

Chapter 12

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY & IMPROVING RACE EQUALITY – *the participants’ suggestions*

Introduction

A comment heard often in race equality circles, and once again in this research was that *‘race equality work should be done with people, not to or for them’*. It’s an issue that Race Equality Councils and any one else interested in race equality work must heed and it was with this in mind that the Devon & Exeter Racial Equality Council’s Rural Outreach Project was set in motion.

The project was designed so that Black and Minority Ethnic participants spoke for themselves. Participants weren’t asked to put ticks in someone else’s preconceived boxes. Questions were open and participants were supported with creative thinking space – especially in workshops and in discussion. Ideas brought up by participants helped to shape the research, as they were raised again for debate with others.

So perhaps the project’s most important function was to facilitate the arena in which rural families and individuals could set Devon’s race equality agenda. Participants did this by deliberating on their experiences and then after much sharing and discussion, responding to the question:

What would your suggestions be for the best way to promote cultural diversity and better race relations in Devon?

Participants usually made these recommendations at the end of their individual contributions to the research, in specific response to a request for their advice about the best means of promoting cultural diversity and race equality. This chapter focuses on these proposals.

From the responses, a number of key areas of concern emerged:

Recommendations for Promoting Cultural Diversity & Improving Race Relations

Order of priority is determined by the frequency with which these recommendations arose.

- 1. Consciousness raising and training (including in schools)**
- 2. Networks and peer support**
- 3. Bridge building across cultures – celebrations of culture and diversity**
- 4. Improving access to information and services**
- 5. Race equality support services**
- 6. Equality in employment**
- 7. Political action and leadership**
- 8. Media**
- 9. Initiative on the part of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals**
- 10. Consultation and influence**
- 11. Effect and promotion of demographic change**
- 12. Inter-religious understanding**
- 13. Cultural centres**
- 14. Closer look at trans-racial adoption**

It should also be noted that, in addition to the priorities identified by participants in this chapter, many key learning points and recommendations also arose from the main body of the discussion with participants in addition to the priorities they selected above for race equality action. Major learning points also emerged from the research when taken as a whole. These learning points supplement and underpin the priority recommendations put forward by the participants, and are discussed in chapters 1 – 11 of this Handbook. The Handbook has been structured by identifying the subjects that attracted the greatest density of discussion among participants, and apportioning each of these to a chapter. (A similar method was also used to construct the analysis of the participants' priority recommendations.) Chapters 1 – 11 set the scene for the key recommendations put forward by the participants in this final chapter, and examine the underlying trends and background issues that also need to be addressed. Please refer to the chapter summaries, in addition to this chapter for an overview of all the emergent recommendations.

How were these key recommendations formulated?

Participants were asked for their suggestions about how to promote cultural diversity and improve race relations. We went through all of the responses and allocated each of the ideas expressed by every participant with a label which briefly summarised the ideas. We then sorted and grouped these concepts under emergent headings. By looking at each heading and counting the number of ideas that had been grouped within it, we were able to see the amount of concern associated with each recommendation. That is not to say that some recommendations matter and others don't. They all matter. But it does enable us to see which actions the participants feel will make the most difference.

In this chapter we look in detail at the ideas within each recommendation, and explore some of the issues that will be relevant to service-providers in addressing them. Particular attention is given to the commentary for the first two recommendations. This is because the body of the research confirms that the need for improved consciousness-raising and training, and the creation of rural Multi-Ethnic networks, are major strategic activities required to advance race equality and support cultural diversity in rural Devon.

The recommendations as put forward by the participants are set out in the boxes below, illustrated with participant anecdotes, and the recommendation boxes are followed by discussion and links to related chapters.

1. Consciousness raising and training

We collated 62 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Of the 62, 29 related to education in schools.

The remaining 33 suggestions related to other audiences that participants felt should be targeted for consciousness-raising, and the manner in which they felt it should be done in order to change attitudes.

Audiences

Participants' feeling about whose awareness needed to be raised ranged from the general to the specific.

- Several people felt attitudes across society needed to change. Others felt that in particular, important audiences for attention are:
- schools
- parents

- older generations
- service-providing staff

☛ *I don't know if I can find a better life in the UK. Perhaps it would be better if people in Devon can change their mentality.*

Concern about general consciousness raising was usually attached to a feeling that only an attitudinal change in society would make a difference. Participants simply wanted an end to rude, invasive and offensive language and behaviour. You can see more detail about the kinds of reactions many of the participants were subjected to in chapter 6. In the chapter 6, participants also describe how they deal with those reactions. Many respond by trying to engage in conversation and trying to inform a person's attitude. It's often difficult or impossible to do this. It's also unreasonable to expect the individuals of the minority population to single handedly field the prejudice that comes without warning from parts of the wider population.

☛ *Awareness raising means it needs to become real... so the people who are targeted need to speak up. But that's difficult to do and you hope it will just go away.*

One participant suggested an alternative to individuals' isolated attempts to change a few attitudes:

☛ *You could have leaflets advertising cultural diversity and better race relations, left in public places, such as Town Hall, Libraries, Sports Centres.*

Other participants identified specific sections of society where consciousness raising could be concentrated.

The majority view was that children needed to be educated in school about issues of culture and race relations. Concern was expressed for the ability of white local young people to integrate into cosmopolitan work and society outside of Devon, as well as for the welfare of Black and Minority Ethnic children experiencing racist bullying.

☛ *All schools should have many topics of discussion about other religions and cultures, otherwise children will get the shock of their lives when they eventually leave Devon!*

But most importantly, the focus on work in schools arose from the view that it is only possible to eliminate prejudice by working on the next generation whilst they can still be reached through the school environment.

“You need to focus on work in schools – it’s too late for adults.

“The only real way to get change is through education projects in schools - i.e long term initiatives. You can’t change the adults. You can only work with the kids and give them understanding of each other to carry through to adult life. You can’t change racism in adults.

Other participants cautioned that work with children had to be accompanied by work with parents:

“Education in schools is the only way forward, but it’s difficult if the kids are surrounded by racist views in society - like those of my parents-in-law – I haven’t made any difference to them in years.

Some participants also felt that attitudes among the older generations also needed attention:

“Getting rid of the prejudices which are rooted in some older British people would help.

The workplace was also identified as a key target audience for consciousness raising, because of the benefits it would bring to the Black and Minority Ethnic population as a workforce and as users of services. Perhaps a key reason why participants identified schools and the workplace as prime audiences is because of the opportunities those environments present for children and staff to spend time giving considerable thought to the issues, and for skilled facilitators to help with examination of the issues and the responses that are needed.

“We need to raise awareness in staff, the population and organisations. We need to break down prejudice which comes from irrational ideas or from inability to cope with complex ideas. Schools have a very important role in promoting race equality.

Several participants pointed out that it’s not only the choice of audience that matters, but also the way in which race equality is covered that is important.

Getting messages across and understood

A number of ingredients for successful consciousness raising were suggested:

- Getting the reality of racism understood through empathy.

☛ *Most people don't believe rural racism exists. To say 'we don't tolerate this' requires you to say it from a point of belief rather than dogma or policy. So you need to convince people that racism and discrimination exist. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry was just another Inquiry but what made it different was the reaction and involvement of the mother and father. It was something you could see and the break up of the family and the emotions touched everyone across the land - everyone could empathise with those emotions. You need to **feel** it to see the senselessness.*

☛ *You have to show people in the community that discrimination could spread and has wider effects. You need to find the point that touches the officials' worlds - you need to find their sensitive points.*

- The need to penetrate the armour and world-view of prejudice.

