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European Social Fund: Equality and Diversity Good Practice Guide – Ethnic Minority Communities



European Social Fund: Equality and Diversity Good Practice Guide Ethnic Minority Communities

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1.0 Introduction

The objective of the 2007–2013 European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programme is to increase employment and reduce unemployment and inactivity, tackling barriers to work faced by:

- disabled people and people with health conditions;
- lone parents and other disadvantaged parents;
- older workers;
- people from ethnic minorities;
- people with low or no qualifications; and
- young people, particularly if not in education, employment or training.

Background

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) European Social Fund (ESF) Division has commissioned this Good Practice Guide to identify and publish good practice from the 2000–2006 ESF and Equal Programme. As equal opportunities is a central aspect of the European Social Fund, the lessons learnt and good practice based on the Equal principles of equal opportunities and empowerment identified have been gathered together to inform the 2007–2013 Programme.

Who this guide is for

This good practice guide is aimed primarily but not exclusively at ESF Co-Financing Organisations (such as DWP/Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council – LSC) that award ESF funding, and providers that deliver ESF projects.

The material will also be of interest to DWP policy divisions, ESF partners, equality and diversity organisations, devolved administrations, the European Commission and other Member States. The guide should also be of use to public bodies, projects and organisations that are developing strategies or delivering services to diverse communities.

Please note that this guide provides information and support that readers may choose to make use of. This does not mean that a provider or project applicant will be automatically successful in securing ESF monies.

Figure 1.1 Structure of the guide



The guidance is structured in accordance with the main steps through which an ESF applicant may pass on the journey from worklessness into employment and beyond. Case studies detailing how outcomes were achieved are included in each section.

Equality and diversity

Equal opportunities initiatives typically occur because the law has compelled organisations to create a ‘level playing field’ in the workplace or to ensure equal access to services. They aim to ensure that individuals, irrespective of their race, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age or disability can have equal access to employment and educational opportunities and the different services that organisations provide. Note however that the Disability Discrimination Act is slightly different in the sense that it does not create a ‘level playing field’ where everyone is treated the same. It requires employers and others to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ that help to overcome the disadvantages that disabled people can face. The making of ‘reasonable adjustments’ can mean doing things differently for disabled people in order to treat them fairly in accessing employment, services, etc. In short, the law plays an important part in ensuring that the ‘rules of the game’ are fair.

Diversity initiatives go further: they aim to take people’s diverse characteristics fully into account to gain maximum benefit from their uniqueness as individuals. Consequently, it makes sense that treating everyone the same is not necessarily going to work. Different people will have different aspirations, expectations, opportunities, responsibilities and needs. Therefore, treating people fairly means recognising their differences, respecting them and acting accordingly. In short, diversity is about valuing difference and respect for people.

Since 2000 there has been a shift in emphasis with regard to the legal framework which underpins the rights of various groups. The Race Relations Amendment Act, The Gender Equality Duty and the Disability Equality Duty, have shifted analysis away from focusing on what a public authority is *not doing*, i.e. discriminating against a particular individual, to one which focuses more on what *they are doing*, i.e. promoting good race relations. Whereas the previous legal framework was dependent on individuals making complaints about discrimination, now it is dependent on public authorities to demonstrate that they treat different groups fairly, challenge discrimination and promote inter-group harmony. The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations, Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations and The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations have all ensured additional legal support to a wider cross section of individuals.

There has also been an increased recognition of inter-sectional discrimination: discrimination based on a combination of grounds. Factors such as age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation can interact to create intersectional disadvantage, often affecting the most disadvantaged members of society, for example ethnic minority women or older disabled people.

The diversity component of the equalities debate requires those providing public services to reflect far more on the diverse nature of communities and groups. This has included recognition of issues of diversity within their user groups and placing a responsibility on providers to recognise and reflect the diversity of its local communities. Both recruitment and service delivery needs to be targeted and appropriate in order to reflect the diverse communities the project wishes to support.

Multiple discrimination occurs when someone experiences discrimination on more than one ground, for instance, by being treated less favourably not only on grounds of age but also because of a disability or their ethnicity. The old debate regarding race and ethnicity centred on perceived skin colour and in particular the opposites of those who were viewed as white and those deemed to be black. Skin colour is no longer seen as the sole dividing line between communities, and is believed by many to be no longer as useful an analytical or practical measure of equality and inequalities. The emergence of communities made up of individuals who are white, yet experience discrimination based on cultural, national and linguistic differences has risen to the top of the agenda as a consequence of the experience of newly-arrived migrants from Eastern Europe. In addition, many individuals experience the effects of dual, multiple or compounded identities – sometimes referred to as multiple disadvantage or discrimination.

This good practice guide demonstrates there are a range of projects that are not simply grappling with the emerging equality and diversity debates but also helping to shape it. Although projects should react to and reflect local circumstances there are common features that underpin successful approaches to equality and diversity, namely:

- a good understanding of equality and diversity and the communities you aim to support;
- securing community buy-in to support the attraction of diverse participants;
- having a robust and fair approach to assessing and developing participants;
- having the relevant processes and partnerships in place to support participants into employment;
- ensuring there is ongoing monitoring and evaluation to continue that support for those in employment.

What is good practice?

