight loss on the individual concerned, the level of support needed for them to function as independently as possible. We in addition explored their training needs to facilitate re-entry into the labour market and the likely consequences should they be returned to their country of origin; where the necessary support facilities do not exist and more likely to suffer severe hardship and deprivation.

One of OBAC's strategic objectives is to develop the immigration service and we took this a step further by seeking accreditation from the Offices of the Immigration Services Commissioners (OISC) at levels 1 and 2. At the time of reporting the organisation was waiting for the final approval from the OISC.

### **Impact Assessment**

Due to the restraints already stated, the impact of our work in this area has been somewhat limited, but we can attest to the contribution made by our supporting letters and documents in the regularisation of status for several clients/users with approved external advise agencies. Feedback from those affected, has been positive in acknowledging the contribution made by OBAC in assisting them in supporting their cases and in addition the emotional support offered through such an arduous and lengthy process.

The regularisation of their status in the country puts them in a position of processing and formalising their socio-economic well-being here in the U.K. by accessing the goods and services that they need without fear or restrictions.

## LEISURE

We identified this as one of our core areas of work two years ago; it was initially incorporated within the Supported Services thematic area of work. The governing body made a strategic decision to separate this from the Supported Services and we have since been trying to develop the service in order to plan activities to alleviate social isolation. The development of this service is greatly reliant on the input of members and service users in exploring and developing strategies to create the mechanisms for facilitating greater access and participation.

Our work has centred on highlighting the leisure facilities and activities that are available to the client group in their own local area and beyond. We assisted them in dealing with mobility, communications and other access needs to ensure that they can overcome any barriers to participation, which are related to having a visual impairment. Information provided was around the location of facilities, events and activities in accessible format.

Through consultation with the membership; a one-day shopping trip to France was initiated and over 35 members participated in the event. We have also organised several events for the membership, which included a quiz night. OBAC management committee, staff and members have played an active role by undertaking most of the research and preparatory work to ensure that each event was a success; we had over 179 members participating in the events.

### Impact Assessment

The general view expressed by those participating was that they thoroughly enjoyed the events and for some it was the first time in many years, since becoming visually impaired; that they had felt confident enough to leave their own immediate local surroundings and venture further a field.

The events have also been a catalyst for galvanising some of our more socially isolated members into action, by demonstrating to them, that with the appropriate level of assistance they are able to more or less function as independently as possible. And whereas in the past they were reluctant to leave their home or go to local shops, supermarkets, and using public transport on a regular basis, they were now able to do so, without experiencing the increased levels of stress and anxiety previously the norm.

## Collaborative and partnership work

OBAC strongly believes that being a black and minority ethnic organisation we have to work in partnership and jointly with statutory and voluntary sector agencies in furtherance of OBAC's stated aims and objectives.

During the year under review we have ensured we have representation on various boards, panels and forums to ensure we feed into the government consultation on policies and services. For example, Transport for London Equalities and Diversity Dept who conducted consultation meetings focusing on collecting the views and experiences of diverse disabled people and the use of transportation in London.

Further, we have continued to identify an issue with the term 'disability' and the conception of what disabled people are; which is mostly people with a physical disability (wheelchair users). It must be highlighted that people with sensory disabilities experience greater difficulty getting around London especially if the ' Loud Speaker or Announcement' equipment is not turned on in the train or may be the bus stop has been moved due to never ending road works; this disrupts the mobility of the visually impaired person. We have seen a positive impact with consulting and working in partnership with these organisations in that it also gives them a better understanding of diversity and disability.

During the period OBAC continued to work proactively with the Dept of Works and Pensions, engaging with the Disability Forum around benefits, entitlements and communication, which are issues of concern raised by the client group. Again, we have seen the benefits of fruitfulness of the membership In addition to the concentration on work involving the development of relevant and accessible services for the service users.

To strengthen the organisation's capacity to represent, influence policy and campaign on behalf of blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbeans we worked with The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association by engaging our membership in a consultation exercise, based on developing new services for the client group and this has the potential for the future development, provision and delivery of relevant services. In addition we continue to work with other similar organisations from other regions in Sheffield, Bristol and Liverpool signposting blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbeans living those areas to statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

Over the past 3 years we have continued to report on the research project, conducted in conjunction with the RNIB, SENSE, Liverpool Association for the Blind, OBAC and Leeds University, looking at the barriers to employment for Black Minority Ethnic Visually Impaired people. We are pleased to report that this partnership project came to a conclusion this year, and part of the final activities for the project is the dissemination of information to various stakeholders from statutory, central government, private and voluntary sector agencies. The activities commenced with the launch of the report entitled 'Ethnicity, Disability and Work', being planned for London in April 2006, with a further two events in Birmingham in May 2006 and in Bradford in June 2006. Representatives from OBAC will be presenting the views of the organisation on the relevance and value of the work undertaken to date at these events.