☛ *Most bigots have a buffer around them and don't get touched by the community. If they really believe in inequality they'll structure their lives so as not to allow anything that will contradict their belief.*

- Education about global issues.
- Providing a learning environment in which it is safe to make mistakes and in which trainees are able to test their ideas out.

☛ *Training needs to be interactive to check people's understanding and to let them test out their thoughts. People need to know they're allowed to make mistakes in the training environment.*

- Black and Minority Ethnic people as educators/ trainers.
- Confidence-building initiatives for Black and Minority Ethnic members of the public so they can take the lead on bridge-building
- Black and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce providing mentoring support for staff wanting to implement race equality in their work – for example as trans-cultural medicine mentors for other Health staff .

- Practical training for service providers' 'how to' do race equality.

☛ *Service providers really need training in the 'how tos' and also they're worried about being PC which holds them up.*

- Packaging of race equality training within equal opportunities training for service providers, in order to get more people 'in the door'.
- Spreading training over a period of time.

☛ *Awareness raising is [should be] gradual – it produces tensions to force people to respond – the result in America is effective segregation, with Black kids' school buses.*

- Mainstreaming education about different cultures, world affairs and multi-culturalism in all aspects of the school curriculum. E.g. History, English language, Citizenship, Sports, Religious Studies, Science etc..
- Involving local Black and Minority Ethnic families in sharing aspects of their culture in class.
- Cultural exchange – schools linking with multi cultural schools, visits and opportunities for intercultural play.

☛ *Kids miss out here all the time because they're all white Christian - they lose out and are very sheltered in education because diversity is not around them. Most kids haven't seen black children. As a teacher I try to include multi-cultural links from the point of view of multi-ethnic Britain. It's difficult to bring multi-culture into education because of lack of resources and time and money. I'd like to have an exchange - but where is the nearest multi cultural school? – I'd just like the kids to have intercultural play. There could be intercultural visits - a proper school-to-school link, not just a one-off session. This would alleviate ignorance and racism in parents and in the children's heads. Kids here never use racist language but I suspect that due to lack of exposure parents may be racist due to ignorance. Lots of kids have never even been to the beach or to restaurants or eaten other sorts of foods.*

- Using education about race equality as an alternative to punishment for children who bully their Black and Minority Ethnic peers.
- Education for pupils about promoting equality and tackling racism, combined with training for school management and staff on how to prevent and address racism.

“The schools need to be more aware. My daughter said that at school in Sidmouth she said she was coffee colour but the teacher insisted that she was white. Schools need to accept colour and should have some way of checking kids are alright and checking that teachers are not prejudiced (like my headmaster had been) and checking all kids are getting a good education. They should do education on anti-discrimination.

- Consciousness raising – among FE & HE students through sport, quizzes, food festivals

Training and consciousness raising is the prime recommendation put forward by participants in this research. It came up so often, because they felt that ignorance is the main cause of prejudice. The only way to counter ignorance is to provide the kind of information that will help people see things differently. The key environments for this work are in schools and in the workplace, where people in positions of responsibility have the opportunity to facilitate education about race equality, for important and sizeable audiences. Consciousness raising is also important because as a proactive, preventative measure, it's more likely to have long term impact. There's also another reason why it's better to prevent a problem than to focus on picking up the pieces: the pieces are often kept out of sight. You can read more about how people cope with prejudice and racist incidents in chapter 6, but you will see that there are many reasons why people don't report the racism they experience. This makes preventative measures all the more important.

“Awareness work will have ultimate benefits for those Minorities who prefer to keep quiet rather than report.

For the participants, the key components of the recommendation to raise consciousness are:

- Changing attitudes in society
- Forming attitudes in schools
- Workforce training

All of these can be addressed in particular by the public sector . They are also important issues for the media and employers in all sectors.

Changing attitudes in society

One of the interesting things about the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) is the general Duty on Public Bodies to promote good race relations. This is most obviously understood in terms of addressing an organisation's

functional relationships with its Black and Minority Ethnic staff and customers. But there's another way of thinking about it that ties in with the research's recommendation that attitudes in society need to be addressed. If we ask '*Who has responsibility for raising awareness in society?*' the answer could be fudged. But if we think about Public Bodies' position in society, both as a reflection of the public face of society and the architect of our social forces and fabric, then our public services are certainly part of the answer. In this sense, there's a duty upon Public Bodies to take the lead in both acknowledging diversity in society and in examining and addressing anti-social prejudice in it. In this way, Local Authorities, Health Trusts, Schools, the Police and other services have a responsibility not only for raising awareness internally with staff, but also for external awareness raising. This puts the call for someone to address attitudes in society in a fresh, sharp, perspective. Public Bodies can respond by thinking widely and laterally about how they can use their interface with the public and with staff to promote good race relations in society. Public Bodies have multiple channels of communication with the external world: inside and outside their many buildings, through their newsletters, through the activities they run, through their workers and members out in the community. These channels can be identified and used for sending out clear, positive messages. There's opportunity for general statements about cultural diversity and how it is valued, and opportunity for more tailored consciousness raising. Organisations and departments can identify specific sections of society with whom they work (e.g. young people, elderly, parents, tenants) and deliver race relations messages in settings and terms that are meaningful and engaging for that audience, and tie in with normal activities. The ROP participants were also keen to help in this consciousness raising. Discussed below under *Bridge Building Across Cultures – Celebrations of Culture and Diversity*, participants raised ideas for events in which culture could be shared, enjoyed and cross-cultural understanding built in which they could take part. Public Bodies have the settings and the audiences – day care for the elderly, community facilities, family initiatives (Sure Start, school/parent projects and the like), and ROP participants have indicated that with good facilitation and support many Black and Minority Ethnic people would be active in connecting cultures within communities.

The media also has a key role to play in public awareness raising. See the recommendation 'Media' in section 8 below.

Forming attitudes in schools

For the research participants, the key to the future of good race relations in Devon rests in the formation of *children's* attitudes, relationships and

world-views. There is considerable activity in a number of schools who make great efforts to look at issues of world affairs and to study global cultures. This goes a long way towards addressing the participants' concern. However, the work that goes on does depend on the commitment and initiative of interested teachers and of development education practitioners.

☞ *I'd like to see more done in schools to promote race equality. Just an hour here or there from a visitor is too superficial. You need to show children that minorities are real people.*

Without an overall strategy to support Devon's teachers in multi-cultural education, pressures on them often preclude added-on initiatives. For example, development education practitioners often experience difficulty in getting take-up of their services, even when it is free to schools. In this sense the coverage of these issues is sporadic. Schools' ability to deal with racist bullying also varies, and specialist help can improve schools' capacity to prevent incidents and work with perpetrators and victims where bullying does take place. You can look at some of the experiences relating to education in chapter 8. The pinning of hopes for improved race relations on education in schools implies the need for a strategy to support all Devon's schools in this work. Several participants also pointed out that race equality in education needs to be mainstreamed. This advice would require a systematic change in the current place of race equality in schools' work. Mainstreaming involves the joint working of the County Council Education Directorate, the Local Education Authority and all schools and involves looking at 3 aspects of work in schools:

- 1) How the distinct themes of appreciation of cultures and religions, cultural history, multi-culturalism in Britain, world affairs and race equality can be built into the curriculum.
- 2) How anti-racism strategies can be built into school culture, policy and practice and how staff can be trained and supported to implement this.
- 3) How academic councils, the LEA and the Education Directorate can develop a strategy to support all schools with 1) and 2).