The term ‘good practice’ is often used to mean effective practice, practice that promises results or best practice, when in reality these terms all mean slightly different things to different people. Without establishing benchmarks and robust arrangements for evaluation, views about whether practice is good are essentially subjective. Good practice aims to remove all kinds of barriers to work, to provide a range of effective supports and activities, and to empower and involve participants. For the purposes of this guide, we have defined ‘good practice’ as approaches that are working well and can be replicated elsewhere.

The practical examples and case studies provided will help to evaluate each organisation’s intentions and the impact that can be achieved.

2.0 Equality and diversity – ethnic minorities

Diversity and European Social Fund

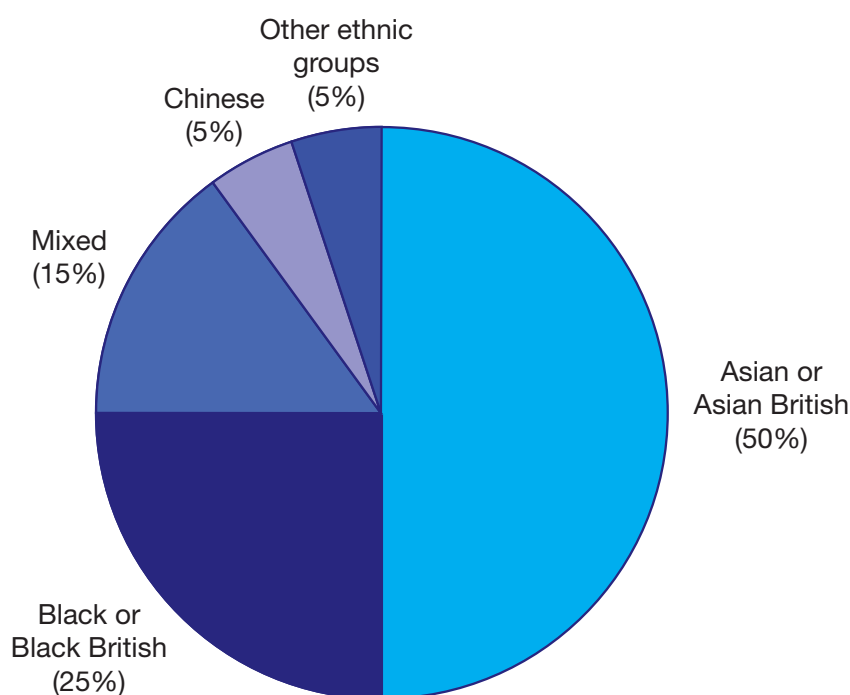
The ESF gives priority to several groups of participants. This good practice guide is particularly focused on practice that can support ethnic minority participants into employment and develop their skills.

Changing demographics

Drawing on information from the 2001 census,¹ the ethnic profile of the UK population comprised classifying themselves as white 92% with the remaining 8% classifying themselves as belonging to other ethnic groups. Indians were the largest of these groups, followed by Pakistanis, those of mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Bangladeshis. The remaining minority ethnic groups each accounted for less than 0.5% of the UK population and together accounted for a further 1.4%.

Around half of the non-white population were Asians of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other Asian origin followed by a quarter who were either Black Caribbean, Black African or other black. Fifteen per cent of the non-white population were from the mixed ethnic group, a third of which were from white and Black Caribbean backgrounds.²

Figure 2.1 The non-white population: by ethnic group, April 2001, UK



¹ Office for National Statistics 2005.

² Office for National Statistics 2007.

Legislation in the UK

The Race Relations Act 1976, updated through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, already outlawed discrimination by any public body on racial grounds (directly, indirectly or by victimisation) and places a positive duty on all public bodies to tackle institutional racism. This includes wider use of ethnic monitoring to assess the impact on racial equality of existing and revised organisational policies.

Since April 2001 local authorities have been subject to an enforceable General Duty under the Act. This duty states that in carrying out all their functions, public authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
- promote equality of opportunities;
- promote good race relations.

On 19 July 2003, a new law to strengthen protection from racial discrimination and harassment came into effect. The Race Relations Act 1976 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 (the Race Regulations) incorporates the EU Race Directive into UK law by making changes to the Race Relations Act 1976.

Under these duties, certain public authorities have to prepare and publish a Race Equality Scheme. The scheme should explain how they will meet both their general and specific duties.

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 makes discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief unlawful in employment or training.

New Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Employment 2006

The Commission for Racial Equality published a new statutory code of practice on Racial Equality in Employment in November 2005, which came into legal effect in April 2006. The new Code contains a set of recommendations and guidance on how to avoid unlawful racial discrimination and harassment in employment. The Code outlines employers' legal obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, and provides general advice on the policies they will need to safeguard against discrimination and harassment, as well as more detailed recommendations on procedure and practice.

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act makes it illegal to threaten people because of their religion, or to stir up hatred against a person because of their faith. It is designed to fill gaps in the current laws, which already protect people from threats based on their race or ethnic background. Any prosecutions under the bill will have to be approved by the Attorney General.

Background information

Lone parents in ethnic minority groups have lower employment rates than white lone parents.

The ethnic minority employment rate in England stands at 61%.

11% of the working age population in England is now non-white.

