



DCLG/NW/59/2006

**MINISTER FOR WOMEN RUTH KELLY APPLAUDS LIVERPOOL  
BUSINESSWOMAN'S SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

A Liverpool businesswoman who created a successful social enterprise was today singled out for praise by Minister for Women Ruth Kelly.

Speaking to one of the biggest Government-organised gatherings of women from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, Ruth Kelly said that women such as Claire Dove – who runs the Blackburne House training organisation in the Hope Street quarter – have made immense achievements in regenerating their communities through social enterprise.

Before an audience of more than 200 ethnic minority women at the Black History Month reception at the House of Commons, Ruth Kelly called on more women from BME backgrounds to capitalise on their potential and improve their economic situation by becoming social entrepreneurs.

The Minister for Women said:

"We know that for many ethnic minority women, despite increasing levels of academic attainment and aspirations, their prospects in the job market are still poor. We can also see strong evidence that they have particular skills that they can bring to social enterprise businesses which can make them a real success.

"Opening up more opportunities for ethnic minority women such as Claire Dove to become involved in social enterprise will not only make the most of their skills, but also reap long term positive economic effects for society through regenerating communities and building good community relations."

More...

Claire set up training company Blackburne House in the early 1980s and it has since grown to become an award-winning social enterprise, having been awarded Learning and Skills Council Beacon status and being one of the five winners of the Department for Trade and Industry sponsored Enterprising Solution Awards.

The centre is ranked in the top 10 per cent of colleges and educational providers in the UK. It offers a variety of courses and the training includes not only women embarking upon education for the first time but also professional women looking to broaden their skills and enhance their career prospects.

Claire said:

“Blackburne House has helped train thousands of women in trades such as construction and information technology – the sort of businesses that a generation ago women were not expected to enter. The women we have worked with are making a difference not just to their own families but also to their communities and to the economy of Merseyside and the wider North West. That’s the whole point of Blackburne House – showing women that they can be economically independent and they can change things for the better.”

Government research shows that Black Africans are three times more likely to be social entrepreneurs than the national average whilst Black Caribbeans are twice as likely. Women are proportionally more likely to become social entrepreneurs than men.

The Women and Work Commission identified social enterprise as instrumental in enabling women who choose to work to match their skills to the local job market. The Government responded to these findings in an action plan published last month to tackle barriers to women's achievement in the workplace.

[More...](#)

Responding to a particular recommendation made by the Commission on how to get more women involved in social enterprise, BME women that run successful social enterprises were supported by the Government to hold the first of a series of workshops yesterday for other women interested in the idea.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. Ruth Kelly was speaking at the Black History Month reception at the House of Commons attended by over 200 BME women and Deputy Minister for Women Meg Munn, Third Sector Minister Ed Miliband and Baroness Amos, Leader of the House of Lords.
2. The Women and Work Commission Report Shaping a Fairer Future was presented to the Prime Minister by Baroness Prosser on 27 February 2006. The Commission proposed a wealth of practical ideas on how to close the gender pay and opportunities gap. The Government responded to these findings through an action plan published last month which addressed the forty recommendations through a raft of practical measures. The next phase of the action plan will research economic exclusion and ethnic minority women as a key priority. Link: [http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/women\\_work\\_commission/index.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/women_work_commission/index.htm)
3. There are at least 55,000 social enterprises in the UK with a combined turnover of £27 billion pounds each year. They contribute £8.4 billion pounds each year to the UK economy accounting for almost 1% GDP. They employ almost half a million people and provide opportunities to volunteer for a further 300 000.
4. Social enterprises are likely to be situated in areas of high multiple deprivation:
  - 29% are located in the 20% most deprived wards
  - a further 22% in the 20-40% most deprived wards.
  - 49% are in the 60% least deprived wards
  - Social enterprises situated in the 20% most deprived areas are more likely than those in other areas to be helping people through the provision of some of the services – education / training (24%), social assistance (14%) and housing (10%)
5. Ruth Kelly also launched a new awareness raising pack being piloted today which promotes social enterprise as a business model option for BME women. <http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/>
6. The Women & Equality Unit (DCLG) and Prowess (women's enterprise organisation) hosted a workshop before the reception for 50 ethnic minority women to give tips on how to set up a social enterprise.

More..

7. The EOC Interim Report , Moving on Up? Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black Caribbean women and work , published in September 2006, reported that despite high ambitions and investment in education, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women employees under 35 are experiencing heavy penalties when they want to work, including higher unemployment, a lower glass ceiling than white women, and for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women lower pay. Most work in a restricted range of sectors and jobs. <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=19421>

**Media enquiries to Karl Turner on  
0161 952 4515 or [karl.turner@gnn.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:karl.turner@gnn.gsi.gov.uk)**

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BY GOVERNMENT NEWS NETWORK**