Devon has many schools and it makes sense not to expect them to address these themes independently and in isolation. DEREK has proposed a project in which these key education partners could be supported with specialist advice and with training in schools from DEREK and DDE (Devon Development Education). You can find more detail about this in the Racial Equality Council's Business Plan (on the web-site www.DevonREC.org). In summary, the proposal comprises a three-pronged approach:

- anti-racism
- cultural awareness
- global awareness

which would be delivered through three settings:

- as policy and practice development with school management.
- as INSET with teachers and curriculum support
- directly in the classroom with teachers

In this way, race equality can be built into the attitudes of pupils and staff, and into the schools' institutional and curriculum practices.

Raising consciousness in the workforce

Most Public Bodies will know that race equality training is a Duty upon them under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000). It's a Specific Duty that requires staff to be trained so that they are able to respond to the law and deliver all the activities that each Public body will have planned in its Race Equality Scheme. (The production of a Scheme is also a Specific Duty). In this way the law expects more than just awareness raising to be done with staff. It's far more focussed on making sure that people are provided with the *competencies* to deliver on race equality. The law also expects Public Bodies to assess how well they are delivering services to Black and Minority Ethnic people and the impact their policies are having. (You can find more information about Impact Assessment in section 10 below, 'Consultation & Influence' and in chapter 11.) Based on the assessment of this impact service providers are expected to work with their staff to make any necessary changes.

The law translates into 4 points for change in attitudes and behaviour in organisations:

1. Consciousness raising
2. Role-specific competency training
3. Assessing impact of service delivery and employment functions
4. Working with staff to address impact.

Staff need to know not only what race equality is all about and why it matters to real people, but also how they can address the issues in their daily work and how their organisation will make it possible for them to do so. There is a potential environment for institutional racism in services that do not know how to reach, talk to or take account of Black and Minority Ethnic people. Overcoming this requires institutions to provide the kind of 4 point framework described above, in which all its staff are empowered to

make changes and act on the learning they gain from consciousness raising training.

This framework is relevant to all aspects of good practice in service delivery. The same process can also be applied to issues of equality other than race. Some participants noted that the cause of race equality would gain a greater audience if the different equality themes were covered together in training. The concepts behind race equality and the framework of action set out by race equality law can be used for good practice in all equality matters. It's important (and a legal requirement for Public Bodies) to think distinctly about race equality, but it's useful to plan it alongside other equality work for mutual benefit.

Chapter 11 provides information about training issues and tools for conducting Impact Assessment.

2. Networks and Peer Support

We collated 31 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Participants had a number of ideas about activities they'd like to participate in with other Black and Minority Ethnic people and about the way in which those activities should be run. These can be summarized as network functions, activities and qualities:

Functions

- Peer support
- Overcoming isolation as Black and Minority Ethnic individuals
- Interest groups
- Support for Mixed Heritage families
- Support for Young People
- Support for Women
- Support for the Elderly
- Co-religious support
- Co-ethnic support
- Confidence building for individuals
- Access to information about services and opportunities, tips from each other.
- Friendship
- Mentoring

- Opportunities to share and celebrate culture with other minority ethnic people

☛ You need young people's groups or something with activities to help people meet each other. People I know are older with children, so I can't go out with them.

☛ I don't think it's good to have a small community of Brazillians or any other if they don't mix with white people. But it's good if they can help each other build confidence and learn about how to make friends and find out about things... my Brazilian friends have helped me feel less isolated - I have people to go out with and talk to.

☛ I would like to see activities for the elderly organised around intellectual interest. I would love the network cultural event idea with food and a talk. The main problem for me with that would be transport. You could tie in with a voluntary transport scheme.

☛ We'll need some kind of social network to cope with being a mixed race family with a daughter. Some [other] Indian people I wouldn't want to deal with. So a network would be a friendship need, not a co-ethnicity need. It would need to be very informal (and not bureaucratic) – like the Black Networking Group.

☛ Rural networks are a really good idea especially for women. You need events with a theme to attract people. Then build in networking and mentoring.

☛ I know less than 5 other minority ethnic people, but they need a lot of things to gather them together like a common place where they can meet on a weekly basis.

Activities

- Themed events (food, dance, countries, etc.)
- Events just for women, just for young people, just for Mixed Heritage Families etc.
- Cultural celebrations
- Creative events
- Talks and social interaction for the elderly (multi-ethnic, Jewish and Chinese events)

- Co-ethnic activities
- Co-religious activities

“I would like to be part of a network. It should have a theme, for example the United Nations, that makes the point of it being an anti-xenophobic club. It should promote community spirit and deal with issues and problems and be a talking shop for people to share their experiences. You need to attract everyone and keep formal meetings to a minimum.

“I'd like to know other people of my ethnicity so a network would be good in that way - you could have arts and food and involve the wider community.

“Group meetings are not a good idea because they're too much like therapy. Fairs and social events would be best. Don't make people sit down and talk, but give them opportunity to do what they want. Have opportunities to learn about other cultures - e.g. cooking, workshops, how to look after your hair, where the churches are - that cater for cultural sensitivity.

“You need to have events that people feel passionate about - for example Mums and toddler's groups, women's groups, study, dance and music

“I don't want to be in a more Jewish community but I would like to meet people of the same faith as me because we would have something to talk about.

Qualities

- An eye on the future as well as the past
- Events should feel informal
- Careful and expert design and facilitation of events
- Sustainable funding and provision of facilitation workers
- 4 networks (North, East, South, West) because Devon is so big.
- People should leave each event feeling a boost in confidence or that they have achieved something.
- The opportunity to give and receive peer support should not be accompanied by expectations that friendship or help should necessarily extend beyond the network events.
- Facilitators should ensure that network members don't experience pressure from other members to conform to particular cultural or

religious views.

- Members should not feel that by participating in a peer network it causes them exposure as a minority in their home community.
- Transport to events should be available, especially in rural areas, and especially for the elderly.
- Cultural differences among people gathering for multi-ethnic events, including feelings about White members of multi-ethnic families, need to be facilitated sensitively.

● *Rural networks could work if sensitively done and if there's no pressure to share other people's ethnic identity and values.*

● *I tried to help set a multi cultural network up with a few people some years ago but it stopped because the person leading on it left the area.*

● *Information networks would be worth trying but it will be difficult to get people to attend because they'll feel they're identifying themselves as BME.*

● *You have to organise events and have to have facilitators to draw people out.*

● *You need to start by finding out what people want to achieve from the day. Organise events around people's needs. They'll need to feel that they've achieved something.*

● *It would be easier to meet people through a network setting because there'd be less obligation to get involved with people. The attraction of a network is just to hear people's stories. It's nice to chat. It would be good to share stories about practical issues in the network - for example like getting indefinite leave to remain.*

● *I attended the Eid and Divali meeting with my wife. There were lots of other White Brit friends of Indians invited to the Divali festival. At Eid the Indians complained about the British people having attended the Divali meeting, because it could threaten their culture. They want the meetings as a way to preserve the culture.*

Second to consciousness raising, creation and facilitation of peer support networks was the main initiative that the participants wanted to propose. Some networks do exist, but rurally speaking most people are not involved

in them. This lack of rural Black and Minority Ethnic infrastructure was also a key problem for our service-provider participants (see chapter 11). But, for reasons of isolation described in chapter 5, to address the need for networks, a catalyst is needed to enable Black and Minority Ethnic people to find peer support and build supportive links and communication with services.