Ethnic minorities tend to be clustered in Britain's major cities. 45% of all ethnic minority people are living in London, where they make up 29% of all residents. After London, the West Midlands and North West regions have the highest ethnic minority populations.

Indian and Black Caribbean people tend to have relatively high employment rates and Pakistani and Bangladeshi people tend to have quite low rates.

Minority ethnic groups have a younger age structure than the white population, reflecting past immigration and fertility patterns. In 2001/02 the mixed race population had the youngest age structure – more than half (55%) were under the age of 16. The Bangladeshi population also had a young age structure, with 38% aged under 16. This was double the proportion of the white population where 19% were under the age of 16.

There is wide variation in employment rates between disabled people of differing ethnic groups. For example, the employment rate of Pakistani disabled people is under half that of 'other Asian' disabled people. The variation is even more pronounced when combining ethnicity and gender.

Ethnic minority qualification attainment rates vary widely. Differences in the proportion holding low or no qualifications by ethnic group are marked.

42% of Asian or Asian British have low or no qualifications compared to only 32% of the white population.

At the higher end, individuals of Chinese origin or mixed ethnicity are most likely to have level 4 or equivalents. There are significant barriers to participation in both learning and work for much of the ethnic minority population. For example, 75% of Bangladeshi women over the age of 25 do not speak fluent English.

Full-time ethnic minority workers are more likely than full-time white workers to receive on the job training and white workers are more likely to receive off the job training. However ethnic minority part-time workers are more likely to receive off the job training than white part-time workers.³

³ England and Gibraltar European Social Fund, Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment Programme 2007–2013.

3.0 Recruitment – attracting participants

Gaining community engagement and community buy-in is an important first step to engaging with participants from diverse groups.

A community consists of a number of sub-communities, based on a combination of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, location, etc. Each community will have different desires and needs that have to be weighed up.

It is possible to engage with communities in a variety of different ways but it is extremely important to understand the environment in which you are operating, the type of engagement each group prefers, and to then be able to deliver services in a way that benefits individuals, communities and individual co-financers and providers.

Consultation of service users, employees and other stakeholders form one of the specific duties of engaging with diverse groups. Such consultation provides a vital source of useful information for organisations to use when developing their equality objectives.

Attracting participants

The following points highlight some practical first steps that can be taken in developing engagement and buy-in to attract and recruit ethnic minority participants:

Commitment: Demonstrate a genuine commitment to working with communities. The first step would need to be a good understanding of the needs and requirements of the varied communities.

Outcome focused: Providers should have clearly thought through what they want to achieve and why it is they are focusing on ethnic minority participants. It is essential to demonstrate how your activities will benefit the participant and the wider minority communities.

Involvement: Ensure all staff are fully on board and committed to what is to be achieved and how this will be done. Ensure staff at all levels fully understand the business benefits of attracting diverse participants.

Planning: Ensure that the strategy is well-researched and evidenced. At the outset gather evidence of the needs and requirements of different ethnic groups. Ensure the information gathered provides a wider understanding of the regional/cultural variation that may exist. This information can then be used as evidence to agree the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken. Where possible use participants from ethnic minority backgrounds/religious and cultural support groups in planning and developing phases to ensure the information gathered is accurate.

Flexible approach: Engage participants at levels they can best relate to, rather than expecting communities to relate to organisational structures and processes.

Independence: Recognise that the most effective representation of community interests is likely to be via community and support bodies which are independent and accountable to the relevant community.

Communication: Communicate with communities in ways they can best relate to, including use of formats such as large print, Braille and languages other than English if required. Avoid assumptions – research and understand the audience and decide on the approach based on responses received.

Managing expectations: Be open and realistic about what can and cannot be achieved by engaging with communities. This includes managing the expectations within the organisation, its partners and targeted participants.

Sustainability: Dipping in and out of community activity will not be of any benefit to the target communities. Long-term strategies that empower both the organisation and/or a provider's reputation are needed.

Variety: There are a range of ways to engage and involve communities and in reality there is no 'one size fits all' approach. Engagement will vary from dealing with single issues to ongoing consultation with the participants.

Partnership working: Acknowledge that other organisations will want to support or engage specific minority groups. So where possible look at opportunities for partnership working with other organisations/stakeholders. If a shared interest exists, think through how best to work together in a way that benefits the communities and other organisations most effectively. Ensure that relevant information is shared and learn from each others' experiences. Where possible look at how resources, including budgets, can be shared too.

Pictures speak a thousand words: When seeking to attract participants from a specific target group make sure that a significant proportion of the images on websites, brochures, flyers, and other publications include positive images of that group.

Role models: A DVD or CD-ROM of successful ethnic minority role models could be distributed to schools, Connexions and other intermediary/support organisations as a careers guidance resource. Alternatively a web forum could be facilitated by a male and female ethnic minority role model/champion to challenge perceptions and provide encouragement.

Continuous learning: Keep an accurate account of what work is being undertaken with whom. Map out all existing levels of community activity and, using local contacts made, draw up community profiles. Carry out community needs assessments to truly understand what is needed. This will include identifying any barriers to engagement that exist and working out how these should be addressed, for example, through training and development work among staff or support for community groups or representatives.

Feedback: Make sure feedback is given to all involved communities and stakeholders on an ongoing basis as to what has been achieved and lessons being learnt.

