

POVERTY & ETHNICITY DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMME

Reducing poverty across all ethnic groups in the UK

THIS is the third and final in a series of Briefing Papers aimed at sharing learning from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Poverty and Ethnicity Demonstration Programme.

Research by JRF shows that ethnic minority people in the UK are up to twice as likely to be in poverty as white British people. As part of a long term research programme to investigate the links between poverty and ethnicity, JRF commissioned four small scale demonstration projects to test solutions to poverty for ethnic groups at highest risk.

Over a two year period, these demonstration projects tested and evaluated models to support ethnic minority individuals and their families to move out of poverty or the risk of poverty. These Poverty and Ethnicity demonstration projects ended in July 2018.

The Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) supported JRF to manage and learn from the Poverty and Ethnicity Demonstration projects, a role which included producing these Briefing Papers.

What works to tackle poverty linked to ethnicity

THIS Briefing Paper shares five key messages from the Poverty and Ethnicity demonstration projects about what works or doesn't work to tackle poverty linked to ethnicity. The messages are drawn from the practical experiences of the demonstration projects and are supported by evaluation evidence collected across the projects. Reflecting the nature of the project ambitions and activities, the key messages are focused on how to tackle poverty linked to ethnicity through two broad approaches: supporting people who are not working to move into work, and supporting people working in low paid jobs to progress into better paid jobs.

These 'what works' messages will be of interest to all organisations engaged in delivering practical solutions to the problems of poverty and ethnic inequality.

Behind each message lies a body of more detailed information from the demonstration

projects and their evaluations. BTEG and JRF can share this information with anyone who wants to learn more about these key messages.

MESSAGE 1: **Supporting people into work:** **target specific ethnic groups**

Ethnicity-blind approaches (i.e. running programmes which are open to all ethnic groups without targeting any specific groups) may or may not result in people from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty taking up the support services on offer. A targeted approach is required, which understands and responds to the barriers and needs which are specific to ethnic groups with high poverty rates. The success of this approach was demonstrated by Bradford Council's textile manufacturing project which established a pathway which targeted Asian women, supporting them to move into good quality jobs in local manufacturing companies.

MESSAGE 2:
Supporting people into work:
trusted intermediaries are critical

People from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty lack knowledge of and confidence to use existing support services, including services provided by Job Centres and other public, private and voluntary sector agencies. They need the encouragement and reassurance of trusted intermediaries. The intermediaries can be individuals or agencies but must be locally based, committed to and trusted by the target communities. Trusted intermediaries are critical for encouraging people from ethnic groups at highest risk of poverty to take up mainstream and other support services.

All the demonstration projects established a trusted intermediary role in some way, including **Women Like Us** who trained Pakistani and Somali working mums to become Parent Ambassadors who encouraged other mums to take up the support service, and the **Mayor's Fund for London** who worked through a net-

work of 80 community based providers to engage with ethnic minority young job seekers.

MESSAGE 3:
In-work progression: in-work progression
does not necessarily mean higher pay

In-work progression does not necessarily mean higher pay. What constitutes 'job progression' varies from person to person and does not necessarily mean progressing to a job that secures a higher income. Many people are equally, or more concerned with the quality of their employment conditions, or in balancing their job with other responsibilities.

Flexibility is critical. Progress to a better job can include shorter travel to work time, more or fewer hours on the same pay, flexibility to work only during school hours. Evidence of this came from **Bradford Council** and **Women Like Us** who found that the Asian women they were supporting needed the flexibility to fit work around their primary care commitments.

CASE STUDY

In work progression does not necessarily mean higher pay

Halima was born in Somalia and has lived in the UK for nearly five years. She is a lone parent to two primary school aged boys.

At the time of registration Halima was on a zero hours' contract working as a cleaner in offices. She was actively looking for other, more stable jobs but the main barrier she had was lack of access to part time/ flexible roles that would fit around her children.

Halima had a number of interventions from our advisor and these consisted of helping her prepare a targeted CV, sending her links to suitable jobs, helping her complete application forms, preparing her for interviews and contacting employers on her behalf. Prior to accessing our support Halima had applied on numerous occasions for a dinner lady role at a local school but had been unsuccessful. With the support of **Women Like Us** she was able to put in much stronger applications which secured her an interview.

As a result of the interview coaching she received from **Women Like Us**, Halima was finally able to secure the role that she had been applying to for over a year. She now works as a Catering Assistant for 17.5 hours a week.