Networking – a rural sparsity

A defining character of the difference in nature between the rural and urban Black and Minority Ethnic populations is the extent to which they are networked. The rural demography is distinctive in the geographical dispersion and the cultural disparities of the individuals and families that make up Devon's Black and Minority Ethnic population. Rural Black and Minority Ethnic people are not living in geographical, co-ethnic clusters as is typical in many urban areas and some other rural regions (see chapters 3 and 5). There are some formal and ad hoc networks working across the South West and encompassing Devon, but much of the activity is regional or centres on the cities, and the research indicates most rural people are not formally networked and have little peer support. In the rural districts, in terms of widespread accessibility and provision of welfare-oriented services, there is no real Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector or infrastructure. What exists in the rural areas tends to be based on the energies of individuals, is not formally organised, and is socially oriented rather than organised to provide welfare services or representation.

The networks that already exist in Devon include:

- The Black Networking Group, working across the far South West. It is a small voluntary group with a few rural district members and organises annual events, including family days. It has a race equality resources collection and an internal newsletter.
- The Islamic Centre for the South West is in Exeter. A number of Muslims from the rural areas attend the Mosque or are in contact with key members of the Centre. The Islamic Centre founded the Olive Tree project with the Exeter Council for Voluntary Service, which initially provided English as an Additional Language support to women, in Exeter, and which has expanded to encompass many other activities, including work with the Chinese community in Exeter. The Olive Tree is developing from a project into an organisation.
- A group of Muslims meet for prayer at a Mosque in Torbay.
- Groups of Muslims meet for prayer in northern Devon. On occasions, over 200 people have gathered for key religious events. The

community would like to establish a community Mosque.

- Many Asian people in North Devon often join annually for an event that coincides with either Muslim, Sikh or Hindu festivals. Different people organise the events each year voluntarily. The network is informal.
- A number of Portuguese-speaking people gather from time to time for social events in Exeter and South Devon. The network is informal, and contacts and events occur on an ad hoc basis by word of mouth and via a private English/Portuguese language teacher.
- The Jewish community in south and central Devon has a couple of informal networks that depend on volunteer capacity and have provided support for secular Jews through a range of social and interest-based events.
- The Devon & Cornwall Chinese Association is based in Plymouth and includes a number of rural members.
- The Devon & Cornwall Refugee Support Council has supported refugees in south Devon.
- Through the Planet Rainbow project for Mixed Heritage families in Exeter, we have also heard of a few groups of families who have been meeting rurally – for example a group of Black families in Totnes.

The lack of formal (as opposed to ad hoc), widely accessible rural network infrastructure has to do with the usual isolating features of rurality itself and some distinguishing characteristics of rural Black and Minority Ethnic ethnography.

The issues include:

- Rural distances.
- Individual outlooks shaping identity.
- Attitudes and concerns about groups and co-ethnic relationships.
- ‘Invisibility’ of the ‘visible minority ethnic’ population members to each other in the rural landscape.
- Predominance of different ethnicities in any one area as opposed to co-ethnic clusters
- Lack of means for people to find each other.
- Integration into the local community.

(For detail, see chapter 5.)

The key characteristic of the Minority Ethnic population in Devon is that it's composed of a great diversity of individuals and outlooks. People live as individuals and families around Devon's large landscape – unlike urban areas, there are no co-ethnic 'communities' as such. Consequently, we found that peoples' individual life experiences and their relationships in the rural community in which they live were more likely to influence their decisions about the attitudes they take towards identity and living as a minority member of a rural community. For some participants this kind of individual cultural autonomy was a choice, and they described how life in Devon offered the opportunity to avoid some of the pressures of community life and the cultural and political group dynamics found more usually in urban co-ethnic communities. It was striking that the more individualistic a person's sense of identity and the more conscious a person was of this, the more reservations a person had about seeking out co-ethnic relationships.

A more fundamental cause of the lack of spontaneous networks and organisation in rural areas lies in our finding that many people in rural Devon have a low awareness of the existence or extent of their local Black and Minority Ethnic population. Most participants needed to think hard to recall the other minority ethnic people living in their area, and some felt there were no other minorities in Devon. This research even put participants of the same villages in touch with each other. It was apparent that this kind of 'colour-blindness' mostly arose from participants' lack of co-identification with other ethnicities and the absence of co-ethnic clusters as a marker in the community.

Combined with rural distances and isolation (Devon being one of the largest counties in the UK) these are the reasons that many rural people don't spontaneously network co-ethnically and there are no social commonalities drawing people together on a multi-ethnic basis. More detail about the factors causing multiple layers of isolation can be found in chapter 5. Issues surrounding friendship and co-ethnic sources of support are also considered in chapter 5.

The factors that mitigate against people being able to or inclined to find peer support and form networks shouldn't be taken however as a signal that people don't want it. The participants' recommendations, and the activities listed in the box above, show that it is needed but needs facilitation to happen if it is to be accessible to isolated individuals. The factors that separate people in rural areas, facilitation can help to overcome. Some participants described their own efforts to hold events and get people together, and the problems they encountered as volunteers acting independently, in sustaining or widening this outreach. The success of the

informal Asian network in North Devon and Portuguese-speaking network in South and East Devon illustrate the interest in networks, but also demonstrate that without the benefit of resources and facilitation informal networks are limited in their outreach and perform mostly social rather than welfare functions. The ideas put forward by the participants describe the provision of peer support through a programme of events that address a number of social and welfare concerns with facilitation that can work with a diversity of cultures and deal with complex needs and group dynamics. Facilitation is also important for the purposes of advertising and making networks accessible to ethnically and rurally isolated people.

External stimulus and sustenance of networks.

The type of network needed to address the recommendation is one with an external catalyst, resources and good quality facilitation. The paradox (of the need for a peer network consisting of people with very little in common with one another in identity terms), requires a unifying project to catalyze and sustain a response and to maintain an overview. The expressed need to ensure that peer support doesn't become peer burdening also underlines the need for careful facilitation and recourse to external support sources.

In response to this need, and in the absence of any other established race equality organisation working in the rural Districts with the capacity to catalyze Multi-Ethnic networking, the Racial Equality Council has developed project plans to establish networks and provide specialist facilitators and outreach workers. These plans have already been developed with agencies in two Districts and other partners, and it is hoped that agencies and partners will also support the proposal in other Districts.

Networks – a safe bridge between Black and Minority Ethnic people and Services.

With overcoming social exclusion being the obvious function of such a network, the proposal has a natural relevance to the interests of public bodies concerned with social welfare and inclusion as well as race equality organisations. Moreover, the existence of facilitated networks could also address some of the problems which service-providing participants in the research identified as barriers to Black and Minority Ethnic access to services. It would also help overcome the barriers that currently prevent public services from meeting their Duty under the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) to consult with the Black and Minority Ethnic population.

In this sense a major benefit of a network, to both its members and to service-providing agencies, is the opportunity it provides through its

facilitation to provide a permanent listening and consultation mechanism. In principle, networks are the ideal safe and supportive environment through which members can be enabled to express their current concerns and ideas and feed them through to the relevant agencies and forums such as community planning forums and community safety partnerships. In this way network members can raise the issues that *are* of concern to them, rather than a few individuals being badgered, as is the present model, by multiple information-hungry agencies on a plethora of issues that may or may not be an issue for people.