Impact assessment: Think carefully about the likely impact on participants of policies or procedures, strategies, functions and services. If processes or the opportunities offered do not meet the needs of diverse groups use this information to make the changes needed.

Monitoring and evaluation: Monitor and evaluate all activities undertaken and look at what works and where progress is slow or activities are proving less effective than hoped then focus on possible alternative options.

ECUBE Equal Development Partnership

WHIZ: Project Inspire

This Equal project worked with young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds who were unemployed or economically inactive. The project developed a number of approaches including outreach into the local community, promotional materials and through partner referrals. Part of the attraction for participating was the level of responsibility and decision-making given to the participants including participation in the recruitment of project workers. Supported by a programme aimed at building self-esteem, raising horizons and a continuous process of self-assessment, participants were able to progress from the project into further learning and employment.

Building new and worthwhile relationships can be extremely challenging. It requires perseverance, determination and creativity – but the end result is always worth it.

Checklist

The following steps can enable a truly inclusive approach to attracting participants:

- Do all staff understand the need and business benefits of engaging Black and Minority Ethnic participants?
- Are staff internally engaged in the project?
- Have all local contacts been researched and contacted?
- How has this been evidenced?
- Has a realistic action plan and timetable been developed for this activity?
- Are the project's objectives and targets directly relevant to BME participants?
- Have BME participants been involved in the start-up of the project?
- Has a realistic budget been allocated for community engagement activity?
- Has an impact assessment, partial or full, been undertaken?
- Are appropriate monitoring and evaluation plans in place?
- Has contact been made with faith groups in the target area?

4.0 Assessing the needs of ethnic minority participants

Gathering information for an assessment is often the first step in planning appropriate goals and objectives.

An assessment should be an ongoing process through which information is gathered about a participant's strengths, interests, abilities, developmental needs, psychological, social and emotional development. It requires looking at how a participant functions in different environments with the assessment process being different for each participant depending upon their needs. Therefore, it is essential that the right information is sought from the outset.

Communication

Assessing the needs of ethnic minority participants requires the same skills as any other assessment, but with an understanding of the needs and specific requirements of diverse groups and the individuals that make up those groups. The assessment should be based on the principles of a person-centred approach where an open, honest and respectful approach is needed.

As with all assessments the most important factor is for assessors to develop good communication skills that enable them to:

- use down-to-earth, everyday language, avoiding jargon;
- ensure that, if required, appropriate interpreting/translation services are in place;
- be a good listener, able to identify underlying meanings;
- use prompts, to encourage participants to focus on identifying positives;
- allow the person to take the lead in conversation rather than using direct questioning;
- take time to build a relationship with the person being assessed.

Assessing ethnic minority participants

Confidence: Participants must feel that the process is a positive experience, which helps them to grow in confidence and feel more able to move towards employment. Some groups may not have any previous work experience, or may require additional language or educational support and therefore confidence in their ability may be low. This therefore requires specific techniques to build self-esteem in the current job market.

Trust: The assessor needs to focus on building a relationship and develop a sense of trust with the participant. Confidence and trust may be key issues and so the assessor will need to play a key role in providing support through continuity and acting as the single point of contact. The purpose of the assessment is to support the individual – and they need to know this is what the assessment is about and that it is not a value judgement.

Action planning: The participant should be encouraged to work with the assessor to develop a personal action plan which includes both realistic and aspirational outcomes. The action plan needs to include an ongoing system for monitoring and evaluation of progress over time. This will also allow the plan to be modified if needed.

Motivation: Life experiences need to form a core part of the assessment process. Many ethnic minority participants may not have had a positive educational experience and so focusing on life experiences and achievements outside of the educational system will allow the participant to focus on what they can do rather than what they cannot.

All encompassing: Assessments must be broad and cover a range of topics – including education, employment and lifestyle. As outlined above, skills developed outside of the workplace may be of more relevance than simply focusing on education.

Two-way communication: Feedback about progress, suggestions about what support package is appropriate to their needs, and why this is the case, should be a core part of the assessment process. Where possible allow for ongoing feedback both during and after the assessment.

Outcomes: The assessment should be outcome-focused. A multi-agency approach should be adopted if required and the assessor should look to involve partners and support agencies to deliver a more targeted approach.

Maximising potential: There is considerable diversity amongst ethnic minority groups and it is important this is recognised and understood by the assessor. The assessor needs to work with the participant to understand each individual's learning and development needs. Identifying how the participant learns best rather than having a 'one size fits all' approach will allow for a more accurate development plan to be put in place.

Appropriate support: Make support and training as accessible as possible for all participants. Offer the participant development and learning opportunities at a time and location that suits them. For those participants who have not been through the UK education system the notion of formal learning can be very daunting. The learner may have negative perceptions about learning or hold stereotypes about the learning approach/ environment and may need initial assurance in a welcoming environment. Provision should also be made in timetables for attending prayers, childcare etc.

Assessment: Some female participants from more traditional BME communities such as the Pakistani or the Bangladeshi communities may prefer to have a female assessor assessing their needs. Some female participants may also feel uncomfortable having detailed dialogue with a male member of staff. This may have an impact as the information gathered by a male colleague is not as detailed or as accurate. If a one-to-one assessment is being undertaken female participants should be given the option of either having a female assessor or to have a female member of staff present.