Halima really enjoys the job and the hours allow her to work without having to worry about or incur childcare cost. She feels much happier being in work and feels that it has made a positive impact on both her and her children.

Message 4:
In-work progression: encourage employers to be proactive in increasing workforce ethnic diversity

A positive narrative which links business success with employing local people from under-represented ethnic groups can encourage employers to re-think their traditional recruitment approaches. This was demonstrated by **Bradford Council** when textile manufacturing companies were involved in finding new ways to attract Asian women to join their workforces, and by the **Mayor's Fund** for London whose Ethnic Diversity Pledge secured commitments from more than 17 major transport companies to take a series of steps to increase their workforce ethnic diversity.

MESSAGE 5:
Moving out of poverty is a long term process

The demonstration projects offered support to their clients which varied in timescale from a few weeks to two years. But even the

longest periods of support were insufficient to help people move out of poverty. Across all projects, when individuals moved into work or into better paid work, this did not increase their household incomes to a level above the poverty threshold.

Moving from unemployment into work takes several steps. Progressing from a first job to a better job may take several more steps. This can be a long and difficult process which some people need a great deal of support to get through. This was evidenced by Crisis Brent who found that there are very high risks for individuals and their families in moving from out-of-work to in-work benefits, and that long transition periods are required to manage this before attempting further moves to increase working hours or pay. Crisis Brent and Bradford Council found that people with low English literacy may require very long term support to develop their written English skills to the level required for higher-paid jobs.

Yasmin was in the first cohort of women trained at the new Keighley College Textile Academy. The Textile Academy is a new initiative developed by the College, Bradford Council and local companies who are keen to diversify their work force with local, dependable talent. The aim is to meet manufacturing skills shortages by creating pathways into work for local people, with a focus on under-represented ethnic groups in the community.

Yasmin was born in Pakistan and came to live in Keighley in 1994. She has two grown up sons and her husband is a taxi driver. Growing up in Pakistan, Yasmin received very little formal education but has achieved ESOL level 1. Her main language remains Urdu.

Yasmin had worked in a local bakery but was made redundant in 2016 and was unable to find a new job. Although she had always sewn at home for herself and her family, Yasmin had never thought of sewing as a possible job. When an adviser told her about the new Textile Academy at Keighley College, Yasmin was interested although apprehensive about joining. She passed the four week course with flying colours and then went onto a two week work experience placement at JTS Cushions, a soft furnishings manufacturer in Keighley whose Managing Director was instrumental in developing the Textile Academy. Yasmin excelled in her placement and was offered a permanent job.

Yasmin is now working full-time at JTS Cushions as a sewing machinist on a permanent contract. Although currently on minimum wage her earnings will increase as she becomes more experienced and skilled. Yasmin is extremely happy in her new job. She loves sewing and working as part of the team at JTS Cushions where she has found everyone friendly and welcoming.

Poverty & Ethnicity Demonstration Programme

Tackling inequality: supporting ethnic minority mothers to escape in-work poverty. This project was delivered by **Women Like Us**, part of the Timewise Foundation which aims to develop the part time jobs market so that everyone can find work that fits with their other responsibilities. The project tested ways of engaging and supporting mothers from Somali and Pakistani communities who were working in low income jobs to progress into better employment.

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The En-route to sustainable employment project was delivered by the **Mayor's Fund for London**, a charity supporting young Londoners to move out of poverty or the risk of poverty. The project tested ways of engaging employers to increase job opportunities for ethnic minority young people and of preparing those young people to successfully apply for and sustain employment. The project focused on the transport sector, with the aim of developing a model of engagement and support that is transferable to other employment sectors.

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The Employment access and progression project was delivered by **Crisis Brent**, part of the national Crisis charity which supports homeless people and campaigns to end homelessness. The project tested ways of supporting clients who are in-work to progress into better jobs.

The project approach was place-based, focusing

on helping local people to access local opportunities, including those generated through the major redevelopment of nearby Park Royal.

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Bradford Council worked with partners including Keighley College, Keighley Association Women and Children Centre and local textile manufacturing companies to develop and deliver the *Bradford Producer City Talent Management Programme*. The Council tested two approaches to helping people to move out of poverty: (1) creating a pathway into textile manufacturing jobs in Keighley to increase the number of Asian women applying for and employed in the sector; (2) providing enhanced support and encouragement for low-paid ethnic minority Council employees to secure better jobs.

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JRF appointed the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) as a strategic partner in this programme. BTEG supported project management, project-level evaluation, capturing and sharing learning from the programme and engaging policy and practitioner stakeholders.

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