### Networking/meetings

One must highlight the importance of networking and continuous liaison with the following local voluntary and statutory sector agencies, through these networks we continued to influence policy and decision makers to ensure the issues and concerns of blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbeans are at the forefront of agenda in terms of identifying gaps and the improvement of services.

We have also been able to input into the Change Up agenda ensuring that the term social cohesion includes planning and the provision of services, which include blind and partially sighted Africans and Caribbeans.

- Social Services Depts, Primary Care Trusts/GPs, Dept of Health, Dept of Works and Pension, Disability Rights Commission, Office For Disability Issues, Lambeth Council – Health and Social Care Forum, Southwark Council – various departments, Southwark Lifelong Learning, Learning and Skills Council, Greater London Authority, Transport for London (Equalities Team), Mayor's Office, Transport for London, London Development Agency.
- OBAC is a member of the following Local Councils for voluntary organisations; Lambeth Voluntary Action Council, SAVO, Southwark Community Care Forum, Peckham Voluntary Sector Forum. The Director of OBAC is the Chair of the Lambeth Voluntary Action Council and Peckham Voluntary Sector Forum.
- Regional Networks: Race on the Agenda (ROTA) BTEG (Black Training Enterprise Group), Minet (A member of the Change Up agenda Advisory Group) and National Council for Voluntary Organisations

We have developed a close working relationship with the Volunteers Centres to ensure that the members/service users understand the government Change Up agenda and how to become Active Citizens in their local environment. This close relationship resulted from our representations and airing the views of blind and partially sighted people and how these programmes were being designed and developed without

proper consultation with the organisation. We have achieved agreeing a programme, which will include seminars and workshops on Active Citizens with Volunteer Centre Southwark and OBAC.

### **Impact Assessment**

The impact on our networking, joint working and partnership work with similar and other organisations provides the members/service users the opportunity to be part of the social cohesion agenda. OBAC is working relentlessly to ensure that its members concerns are at the forefront in terms of government review and planning, which involves mapping the social environment and encouraging greater participation by the client group.

It should be acknowledge and recognised that members/users who participated in the consultation processes with regards to Health and Social Care, Civil Renewal, Change Up - Active Citizenship acquired the skills and understanding necessary for them to become more independent and mobile as well as the ability to advocate on their own behalf.

### **Strategic Ethnic Alliance**

During the year under review we have continued to host the Strategic Ethnic Alliance in Southwark, which is funded through the Southwark Alliance – Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. We would like to report that OBAC has continued to ensure the Strategic Ethnic Alliance operates within the parameters of its funding. During the year of reporting there was a review of the strategic focus of SEA, and which resulted in SEA successfully securing further funding from Southwark Alliance to develop an Active Citizens programme for Black Asian Minority Ethnic people in Southwark.

# Information, Management & Administration

## Operations

Our operations are designed to provide a quality service that addresses the needs of service users that resolves issues around disability, confidentiality, equality and diversity. This means that staff have to deliver services that fall within the organisations standard of delivering best value. We continue to invest in the learning and development of staff and volunteers to meet our business objectives and this is continuously identified through the performance review process. Through this practice we have been able to place our service users at the centre of all our activities and as such they are the key driving force behind many of the services currently in operation and/or under development.

## Quality Standards

We have continued to work within the parameters of the requirements of the bodies of Quality Assurance Measures and Standards. We continue to maintain the following;

- Investors In People
- The Advice and Guidance Matrix.
- Community Legal Service – Quality Mark (General Advice and Casework)
- OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA) New Clait and New Clait plus

Furthermore in terms of improving the standard of delivery of services we worked towards achieving the following;

- City and Guilds
- Office of Immigration Services Commissioners (OISC) Levels 1 and 2 (waiting for approval)

## Transcription services

The statistical breakdown of service take up for Transcription services (7496) are as follows:

1. OBAC Newsletter – 2560
2. The Voice – 2444
3. The New African - 1240
4. Other Transcribed Documents-442
5. African Trumpet - 210
6. Training Materials – 300
7. Documents to external organisations – 300

Transcribed documents were in the formats of Braille, Large Text and Audio-tape and consisted of information on news items, accessing goods

and services, benefits issues, the consultation process, central and local government disability provision, health and social care, leisure and social activities and training, education and employment.