Additional language support: If the participant's first language is not English additional language support may be required. It is estimated that there are up to one million adults in the UK who do not have English as their first language and therefore require additional listening, reading, speaking and writing support. However, they are not a homogeneous or static group but extremely diverse in make up. This group will include both long settled minority ethnic communities of all ages, and groups of more recent arrivals. In relation to the new arrivals, take into consideration the background of each group, develop an understanding of any issues between groups and where necessary and/or relevant, avoid mixing ethnic groups with a history of tension between them.

The key to working successfully with ethnic minority participants is ensuring a flexible and bespoke approach to the learning and development needs of the participants. Avoid trying to mould the participant into a set type or group and instead look at how services can be developed and moulded around the needs of the individual participant.

Engage Equal Development Partnership

Skills and Curriculum Projects

This Project supported basic skills needs for learners. The key target groups were BME communities, Jobseekers with low basic skills, and people from disadvantaged areas. Bournville College was engaged as a partner to develop a range of measures including a personal development plan, digital CV and a new engagement curriculum that enabled assessors and participants to jointly assess individual needs, skills, experience and aspirations in science and technology related subjects. These measures have been developed to track the distance that each individual has to travel to enter the labour market in South Birmingham and access jobs in the A38 technology corridor. They are also used as a management and information tool by the assessor to raise awareness of science and technological subjects and to support each individual in fulfilling their aspirations and goals in attaining the qualifications and skills necessary for employment in new labour markets.

Checklist

The following steps can enable an inclusive approach to assessing the needs of participants:

- Are all staff involved in participant assessments fully trained and do they have a clear understanding of diversity issues relating to BME participants?
- Has a participant's action plan been implemented?
- Are partnerships and multi-agency links in place to ensure external support can be adequately assessed?
- Does each assessment focus on the needs of the participant and include an education, employment and lifestyle perspective?
- Is there a clear transparent and flexible approach to assessment?
- Have faith or cultural issues been raised or do they need to be addressed?

5.0 Helping ethnic minority participants to access the labour market

The Government's aspiration is to provide work for those who can, and support for those who cannot. However, not everyone is sharing in this success. Ethnic minorities are still less likely to find and sustain employment than their white counterparts – and this disadvantage has persisted for more than a decade.

Even today only 61% of ethnic minorities are employed, compared to 76% of white people.⁴ This waste of employment potential has both economic and social costs, contributing to social exclusion and damaging community cohesion.

A dual approach of demonstrating to employers the importance of a diverse workforce for its business and training and improving the job skills of ethnic minority participants will help to reduce this current inequality.

Fair Cities Birmingham

Fair Cities is an initiative designed by the National Employment Panel to help disadvantaged members of ethnic minorities stay and advance in work. It looks to meet employer demand for jobs to be filled. Fair Cities Birmingham has helped many BME participants take part in a pre-recruitment programme of skills development. The programme includes the application process, teamwork, communication skills, and maths and English tests. The programme is based on the precise skills requirements of employers. Through this programme a number of unemployed BME graduate participants have gained employment in organisations such as the West Midlands Police and The Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust and Mitchells & Butler.

Information, advice and guidance

An essential step to reducing the inequality in the labour market is to ensure that a high quality of information advice and guidance is available to ethnic minorities. Individual skills and qualifications should be taken into consideration when providing advice and guidance to participants.

Employers

Demonstrating the business advantages of diversity in employment by assisting employers to understand the arguments for race equality in the workplace and promoting employment of ethnic minority employees in enterprises at all levels is a crucial first step.

Employers also need to be aware of the legislative requirements and needs and of the ethnic minority participants and ensure that, where possible, their work practices are not causing the disengagement of diverse groups.

⁴Labour Force Survey, fourth quarter 2006.

Being an employer of choice means understanding what potential employees want from their employer. Understanding individual needs and requirements will enable an organisation to decide whether the opportunities it offers is right for the groups it wishes to attract.

Remember that employment decisions based on assumptions rather than proper appraisal are never justified because:

- having a preconceived notion of what age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion and belief are appropriate for a job are never genuine criteria for employment;
- age, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion and belief should not be used as predictors of performance;
- physical and mental ability is not solely linked to any single identity, personal or lifestyle choice.

Ensuring an inclusive approach to employment will ensure that organisations are able to tap into the widest possible talent pool and recruit and engage with a diverse range of applicants. The following steps will support employers help diverse applicants into work:

Recruitment: Job and person specifications need to match the requirements of the job. 31% of people from an ethnic minority background are currently economically inactive and so when looking at cost-effective employment this groups provides a possible solution.

Advertising: Ensuring all advertising is inclusive and appeals to all communities will help attract and engage from a much wider talent pool.

Interview and selection: Organisations need to ensure that staff responsible for shortlisting, interviewing and selection are not basing their decisions on any diversity biases and assumptions. Clear guidance and training, alongside a proper consideration of the required skills and abilities for the job, are essential.

Equality of opportunity: Ensure that all staff are offered the same opportunity and encouragement to participate in promotion and developmental opportunities. In some cases this may mean actively encouraging groups who do not come forward to do so.

Reflecting service delivery: Having a workforce that reflects the local population the organisation serves is extremely good for business. A reflective workforce means that goods and services are more likely to be targeted and appropriate to the needs of a diverse population.