Community planning requires on-going consultation mechanisms to be in place in the community, if it is to be meaningful and if it is to be sustained as framework for reinforcing local democracy. A variety of approaches are being taken to implement local consultation structures, and many rely upon open meetings and surveys as their mechanism. These approaches are unlikely to engage Black and Minority Ethnic individuals. This research indicates that Agencies would be wise to jointly support Multi-Ethnic rural networks and derive the consultation information they need from the much wider base of feedback information that networks would provide. Agencies are currently trying to find means of jointly rationalising and improving consultation with the Black and Minority Ethnic population through the Devon Consultation Group. The Multi-Ethnic Network idea has been explored during a meeting with the DSG and in discussion with the DCC representative to the group, and was welcomed in principle. The proposal represents best practice in that it allows the Black and Minority Ethnic network members to set the consultation priorities and agendas themselves. But it also presents the opportunity for the DCG members to make best use of the proposal by periodically synthesising lists of data needs for planning of services. The network facilitators – specialist community development workers - could then discuss these data needs with the Group, provide existing data, and collect other data as appropriate during the course of their work. The benefits of this methodology are numerous:

- The community development workers would act as a confidentiality buffer between consulting agencies and Black and Minority Ethnic people
- A Black and Minority Ethnic perspective would be available to meet all the agencies' Community Planning and Best Value review duties, as well as facilitating impact assessment under Race equality Schemes.
- Agencies' and districts' consultation with Black and Minority Ethnic people would be co-ordinated. This means that a larger area and population set can be drawn from, which would increase statistical reliability on common issues. The consultation methodology would

increase not only data quantity but also quality. (At present reliance on random sampling with ethnicity monitoring questions does not yield sufficient Black and Minority Ethnic data, either pan Devon or in specific districts. See chapter 11.)

- Data collection would be ongoing and user-centred rather than intermittent and agency-centred, but would still meet agency data-needs.
- Black and Minority Ethnic people in Devon would feel the consultation work of the development workers to be supportive and part of a relationship. This stands in positive contrast to consultations which come from multiple fragmented sources, may lack sensitivity and relevance, and often place a repetitive burden on a few known Black and Minority Ethnic individuals to ‘represent’ the Black and Minority Ethnic population perspective.
- The community development workers would be a point of reference through which Black and Minority Ethnic people can enquire as to the impact that consultation has had on services. This means that consultation would be two-way.
- The consultation methodology would help service providers overcome the frustrations of lack of time, data protection constraints and lack of outreach know-how.

Most importantly, consultation would be only one aspect of the community development workers’ brief. Their key role would be the support of Black and Minority Ethnic people in rural areas, assisting with case-work, advocacy and sign-posting people to appropriate sources of help and helping them access appropriate services. Their part in supporting a Black and Minority Ethnic consultation framework for Devon would be part of that supportive brief by helping to ensure that services meet real, articulated need.

The community development aspect of the workers’ role would provide other benefits for agencies, namely:

- A resource to be used by the Race Priority Action Teams (RPATs) under the district Community Safety Partnerships. By linking RPATs to people’s everyday experience in the community, the workers would be enabling the RPATs to both proactively and reactively deal with racial discrimination – something most RPATs are currently struggling to do.
- A means for the Racial Equality Council to build rural networks for peer support and to stimulate the development of a Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector in Devon. The County Council would then

have the opportunity to develop a supportive compact with a Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector.

- A means for grant-making bodies (e.g. Community Fund et al.) to have a Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector infrastructure created, so that their funds can be used by constituted grass roots organisations, which are at present virtually non-existent in Devon. Agencies' support for the community development worker /network initiative will thereby have added value in that it will enable a newly created Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector to draw down new sources of funding into Devon.
- A means to make sure that Black and Minority Ethnic rural residents are enabled to know about and access the full range of services they may need, whether from the statutory, voluntary or private sector.
- A means for service-providers to reach out to people through foreign language speaking development workers (peripatetic workers who form part of the Racial Equality Council's proposal), reaching especially women, elderly, and young immigrant men who do not speak English.

Inter-Minority Ethnic race equality work

The research has also heard about intercultural tensions sometimes arising when religion and cultural identity are deeply intertwined, but expressed differently, among various nationalities within the same faith group. The research also heard from participants about inter-racial prejudices on the part of some Minority Ethnic individuals themselves. This suggests that there is also room for Multi-Ethnic networks to facilitate consciousness raising work among different Minority Ethnic groups, as well as in the wider community.

3. Bridge building across cultures: celebrations of culture and diversity

We collated 31 suggestions from participants under this heading.

- Activities and events are needed, aimed at exchanging information about one another's culture and celebrating culture and diversity.
- These events could be hosted, and gather people together, through the networks described earlier in this chapter.

- Events should enable Black and Minority Ethnic network members and their families to enjoy the expression of culture in a safe, appreciative setting.
 - Sometimes these events should be aimed at co-ethnic groups of people.
 - Sometimes they should be aimed at Multi-Ethnic gatherings.
 - Other events should enable Black and Minority Ethnic members of Multi-Ethnic rural networks to raise awareness of culture and diversity among the wider public.
 - Events aimed at the wider public should also incorporate celebration of Devonian culture and language.
 - Events should celebrate culture through mediums such as food or dance.
 - Events should be hosted in rural communities.
 - Food outlets – restaurants, delicatessens and Multi-Ethnic community cafes - could also be a focus for celebrating culture in themselves, and could also be a venue for social and cultural gatherings.
- *I'd like to know other people of my ethnicity so a network would be good in that way - you could have arts and food and involve the wider community.*

This recommendation is closely linked to the participants' interests in rural networking, because the need to find a means of getting people in touch with each other is a pre-requisite of the ability to run events. As described earlier in this chapter, some informal self-organised activity does take place, but most of the participants had not been involved in such opportunities and the opportunity to gather around cultural events was a widely felt gap. The participants' descriptions of the types of events they would like to see could be the substance of Multi-Ethnic network events, or could be the subject of activities currently run in Exeter by projects and faith groups extended into rural areas too. Some of the participants' suggestions could also be of interest to rural communities and organisations interested in running activities to promote cultural awareness and celebrate diversity.

4. Improving access to information and services

We collated 19 suggestions from participants under this heading

The majority of the interest expressed in improved access to information and services related to English language support. Some specific suggestions were made:

- English language support could be offered with the option of participation on a skills/time bank basis, so that learners of English as an Additional language - especially low income learners - can offer their own skills in return for coaching.
- English language support should also address the particular needs of women, in terms of curriculum content pitched at the learner's welfare needs and reducing social isolation, and in terms of appropriate learning settings.
- First-language support networks would help to reduce isolation for women learners of English of an Additional Language.
- Means should be found to provide multi-lingual information and interpreter support to those who need it.
 - *Main problem with access to service is language barrier (esp, doctor, dentist, hospital, evening classes, public transport, advice and info). I speak only Chinese.*
- Black and Minority Ethnic people's language skills could be better used by the creation of an interpretation network, especially for complainant aid. Some people would wish to provide their skills on a volunteer-expenses basis, other would need to have the costs of their professional time covered.

Several participants felt that access to information and services could be overcome best through sign-posting services and with help in navigating their way through service provider's systems.

- Some suggested that such sign-posting could be provided by a multi-lingual welcome pack providing information about relevant national, county and local services.
- Other suggested that sign-posting and help with service-navigation would best be done by specialist community development workers (such as the workers who would facilitate the Multi-Ethnic networks proposed earlier).