### **Impact Assessment**

It is not surprising that there has been a significant increase of the provision of this service, firstly due to the fact that we were able to upgrade part of the equipment for recording. Secondly having in place a dedicated team that worked hard at ensuring that the organisation addressed the members/ service users communication needs. The main objective of is to provide the necessary information with regards to making their local and regional environment much more accessible to them by providing information in an appropriate medium, commensurate to their own personal needs.

The organisation acknowledges that accessible information is a major tool in informing the client group of the events and activities in their own areas, as well as assisting them in pursuing personal development through participation in leisure and social activities, training and education programmes, leading to career development and eventual employment.

## Future Developments

Main trends and factors likely to affect future development and performance OBAC continues to struggle in terms of resources, most especially with the increasing demand of our service provisions in particular greater outreach work targeting members/service users who are less mobile and therefore more likely to be socially isolated. Again the demand for this type of service far outweighs our capacity to meet them and we are again, having to re-examine the ways in which areas of work can be maximised within the scope of the limited resources that we have available. There is also the shift in the government's commissioning of services, which might affect small and medium sized voluntary and community organisations bidding or tendering for contracts with other major organisations.

### **The OBAC Benevolent fund**

There is still a low take up of this grant assistance from our members, which purpose is to improve their social well-being. The Chair of the Benevolent fund sub-group, the Secretary of OBAC is reviewing the funding criteria to make the fund more accessible to the members, in addition the organisation is looking at ways of increasing the money available for grant distribution from unrestricted sources.

### **Social Enterprise**

One must point out the importance of diversifying its funding base and as such the management committee are looking at the risk factors in terms of the organisation's funding and how this can be diversified for sustainability and gradual growth and expansion. Last year, we committed to looking at developing a social enterprise scheme; a volunteer/administration recruitment agency to manage the community care packages and administration of the Direct Payments scheme for the client group. A plan has been put together for this project and we are hoping that within the next financial year we will be able to receive pump-priming money to develop the scheme.

# List of Management Committee members, Staff and Volunteers

## OBAC's Management Committee

Dafton Robinson	-	Chairman
Joseph Gay	-	Vice Chair
Patricia McCalla	-	Secretary
Francesca Osibo	-	Treasurer
Sylvanus Bisong Effiom	-	Assistant Secretary (25 November 2005)
Solomon Odeleye	-	Member
Yetunde Oyediran	-	Member (Deceased)
Philip Ojo	-	Member
Ambulai Richard Siafa	-	Member
Diib Jama	-	Member
Jennifer Eshalomi	-	Member
Jullet Purchase Tejan	-	Member (25 November 2005)

## OBAC Staff Team

Ibukun Olashore	-	Director
Henry Nicholson	-	Development Coordinator
Amal Jama	-	Befriending & Support Services Coordinator
John Gakpe	-	Resources Coordinator
Bintu Barley	-	Information, Advice & Administration Coordinator
Grace Foster	-	Membership Officer
Pius Aigbogun	-	Basic Skills & Guidance Tutor/Coordinator
Petrit Jaka	-	Information Technology Tutor
Maxwell Buatsi	-	Basic Skills/IT Tutor
Marcus Powell	-	Support Services Worker
Dioanne Nsiah Boachi	-	Support Services Worker
Madelene Metzger	-	Support Services Worker

**OBAC Volunteers**

Joseph Gay	-	Transcription Service
Ruth Bishop	-	Teaching Assistant
Verna Hill	-	Befriending Service
Violet Campbell	-	Befriending Service
Yinka Yemi Tijanee	-	Admin.
Ifeoma Omife	-	Admin
Emou Mian	-	Admin
Isaac Minta	-	Accounts/Admin
Alywn Stephenson	-	Support Services
Maxfred Greenwood	-	Reader
Alfred Henderson	-	Transcription
Elaine Osborne	-	Driver

\*OBAC recognises the significant contributions and sustained efforts of volunteers who have assisted in developing and delivering some of our services.

**SEA (Strategic Ethnic Alliance)**

Osu Ota	-	Policy and Network Coordinator
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- Action for Blind People (Partnership)
- Shaw Trust – (Partnership)
- Southwark PCT
- Learning and Skills Council (Business Alumni 50\*) and Workforce Development team – information and networking
- Institute of Fundraising
- The Voice Newspaper
- The African Trumpet
- The New African Magazine

# OBAC



OBAC is a leading provider of business training and support for small and medium-sized businesses in London. We work with a wide range of businesses to help them grow and succeed. Our services include business planning, marketing, finance, and legal advice. We also offer a range of training courses for business owners and employees. OBAC is committed to helping businesses in London thrive and create jobs.



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