Positive action: If organisations want to positively encourage ethnic minority applicants to apply to their organisation they can legally do so. However, attracting ethnic minority applicants is allowed but shortlisting or recruiting all applicants will need to be objectively assessed.

Policy and action: Employers need to ensure that they have policies and practices in place that encourage and benefit ethnic minority applicants in the same way that they do all other applicants.

Evidence-based selection: There is no obligation on an employer to show that they have selected the best candidate for the job. However, all employers are recommended to keep records that allow them, if challenged, to justify their decisions to select particular candidates and reject others. Employers need to be able to show that each selection is based on objective evidence of a person's ability to do the job satisfactorily (for disabled candidates this means how they would perform the job if reasonable adjustments were made), and not on assumptions or prejudices about race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age.

Support for participants

In certain cases ethnic minority applicants may require additional support and encouragement to ensure they are skilled and ready for work. The following are ways in which ethnic minority participants can be supported:

Choice: Look at opportunities that allow for social integration, through a supportive work culture that values diversity in applicants.

Flexibility: Organisations offering a flexible working environment are better suited to the needs of diverse participants, taking into account faith and religious needs and events.

Pay and conditions: Ensure that ethnic minority male and female participants are able to benefit from the same pay and working conditions as all other staff. Conducting an equal pay review within the organisation is the best starting point for all organisations when doing this. This should be supported by measures to make reasonable adjustments where necessary in relation to a participant's disability.

Work placement: Where possible explore work placement opportunities for participants prior to placement to allow both the organisation and the employee to gain an insight into the role and its requirements.

Ongoing communication: Providing a rolling programme of advice and hands-on information seminars where participants learn about working in specific occupations can be extremely effective in engaging participants on a longer term basis.

Work readiness: Participants need to want to work, as well as be ready to work. It may be that some participants have not been in the job market for a length of time, so easing them back in at a pace that suits them is very important. Processes need to take the individual's requirements into account. Motivation and commitment on both sides is needed to ensure that the participant is prepared and committed to move forward.

Open door policy: There needs to be an open door policy that allows the participant to be open and honest about their experiences. If an opportunity does not work out for any reason the individual needs to know that they can learn from the experience and review alternative options.

Language support: If additional language support is needed then ensure the language support offered includes:

- a clear framework of standards;
- a national curriculum framework which identifies the skills to be learnt;
- sound assessment, with qualifications mapped against nationally agreed standards;
- high quality teaching, with teacher training programmes which recognise the specific requirements of the learners;
- a range of learning opportunities including family programmes, multimedia, open and distance learning programmes;
- provision integrated with other programmes of learning and vocational training.

Partnership working: In many cases ethnic minority participants may not be aware of the full range of opportunities available to them or may not have even thought about accessing employment due to development needs they may have. Working through existing diversity networks to promote the benefits of working and the development and support available will help in engaging and encouraging applicants to come forward.

Checklist

The following steps can enable an inclusive approach to helping participants access the labour market:

- Is the organisation aware of the relevant race and employment legislation and its requirements?
- Is information and support available for employers to ensure they understand what is required from them under the relevant legislation?
- Are ethnic minority participants fully aware of all job-related opportunities available to them?
- Are ethnic minority participants encouraged to seek job and learning opportunities that meet their specific requirements?
- Are partnerships in place to ensure that if external support is needed, it can be accessed?

6.0 Supporting ethnic minority participants in work

Support in the workplace should be discrete and sensitive. Employees rarely like to be singled out or made to feel needy or overly dependant on others.

Training and mentoring

Offering mentoring and development opportunities to ethnic minority participants will ensure constant awareness of workforce needs and their ongoing requirements. In addition where extra development is needed the training will allow the participant to grow in confidence.

Learning and development should be seen as beneficial to all staff, equally. All individuals, regardless of ethnicity or background, should be given the same access to development opportunities.

Structure: Having mechanisms in place for appraising, motivating and developing staff will support retention and, in the long term, lower the cost of recruitment.

Mentoring: Mentoring can be an extremely effective way of nurturing staff within an organisation as well as encouraging individuals to work as a team. Mentoring is an effective way of promoting the transfer of skills, knowledge and experience and can be of use to both the mentee and the mentor involved.

For the mentee, mentoring:

- clearly demonstrates how the organisation values them;
- offers an objective, supportive, non-threatening source of help and support whilst developing and learning;
- offers improved opportunities for personal and career advancement;
- offers access to someone with an understanding of the organisation's culture, personnel and ways of working.

For the mentor, mentoring offers:

- increased job satisfaction, and a sense of value and status;
- an active role in performance and policy implementation;
- greater self awareness and wider experience in change management;
- the opportunity to help and guide others in their career development;
- potential to develop and refresh leadership knowledge, skills and qualities.

The Last Mile Equal Development Partnership

The North West Foundation Placement Scheme

This project was led by Northwest Vision and Media and aimed at supporting individuals from black and minority ethnic communities into opportunities in the creative and cultural industries in the North West region.

The project also worked with a network of media and creative businesses to promote cultural diversity, developing a regional media training network and encouraging recruitment and marketing to be taken forward through non-traditional means.

The partnership sought to identify, nurture and support creative talent and ensure that entrants had the skills needed to develop and progress in the media sector by implementing positive action training to address under-representation in the workforce.