☞ *It would be really useful if there were community development workers to refer to, to help with finding out about services for patients and to refer patients onto.*

- Some participants also felt that help with system navigation could also be done by service-providing staff themselves, taking the time to explain services clearly in person and help people with paperwork.
- In particular, it was noted that communication about services and information is best done orally, avoiding reliance on written media.

☞ *Bangladeshi people are not keen on filling forms in – they even resist my credit scheme because it involves reading adverts! Older people often don't speak much English, and don't read much in whatever language.*

- It was also suggested that access to information and services would be improved through having a proportional workforce (in ethnicity terms) extending a means of identification between service providers and users (especially in social care).
- Participants also felt that an improved gateway to wider support and services could best be provided via doctors, community nurses, health visitors and midwives.
- However, participants also suggested that the experience of accessing health services themselves, and on-referral services, needed to be improved through trans-cultural medicine training and information handbooks for health practitioners in hospitals and the community, GPs in particular.
- It was also proposed that information could be distributed to Black and Minority Ethnic individuals via GPs (doctors or practice staff) who are trusted, seen usually once a year and who could download, print and provide leaflets as relevant.
- ☞ *Most Chinese people don't read - they put it in the bin. Most people also won't talk long like this. People won't answer questions, but they would take information from the Doctor. They might look at a Chinese information pack.*

Other ideas and recommendations relating to improved access to services are also covered in chapter 10, which looks specifically at health and welfare services, and in chapter 5, which examines the factors that cause isolation and language barriers in particular. chapter 11 also examines some of the issues that impede the ability of service providers to engage with Black and Minority Ethnic people to make services more responsive and accessible.

5. Race equality support services

We collated 17 suggestions from participants under this heading

Some comments related to ethos of race equality work, and advocated:

- Focus on equality, not vulnerability.
- A spirit of delivering race equality initiatives ‘with’ and not ‘to’ or ‘for’ Black and Minority Ethnic people.
- Equality means working with difference.

Some comments picked out specific groups around which work should be focussed, in particular support for Black and Minority Ethnic:

- Staff
- Teenagers
- Tourists
- School pupil victims of racial bullying

Suggestions also highlighted issues that needed attention in terms of the way that support is delivered, including the need to:

- Ensure that the racial equality council has the capacity to take on complex and difficult cases
- Provide local race equality support surgeries (e.g. at CAB or other drop-in centres) and advertise through local Multi-Ethnic networks.
- Ensure that cases are appropriately allocated to complainant aid workers, taking account of skills required by case specific and gender, cultural and faith sensitivities.

☛ *For a closed session for just minority people it's better to have a support surgery once a week at the market drop-in centre. It would need to be advertised in the library and local newspaper (the free one) or it could be at the CAB.*

Recommendations were also put forward for specific activities and measures, including:

- Black and Minority Ethnic young people’s development: teamwork and leadership skills, and entrepreneurship training and mentoring.
☛ *You could do with an initiative to look at leadership, teamwork and entrepreneurship and some mentoring to help young people look at their dreams and help them to follow them. Mentoring schemes work well. You need to find the Black and Minority Ethnic kids by getting out on the streets. Kids like doing their business on the street.*

- Links and initiatives between youth and race equality services: – support surgeries; street/detached outreach; intercultural/ inter-religious work through music.
- Clear communication about institutional racism – what it is and how it works – to both institutions and Black and Minority Ethnic people too.
- Conscious inclusion of anti-Semitism in the anti-racism brief of the REC.
- Inclusion within the REC brief of measures and partnership initiatives to address prejudice experienced by Travellers and homophobia.
- Management of inter-religious sensitivity in general racial equality work and prevention of disenfranchisement of individual groups from Multi-ethnic race equality work and services.

☞ *We need the recognition by the REC of anti-Semitism. For some people I think it would be hard to take on anti-Semitism case-work. There's a feeling in Devon of a very Arab influence and a pro Palestinian march - has this affected DEREK? Has it checked this out? It's been very hard since September 11th and the worsening situation in Israel.*

Suggestions were also made about the future profile and accessibility of the Racial Equality Council (REC), including the points that the REC should:

- Have a higher profile in the public and among service-providers (providing improved access to its services).
- Make its principle duty to promote the interests of the Black and Minority Ethnic population clearly understood.
- Underline the independence of the REC from its funders, and demonstrate that activity is driven by Black and Minority Ethnic interests and not by funding.
- Establish a Racial Equality Council youth council – thereby building future infrastructure and taking on the emerging issues of race equality as experienced by young people.

All of these recommendations have been taken on board by the Racial Equality Council which has already incorporated many of the suggestions into its forward-planning 3 year business plan. For example, the business plan includes a proposal for an empowerment project, aimed at developing leadership and teamwork skills among Black and Minority Ethnic young

people. The project would aim to promote access to and advancement in the workplace and stimulate entrepreneurial and grass-roots activity, in particular the development of a Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary sector. The need to improve rural, local access to complainant aid services is also incorporated into the business plan, with proposals to work with partners to increase the capacity of local organisations to deal with race and discrimination cases, and to provide increased specialist backup and peripatetic services. The participants' recommendations that do not fall within the business-planning brief have also been disseminated to the Executive for priority attention.

6. Equality in employment

We collated 14 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Eliminating racism in employment was seen as a key means of improving race equality. Some specific measures were suggested including:

- Positive action on recruitment – welcome statements (and guidance about how to draft them)
- Positive action to promote managerial status within the Black and Minority Ethnic workforce.
- Separation of ethnicity monitoring forms from job applications (using separate envelopes and removal of all personal details from application form)
 - *The main problem is we can't tell why there are problems with job applications. So it would be best to de-personalise all personal details from application forms.*
 - *There should be separate ERKM envelopes which are not opened until **after** the interview - that's a good idea.*
- Explanation to applicants about how ethnicity record keeping and monitoring is handled and why it is done, in order to build confidence in the benefits that ethnicity monitoring can bring to race equality.
 - *There's a general worry among Black and Minority Ethnic people caused by the feeling that everyone wants to monitor them. This is very counter-productive and causes people to put up walls.*
- Providing for people to describe their ethnicity in their own terms on ethnicity monitoring forms.
- Creation of an ethnically proportional workforce – and for nationally advertised jobs the use of national census proportions, not local percentages.

- Better support for Black and Minority Ethnic people in finding work (better communication of transferable skills to employers; information for employers about the comparability of work within systems and job settings overseas; translation and accreditation of qualifications gained overseas; help with adapting to UK norms and culture in applying for jobs and going through interviews.)

The participants' experience of life in the workplace is covered in detail in chapter 7. Issues relating to ethnicity monitoring – of both the workforce and service uptake – are also covered in chapter 4. These issues are also picked up in chapter 11 in which service providers and employers also describe the difficulties they encounter with ethnicity monitoring, and suggestions are made for dealing with these problems, in addition to the suggestions made in the box above by Black and Minority Ethnic participants themselves.

7. Political action and Leadership

We collated 14 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Participants described several indicators that would help to demonstrate political commitment and leadership to addressing race equality, including:

- Clearly stated coherent messages
 - Funding from public bodies for race equality initiatives and services
 - Sustained action by contrast to frequent appearance and disappearance of initiatives, measures perceived as tokenistic, or frequent changes in personnel with race equality designations
 - Changed behaviour by service-delivery staff, prompted by better understanding on the part of management about difficulties existing at the point of delivery.
- ☞ *The Devon and Cornwall Police Force is committed at corporate level to race equality and eradicating inappropriate behaviour. But senior police officers need to spend time with officers at the grass roots, to find out more about working with attitudes and confidence levels to make their [officers'] behaviour supportive of diversity and make equal opportunities a reality.*
- Increased political representation by Black and Minority Ethnic people.