The partners delivered bespoke employability workshops supported by specific training provision around script writing, producing and directing to support entrants during their placement and underpin their learning and skills.

Confidence: Mentoring can be extremely useful when looking to develop the confidence of ethnic minority participants. Where possible ethnic minority participants should be offered a mentor who is also from a diverse background as it will allow the participant to recognise what opportunities exist for ethnic minority participants.

Support networks: Developing diversity support groups will allow ethnic minority participants to network and engage with others, to share experiences and talk through development and training opportunities that they may have experienced.

Organisational learning: Organisations should be encouraged to network and share experiences with other like-minded organisations to learn from good and bad practices undertaken elsewhere.

Policies and action plans: Organisations should be encouraged to have clear and transparent policies relating to recruitment and development of all staff. Organisations should look to monitor and record achievements and share that information with staff.

Communicating commitment to diversity: Organisations should communicate with staff and stakeholders the business benefits diversity offers on an ongoing basis. Marketing the organisation as diversity-friendly makes financial sense as part of the wider business case; it illustrates the organisation's compliance with the law and it demonstrates a commitment to social responsibility.

Open House Equal Development Partnership

This partnership led by Tees Valley Housing aimed to increase awareness of the social housing sector within BME communities and increase access to housing and employment within the region.

The partners sought to tackle racism and xenophobia in the labour market by carrying out a range of interventions linked to the housing sector and associated trades. This included:

- identifying all SMEs in the supply chain of participating housing sector organisations by carrying out a baseline survey;
- influencing SME employers' recruitment and retention policies by providing assistance to develop robust policies, provide training for HR and front line managers;
- working with the housing sector and SMEs to look at procurement procedures, tendering arrangements and community benefits clauses to ensure that community, local labour and social inclusion are maximised;
- providing mechanisms for BME including secondments, mentoring, job swaps and a sheltered employment model for the unemployed;
- providing assistance to BME-led businesses to access approved contractor lists and produce business directory of BME businesses.

Checklist

The following steps can enable an inclusive approach to supporting participants in work:

- Does the organisation have a clear recruitment, progression and training policy?
- Do all recruitment policies, procedures and practices meet the terms and objectives of the organisation's equal opportunities policy and action plan and appropriate legislative requirements?
- Are training opportunities made available to all staff?
- Has the training offered been piloted and tested with a diverse range of staff?

7.0 Monitoring and evaluation

It is worth pointing out that monitoring provides one of many ways of enabling equality policies to be assessed for effectiveness (impact assessment) generally and in respect of each and every minority group. For a more effective assessment of policies that will allow a co-financing organisation and provider to measure and improve services and also to identify and remove any possible barriers, monitoring should be undertaken alongside consultation and stakeholder involvement, identifying aims and objectives etc.

Throughout this guide, we have highlighted the need to apply recommended and relevant tools that will help embed monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure an accurate assessment of activities. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be built into every stage of activity. Monitoring equality practices requires collating, analysing and acting on data collected and can be used to:

- highlight possible inequalities;
- investigate the underlying causes of those inequalities; and
- help develop mechanisms to redress any unfairness or disadvantage.

In employment, monitoring allows an understanding of the make-up of the workforce and provides an invaluable insight into who is applying and who has been successful.

Monitoring can be used to tell which groups are using services, and how satisfied they are with them. It is possible to collect information on provider performance, assess compliance, set improvement measures and monitor progress on them. Based on the monitoring data received back and the action to be taken, services can be delivered far more effectively; for example, by considering mechanisms to reach groups under-represented in the workforce, or making sure that services are relevant to the diverse needs of customers.

Without monitoring, it is difficult to know whether policies and services are working. This could result in the policy seen as paying lip service to equality, and therefore of little value. Such an approach risks losing credibility and commitment from those who have to deliver, as well as from people who are affected by it due to a lack of evidence that policies work.

Monitoring enables equality policies to be assessed for effectiveness (impact assessment) – generally and in respect of each and every minority group. This information can be used to measure and improve services and identify and remove any possible barriers.

Annex One: Glossary

Adverse impact

This is a significant difference in patterns of representation or outcomes between different equality strand groups, with the difference amounting to a detriment for one or more groups.

Ageism

Discrimination against people based on assumptions and stereotypes about age.

Best value

This refers to the process outlined in the Local Government Act 1999, which requires local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the delivery of services.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)

Term currently used to describe a range of minority ethnic communities and groups in the UK – can be used to mean the main Black and Asian and Mixed racial minority communities or it can be used to include all minority communities, including white minority communities.

Community or social cohesion

A Government initiative, developed in response to the disturbances in 2001 in the north of England, which gives local authorities a leading role in helping to realise a ‘common vision’, a sense of belonging, and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds among the elements that help create cohesive communities.

Consultation

Asking for views on services or policies from service-users, staff, decision-making groups or the general public. Consultation can include a range of different ways of consulting such as focus groups, surveys and questionnaires or public meetings.

Disability

The legal definition for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on an individual’s ability to undertake normal day to day activities’. However this definition sees people under what is known as the ‘Medical Model of Disability’. By contrast the ‘Social Model of Disability’ views disability as caused not by impairment but instead by the way in which society fails to meet the needs of disabled people. Any attempt to apply the social model should take into account the fact that some disabled people will themselves use the medical model – sometimes unaware of the social model.

Direct discrimination

Treating a person less favourably than others are, or would be, because of their race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religious or other belief, or their sexual orientation.

Discrimination

Treating an individual or group differently and less favourably than others under comparable circumstances. It may be based on a person’s race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religious or other belief, or their sexual orientation. It may be unlawful and can include harassment.

Diversity

Appreciating diversity goes beyond the mere recognition that everyone is different; it is about valuing and celebrating difference and recognising that everyone, through their unique mixture of skills, experience and talent, has their own valuable contribution to make.

Diversity proofing

Ensuring your practices are in no way compromising or having an adverse impact on equality and diversity.

Equality and human rights

October 2007 saw the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (CEHR) begin its work. The CEHR took over responsibility from the Commission for Racial Equality, Disability Rights Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission, and assumes responsibility for more recent legislation on age, transgender, sexual orientation, and religion and belief. The Commission is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) established under the Equality Act 2006 – accountable for its public funds, but independent of Government and aims to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

Equalities

This is a shorthand term for all work carried out by an organisation to promote equal opportunities and challenge discrimination, both in employment and in carry-out functions and delivering services.

Ethnic monitoring

The process of collecting and analysing information about people's racial or ethnic origins to see whether all groups are fairly represented.

Impact assessment

An impact assessment is simply a tool/process that enables you to check how an existing service or policy or a new service or policy affects groups of people covered by equalities legislation. It allows you to look at evidence or consult as to whether the service or policy is discriminating (actual or perceived to be) against a particular group of people.

Indirect discrimination

Applying a rule or criteria to everyone which:

Cannot be met by people from a particular group **and** is to the disadvantage of the group **and** cannot be justified on non-discriminatory grounds. All three conditions must be met.

Racial group

Racial groups are defined by racial grounds, that is race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins. All racial groups are protected from unlawful racial discrimination under the Race Relations Act. Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Jews and Sikhs have been explicitly recognised by the courts as constituting racial groups for the purpose of the RRA. A person may fall into more than one racial group: for example a 'Nigerian' may be defined by race, colour, ethnic or national origin and nationality.

Reasonable adjustments

Employers have a duty of making reasonable adjustments in respect of disabled candidates or staff, and those delivering services must consider adjustments to meet special needs of disabled customers and clients.

Service Level Agreement (SLA)

An SLA is a formal negotiated agreement between two parties. It is a contract that exists between customers and their service provider, or between service providers. It records the common understanding about services, priorities, responsibilities, guarantee, etc. with the main purpose to agree on the level of service.

Sexual orientation

A term describing a person's attraction to members of the same or different sex. Usually defined as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or heterosexual.

Stereotypes

Generalisations concerning perceived characteristics of all members of a group.

Annex Two: Useful contacts and resources

General

Campaign for Learning: The Campaign for Learning works to create opportunities and provide support for learning in families and communities, workplaces and schools that lead to positive change. www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/index.asp

Employment and Training Links Ltd: Works with disadvantaged individuals in Yorkshire and the West Midlands to support individuals and assist them to access training and work opportunities. www.employment-training-links.co.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Information about individual rights and advice for employers and professionals. www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx

Higher Education Funding Council for England: Working in partnership, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) promotes and funds high-quality, cost-effective teaching and research, meeting the diverse needs of students, the economy and society. Widening access and improving participation in higher education forms one of the Council's strategic aims. www.hefce.ac.uk

Jobcentre Plus: A Government agency supporting people of working age from welfare into work. It aims to help economically inactive people move into employment and to help people facing the greatest barriers to employment to compete effectively in the labour market and move into and remain in work. www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Learndirect: learndirect operates a network of online learning centres providing access to e-learning opportunities available to adults wanting to improve on existing skills or learn new ones, and to employers looking for innovative ways to develop the skills of their workforce. www.learndirect.co.uk

Learning and Skills Council: The Learning and Skills Council works to improve the skills of England's young people and adults. www.lsc.gov.uk

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE): NIACE exists to encourage more and different adults to engage in learning of all kinds, they campaign for and celebrate the achievements of adult learners. It is the largest organisation working to promote the interests of learners and potential learners in England and Wales. www.niace.org.uk

Support for Learning: Website to signpost to relevant organisations and resources in a number of key areas. The site contains links to resources for advisors, students and everyone involved in education, training and communities.

www.support4learning.org.uk/home/index.cfm

UK Skills: A not for profit organisation which champions skills and learning for work through competitions and awards.

www.ukskills.org.uk/opencms/opencms/website/aboutus/index.html

BME

Education Action: Provides advice for education and professional training opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers. www.education-action.org/default.asp?pageRef=201

Ethnic Jobsite: Recruitment posting for ethnic minority groups and advice for employers. www.ethnicjobsite.co.uk/d_res.php

Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force: A Government task force which aims to remove the barriers to employment that are faced by some ethnic minority groups. www.emetaskforce.gov.uk/index.asp

Ideas Training and Employment Service (ITES): ITES is a voluntary organisation that aims to empower people from refugee and minority ethnic communities by developing their skills and confidence to enable them to move towards the labour market.

www.ites.org.uk/index.html

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