- Action to support equality for Travellers, including increased provision of stopping sites and shake up of planning permission systems and decisions that discriminate against the Traveller and settled-Traveller community.
- Evidence that the outcomes of research and consultation, such as the Rural Outreach Project, are used by service providers in planning action.
 - *People are mistrustful of organisations prying into their lives especially if they can't see likely results.*
- Reports evidencing the monitoring and evaluation of race equality policy implementation

Participants also referred to strategic political measures that they also felt would have the effect of improving race equality, including:

- Impact assessment of international policy on community relations
Racism not just due to fear and hostility. It's also whipped up by political agendas e.g the war on terrorism and Iraq – they have to make people want to go to war with another civilisation. So I don't blame people for being hostile on the street. The Government accusations of a culture of being barbaric and autocratic become very difficult to fight on a personal local level.
- Poverty reduction measures to address socio-economic frustrations of wider society that get irrationally displaced as racial intolerance.
- Mitigation of the threat to rurally-based livelihoods and the knock-on effect of that threat on relations with 'in-comers'.

Chapter 11 looks in greater detail at the support needs expressed by service providers. The findings echo the need expressed by Black and Minority Ethnic participants for leadership to be exerted by senior Public Body staff and politicians as a means of driving and enabling change at the point of service outreach and delivery. Research conducted recently by the Local Government Association also stresses the pivotal role of leadership in public bodies, not only on the part of Chief Executives but also on the part of Heads of Services (senior management) and elected members.

8. Media

We collated 11 suggestions from participants under this heading.

The media was seen as having a key role to play in valuing and encouraging local diversity and combating negative typecasting.

- *Life in Devon would be improved by articles in the papers about valuing diversity of people here and the businesses. It will encourage more people to come including people to invest.*
- *Improve race relations by publicizing on TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, that Britain is multi-cultural (and fortunately most British people are tolerant and learn to cope).*

Participants suggested that the media can tackle racist attitudes in society specifically through comedy, and through increased presence of Black and Minority Ethnic broadcasters and actors – especially in soap operas.

- *Spike Milligan in 'Chicken and chips' used the tactic of showing how ridiculous prejudice is – a tactic that should return. More Black and Minority Ethnic actors on TV –especially the soaps would be good.*

Participants also suggested that cultural diversity could be promoted by coverage of 'real people' stories in the media, but that means need to be found to enable people to speak about their experience without fear of exposure or exploitation.

- *The newspapers etc. should talk about stories of real people in mixed relationships - to show we're real people, not aliens, not to be frowned at.*

In the course of the research, we came across a number of initiatives in the media, particularly television, to address race equality and cultural awareness. The project was often approached with requests for help in advertising to participants opportunities to get involved with media projects. In a few cases, where one or two participants had expressed interest in this, the project was able to help make the links. However, there remains a problem in that it is inappropriate as well as impractical for organisations such as the Racial Equality Council to individually get in touch with its many contacts every time a broadcaster or other service-provider wishes to involve members of the Black and Minority Ethnic population. By contrast, several participants did feel that people should put forward their real life stories into the public domain as a means of raising awareness. However, at the same time, participants pointed out that people

should not risk further vulnerability in the process of exposing their experience to the media, and described the need for a safe means of sharing and passing on real-life cases. Multi-Ethnic peer networks present an opportunity for people to come together in a safe setting to describe their experience. Networks could also present the opportunity for Black and Minority Ethnic people to drive the process of sharing their stories themselves, through literary and arts-based projects. Networks also provide the opportunity for far less intrusive advertising of opportunities to take part in external initiatives, such as media interest, through network newsletters or magazines and advertising at events.

9. Initiative on the part of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals

We collated 8 suggestions from participants under this heading.

These participants felt that promotion of cultural diversity and race equality should be taken on personally by Black and Minority Ethnic people living rurally, in their communities and in their work.

☞ *Attitudes change e.g. when a White person finds themselves in position of having to depend on a Black person's help.*

For some of the respondents, this view was born of a pessimistic appraisal of the commitment of anyone other than affected individuals to respond to incidents. It was also sometimes born of the perception that there was no race equality work going on in rural Devon. For most of the participants, the outlook was also rooted in individuals' commitment to building relationships in the wider community, instinctive decisions about how best to survive in their local community and a sense of self-reliance.

The suggestions for individual initiative centered on working at one-to-one relationship-building and joining in and 'fitting in' with the community. 'Self-improvement' was also seen by some as the best line of action in the absence of the ability to change others.

☞ *To feel welcome depends on the image you portray and how accessible you are to the community – you need to come out and relate to people, this leads to acceptance.*

The participants' suggestion that Black and Minority Ethnic people should take on initiatives to promote race equality and cultural diversity was often followed by references to their desire to take part in events that would celebrate culture and build bridges in the community, such as described earlier in this chapter under *3. Bridge building across cultures:*

celebrations of culture and diversity. The suggestions were also linked to the ideas that Black and Minority Ethnic people should also be involved in consciousness raising and training events, see *1. Consciousness raising and training.*

Chapter 6 looks in greater detail at the participants' experience of racism and their strategies for coping with it. (Chapter 7 also looks specifically at people's experience of discrimination at work.) Chapter 6 goes on to examine some of the factors that prevent people from reporting racism and cause people to depend on self-reliant coping strategies. Whilst the duty must remain with society and its infrastructure to eliminate racism from its midst, the role that Black and Minority Ethnic individuals play in transforming attitudes, as a matter of necessity and personal courage, must be supported. During the course of the research, many people asked for help with anecdotes and reactions that they could employ to challenge racism when it affronted them. Participants were all asked about their coping strategies and their suggestions for other people in the same situation. Whilst a few had ideas to recommend, many others described how they never failed to feel confounded by discrimination or astounded that people should feel such prejudicial attitudes. The need to find more response tactics was echoed in the participants' call for peer support opportunities, through which members could share experiences and ideas and reduce the sense of personal isolation that is exacerbated by experience of prejudice. We also noted that service-providing staff wanted the same kind of advice about comments and tactics that could be kept 'up one's sleeve' so that, just like the Black and Minority Ethnic participants, they would be better ready to challenge racist behaviour and comments. Some suggestions are made in chapter 6 about the tactics advocated by participants, but supporting individuals in one-to-one and work-situation attempts to counter racism remains an area that needs to be addressed with action-research, production of resources, and dissemination.

10. Consultation and influence.

We collated 6 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Consultation and outreach were seen as a means of improving race relations between service providers and Black and Minority Ethnic people. Some specific points were also made including:

- The suggestion that consultation and reporting of incidents or complaints could be improved through creation of a joint agency telephone support service, advertised through the media including local papers and Health Trust newsletters etc.
 - *I think more people would prefer to share their views by having a telephone number they can contact people on.*
- Black and Minority Ethnic people should be able to participate more widely in consultation but without feeling that they are being singled out as individuals.
- Outreach needs facilitation through neutral outreach workers, who would work to overcome suspicion, be non-intrusive and be a means of avoiding the problems of written-media outreach.

Organisations often rely on the reporting of incidents or complaints to flag up the need for re-evaluation of policies and their impact. This is especially true since sample surveys carried out by agencies as part of their standard consultation usually fail to pick up any significant number of Black and Minority Ethnic respondents, and therefore do not act as a good means of picking up problems. The research shows that the Black and Minority Ethnic response to prejudice, discrimination or poor service is usually to absorb it rather than to report it. More information about this can be found in chapter 6. It's only at the end of their endurance that most people will complain and then with reluctance for fear of exposure and reaction. Isolated Black and Minority Ethnic people do not like to 'stick out', especially on matters in which they have been made vulnerable and which make them a complainant. Backlash and outcry cannot be depended upon alone to inform Impact Assessment. Neither is there a framework for consultation in Devon with the Black and Minority Ethnic population. The information that is required for Impact Assessment can only be procured if a safe route is provided for people to express themselves. Under *Networks and Peer Support* above, participants set out their second key recommendation: that peer networks should be facilitated in which people can meet, share experience, collect information, access support and enjoy an environment that celebrates identity and cultural interest. This is the safe environment in which people's experience, views and ideas can be

expressed, debated and amassed. It's the opportunity through which the isolated and disparate identities of the rural Black and Minority Ethnic population can come together to raise issues, find common ground and be active in informing services, without prejudice of personal security or repetitive exposure to multiple consultation agendas set by Devon's many agencies. This kind of consultation mechanism is the means by which Public Bodies' Duty to assess the impact of policies could be made far more achievable, but it is a measure that needs public bodies' support to sustain the facilitation of independent networks and dialogue about services and issues of concern. Consultation in this way would be good race relations in itself. It would also be a single means of making best value use of public funds to achieve a Duty of outreach to a minority population of individuals who by their disparate nature are difficult to access. More information about service providers' own concerns over consultation and Impact Assessment are discussed in chapter 11, which also provides tools for conducting Impact Assessment and for strategic planning of consultation.

11. Effect and promotion of demographic change

We collated 5 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Some participants felt that acceptance of cultural diversity and improved race equality would come about as an inevitable result of the natural growth of the Black and Minority Ethnic rural population and, in particular, the effect of the increasing numbers of Mixed Heritage families.

Participants also noted that, at the same time, preparation amongst agencies and race equality services should be made to cope with increasing exposure to previously latent prejudice that would accompany the growth in the Black and Minority Ethnic population.

It was also suggested that measures should be taken to encourage more Black and Minority Ethnic people to live in Devon, and to help Devon communities to be more welcoming and receptive of in-comers. This was suggested both to open communities up to the benefits of multi-cultural society, and as a way to give more rural people experience of cross-cultural relationships with the attendant awareness raising effects.

 *Promote the existence and benefits of diverse cultures to rural communities - even in rural Devon we are a multi-cultural society!*

- ☞ *Race relations will improve if more Black and Ethnic Minority people are encouraged to come to Devon and thereby White people will become more accustomed to Black people: people may be indoctrinated from birth but will change as a result of one-to-one relationships. However racism in job opportunities will have to be overcome to achieve this.*
- ☞ *There's lots of BME and other incomers now in Devon so you need to be more welcoming. You need to get people to live and let live. The future of society is multi-racial.*
- ☞ *Devon is a white area with a small number of minority ethnic groups and I personally feel that as more ethnic groups are moving here racial abuse incidents are going to be on the increase. Unless people are made aware of the consequences of their actions not just legally but also emotionally for their victims, racism will continue.*

More information about the demographics of the Black and Minority Ethnic population can be found in chapter 3. Issues about attracting and retaining Black and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce and business sector are also discussed in chapter 7.

12. Inter-religious understanding (including within the Black and Minority Ethnic population)

We collated 4 suggestions from participants under this heading.

This recommendation highlights the faith dimensions of ethnicity and participants' concerns about the attendant religious issues in multi-ethnic society.


Specific suggestions included:

- Promotion of inter-religious understanding – through use of counselling and listening techniques, comedy, and sensitively facilitated social events.
- Cultural and inter-religious exchange initiatives – especially for young people

Chapter 9 looks at the prejudice and tensions described by participants in relation to faith-identity, and religious isolation. According to Census 2001, 67% of the Black and Minority Ethnic population (including Europeans) ascribe to a religious identity. This project has also shown that religion is a key part of ethnic identity in either faith or cultural terms. Hence is it logical that inter-faith work is an important element of cross-cultural understanding. Some inter-faith activities already take place in

Exeter, through groups such as the Council of Christians and Jews, the Inter-faith group and inter-faith events hosted by the Society of Friends. The research also suggests that this work is also needed in rural areas and among religious groups within the Black and Minority Ethnic community in order to promote cultural awareness, race equality and community cohesion.

As one participant described, inter-faith activity can have deep effects, and can be especially important when messages about religious and cultural issues are enmeshed in media coverage of the international political scene, with consequences felt by Black and Minority Ethnic people locally in Devon.

 *The eagerness of the people wanting to know about each other was exciting - Not only to learn and develop dialogue but to recognise differences and unravelling where misinformation is coming from. For example Israel and Palestine - if people really listened and understood the issues for both and understood what's at stake for each, it would lead to mutual understanding. We need listening techniques.*

13. Cultural Centres

We collated 4 suggestions from participants under this heading.

Global Centres, Multi-Ethnic community centres, and faith centres were all suggested as a focus for education, consciousness raising and cultural gatherings. They were proposed both as a facility for interaction among Black and Minority Ethnic people and for connection with the wider community.


Typically, cultural and education activities have been organised in Exeter, using a variety of venues, for events such as the annual Respect festivals, Inter-faith meetings, co-ethnic gatherings and the delivery of projects serving groups such as Mixed-Heritage families, women learners of English as an Additional Language and the Chinese school. The Islamic Centre in Exeter and Faith centres in Plymouth have been a focus for partnership meetings and activities and now Devon Development Education (DDE) and partner organisations in Exeter have established a Global Centre at 15 York Road in Exeter (contact DDE about the services and resources on offer at devondeved@eurobell.co.uk). The Global Centre will provide an educational focus for exploring diversity globally and locally too.

There is great potential in the idea that community facilities attached to faith centres could provide important opportunities for promoting religious understanding and for community cohesion. The Olive Tree project has shown too, how needs identified in a faith community (the Muslim community) can also be a catalyst for services encompassing the needs of other Minority Ethnic groups. Some participants also felt that because of the diversity ethnicity and faith of the Black and Minority Ethnic population, there remains a need for venues that can act as a marker on the landscape and as a place for people to gather on a multi-ethnic and multi-faith basis. With such diversity, multi-ethnic initiatives are a pragmatic response to making sure that individuals of all ethnicities and faith backgrounds are included. Such initiatives are yet to be developed in rural Devon and have yet to find a recognised home. Given the variety of initiatives and centres of activity in Exeter, such as the Global Centre, the Racial Equality Council, and faith centres, it is important that networking takes place between them to ensure that individuals have the opportunity to find out about everything that is currently available.

14. Closer look at trans-racial adoption

We collated 2 suggestions from participants under this heading.

For these participants, addressing the problems of trans-cultural adoption and promotion of co-cultural adoption were the key measures that needed to be taken.

 *The main problem is white parents adopting or fostering Black kids. You need to encourage more Black people to foster or mentor Black kids.*

More information about some issues raised by adopted Black and Minority Ethnic participants can be found in chapter 10 within the section on *children and services*.

This handbook and supporting tools ✂ can be accessed at www.DevonREC.org